Irreconcilable: The Story of the Palestinian and Israeli Future Visions Since 1967

Author: Matthew J. DeMaio

Persistent link: http://hdl.handle.net/2345/3094

This work is posted on eScholarship@BC, Boston College University Libraries.

Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2013

Copyright is held by the author, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise noted.
IRRECONCILABLE:

THE STORY OF THE PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI FUTURE VISIONS SINCE 1967

A Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted to

The College of Arts and Sciences

Islamic Civilizations and Societies Program

By

MATTHEW DEMAIO

5/15/2013
© copyright by MATTHEW JAMES DEMAIO

2013
At the conclusion of the June 1967 War, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip were united under a single sovereignty for the first time since the end of the British Mandate for Palestine nineteen years earlier. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict returned to the contest between two national movements, Palestinian and Israeli, making competing claims to the same piece of territory. Over the course of the ensuing 45 years, the discourse of each national movement has been littered with explicit and implicit references, acknowledgements and denunciations of the other. Discourse is the means by which national leaders attempt to build a bridge from present circumstances to an imagined future. This study, therefore, takes a critical reading approach to political discourse of each national movement with the goal of finding the place of the other in the imagined future of each group. Reading official remarks, constitutions, party platforms, speeches and international documents illuminates the changing place of the other in each nation’s future vision over the last 45 years of conflict. By understanding the evolving place of the other in national movements that make claims to the same piece of territory, we are able to understand the irreconcilability that has characterized the Palestinian-Israeli conflict since the start of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 and the failure of the Oslo Process to bring about a negotiated solution.
To my Mom and Dad, thank you for letting me follow my passions, even though it took me far away from you. I love you
# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments................................................................................................................iii

List of Figures..........................................................................................................................iv

Introduction............................................................................................................................1

1. Literature Review..............................................................................................................11

2. The Roots of the Conflict; 1834-1967.................................................................23

3. A New Conflict, A New Discourse; 1967-1968.........................................................97

4. Israeli Plans and PLO Rebirth; 1968-1970.................................................................123

5. The National Authority; 1970-1976...........................................................................144


7. The First Intifada; 1987-1993.......................................................................................191


   Epilogue: The Death of a Paradigm? 2012-2013.........................................................278

   Conclusion.........................................................................................................................289

   Bibliography......................................................................................................................295
Acknowledgements

I need to thank first and foremost my parents for making this all possible. They were endlessly supportive when I insisted on going year after year to a part of the world that was not only very far away but also potentially hazardous (although they took some convincing). You have my endless love and gratitude for everything you have done for me and sorry I keep traveling. I also need to thank Professor Eve Spangler not only for advising this work but also for writing me numerous letters of recommendation that made all of my trips to Palestine possible. The same goes for Professor Kathleen Bailey who has guided me along the Islamic Civilizations and Societies path for these past three years, written letters of recommendation and nominated me for recognition. To them I say: Sorry this project is so long, and I am sorry you are required to read it (the rest of you lucky people have a choice). I also want to thank Kali Rubaii generally for making sure I am always saying what needs to be said and specifically for helping to shape the framework of this study. I need to thank Professor Atef Ghobrial for providing me the Arabic skills I needed to make the trips to Palestine productive and enlightening. Of course I must thank my roommates for putting up with four years of the same, tedious conversation about military occupation and human rights that I always find incredibly interesting but likely bores them. Also, to my Students for Justice in Palestine members and officers: thank you for being great and working so hard this year to bring the story of Palestine to Boston College. I want to thank Boston College, particularly the University Fellowships Committee, for providing the resources to travel and study in this region. Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank every Palestinian who has taken me into their lives and their homes and told me their stories. It is your steadfastness and courage in the face of tragedy that has driven me to read and write. I will keep coming back to Palestine and I cannot wait until the stories are no longer about walls and checkpoints but about trips to the beach in Jaffa and days in Jerusalem. It is my sincere hope that this work becomes irrelevant as soon as possible and questions about armistice lines, security concerns and final status issues, no longer trouble anyone. As I write this, on May 14th, 2013, Palestinians everywhere are preparing to mourn Nakba Day, the sixty-fifth Nakba Day. That is far too many.
List of Figures

1. Heinrich Bünting’s 1581 Depiction of Jerusalem................................. 24

2. The Sykes-Picot Agreement................................................................ 58

3. British soldiers search Palestinians for Arms........................................ 74

4. The Peel Partition Plan......................................................................... 77

5. Original Partition Plan and Post-War Armistice Lines.......................... 92

6. Israeli Territorial Gains of June 1967.................................................. 98

7. Map of the Allon Plan.......................................................................... 104

8. The Oslo II Demarcations..................................................................... 235
Introduction

In September of 2011, I was watching the United Nations General Assembly in my apartment from the upscale Amman neighborhood of Shmeisani. That night, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was giving a speech on the occasion of his submission of Palestine’s application for full membership in the UN to the Security Council. During the impassioned speech he affirmed that “the goal of the Palestinian people is the realization of their inalienable national rights in their independent State of Palestine … to resolve the core [of] the Arab-Israeli conflict and to achieve a just and comprehensive peace.” He finished his speech by appealing to the member nations in the chamber: “Your support for the establishment of the State of Palestine and for its admission to the United Nations as a full member is the greatest contribution to peacemaking in the Holy Land.”¹

Immediately after Abbas left the podium, Benjamin Netanyahu, prime minister of Israel, stepped up to deliver his address to the General Assembly. Netanyahu, in between warning about the threat posed to the West by militant Islam and nuclear Iran, insisted that the Israelis have always been ready for peace but will not allow the establishment of a Palestinian state without a commitment by the Palestinians to peace. He stated that “all these potential cracks in Israel’s security have to be sealed in a peace agreement before a

¹ Mahmoud Abbas, “Speech to the UN General Assembly” (UN General Assembly, New York, NY, September, 23, 2011).
Palestinian state is declared, not afterwards, because if you leave it afterwards, they won’t be sealed. The Palestinians should first make peace with Israel and then get their state.”

Both speakers used many of the same words throughout their official remarks but came to vastly different conclusions about the process that would bring about the universally endorsed but ever-receding two state solution. The discourse each leader used betrayed the deep divide between these two national movements that has made this protracted conflict last for more than 65 years. For the Palestinians, the conflict is being prolonged by Israel’s continued occupation of the Palestinian territories. This occupation is used by Israel to keep the Palestinians powerless thus enabling the state to expropriate more and more land. It is impossible for the conflict to be resolved with this power imbalance which is why the Palestinians went to the United Nations looking for recognition of statehood. To Netanyahu, Palestinian statehood in the West Bank in the Gaza Strip as sought by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) impinges on land he believes belongs to the state of Israel. Peace to the current Israeli government depends on the renunciation of Palestinian claims to land Israel already holds in the West Bank and a written agreement with the Palestinians that would allow a permanent Israeli presence throughout the occupied territories. The two speeches also betrayed how each leader saw the other in their own imagined future. For Abbas, Israel is a state with which Palestine will be able to negotiate on equal footing as an independent state. For Netanyahu, real

---

Palestinian independence is unacceptable and any Palestinian self-determination would be subordinate to Israeli control.

Seeing these two speeches side by side is what inspired the following study about the discourse of the Palestinians and Israelis since 1967. The words of each leader had a depth of meaning which spoke not only to the current state of affairs but also to the place of the other in the imagined future of each nation. Discourse is the means by which national leaders seek to build a bridge between the present situation and an ideal imagined future. At its heart, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a clash between two exclusive national movements that make claims for the same piece of land. The national discourse of each, therefore, is littered with explicit and implicit references, acknowledgements and denunciations of the other. These references convey the place of the other in the imagined future that each nation is seeking to build. A study of official discourse over the course of the history of Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip will therefore show how the place of the other has changed since historical Palestine\(^3\) was once again united under a single sovereignty in 1967. By understanding the evolving place of the other in national movements that make exclusive claim to a piece of territory, we are able to understand the irreconcilability that has characterized the course of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and gaps that will need to be overcome for a peaceful solution to be reached.

---

\(^3\) Which is henceforth how I shall identify the single zone of control that is Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip; the piece of territory that was once Mandate Palestine.
This leads me to the question for study: What is the place of the other in the imagined future of the Palestinians and Israelis as represented in their respective national political discourse. How have those visions changed since 1967? In order to fully explore this question it is first necessary to define its terms. What do we mean by “national,” “Palestinian-Israeli conflict,” and “discourse?”

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict began towards the end of the 19th century with the Zionist (Jewish nationalist) colonization and settlement of the historical Palestine. At its roots, this conflict is a struggle between two rival nationalist groups who make claims to the same piece of land. The goal of Zionism was the creation of a Jewish state in historical Palestine; a goal that has been realized. The goal of Palestinian nationalism is the creation of a Palestinian state in the same territory, which has yet to come to pass.

When it comes to defining the nation, there is no better person to turn to than Benedict Anderson. First published in 1983, Anderson’s seminal work *Imagined Communities* was groundbreaking in its analysis of the creation of nations and the coming of the age of nationalism. He proposes this definition for the nation: “it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” It is “imagined” because, despite the fact that most of the members of the nation will never meet or even see one another, they see themselves as part of the same national group. The nation is “limited” because “even the largest of them... has finite, if elastic, boundaries beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with

---

mankind.” It is sovereign because nationhood was created in a time where Enlightenment thinking was challenging the legitimacy of divinely-ordained leaders. It is a community because “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”

Despite the fact that it presents itself as natural and timeless, nationalism is an 18th century mode of organization that in all cases depends on some level of social construction. Both Palestinian and Jewish nationalism grew out of reactions to outside pressures and a set of crucial shared experiences that pushed leaders to imagine themselves as members of the communities we see today. We will trace the emergence of these two national movements in the ensuing chapters, but it is vital to state here that the goal of this study is not to determine whose national claim to historical Palestine is more legitimate or is more historically accurate. As Benedict Anderson states, nations “are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they were imagined.” However, as we will come to see throughout this study, each national movement aimed to delegitimize the nation-ness of the other in order to undercut their rival’s claim to the land.

The conflict has gone through a number of phases. From the beginning of Jewish settlement until the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the conflict proceeded in a historical Palestine that was unified under a single, initially Ottoman and later British, sovereignty. In the aftermath of the war that created Israel and the Palestinian refugees in

---

5 Ibid., 7.
6 Ibid., 7.
7 Ibid., 6.
1948, this territory was divided between three sovereignties. Israel took 78% of the land of historical Palestine and the rest was split between Jordan, which annexed the West Bank, and Egypt which took administrative control of the Gaza Strip. I choose to start this study in 1967 because in June of that year, Israel conquered the remaining 22% of historical Palestine, uniting it under a single sovereignty for the first time in nineteen years. Israeli control over the land conquered from Jordan and Egypt took the form of military occupation.8

Because Israel did not annex this land, this is not sovereignty in the conventional sense of the word. However, as the scholar Achille Mbembe argues “the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to decide who may live and who must die,” in any given territory.9 As the government of Israel holds this final say over “who may live and who must die” in the entirety of historical Palestine, it is the state of Israel that holds sovereignty over the territory, despite a lack of official annexation and international recognition. Since 1967, Israel has expressed this sovereignty in what Mbembe calls “late-modern colonial occupation” which is characterized by “seizing, delineating, and asserting control over a physical geographical area – of writing on the ground a new set of social and spacial relations.”10 That is to say, Israel is expressing its de facto control over the occupied territories with physical construction of settlements, roads, military bases, closed military zones, nature reserves, and checkpoints.

8 See Ilan Pappé’s upcoming book The Bureaucracy of Evil.
10 Ibid., 25
It is with this reunification of historical Palestine under a single, albeit de-facto, sovereignty that our study of discourse begins. Whereas in the nineteen years preceding this unification, the conflict was decidedly interstate, i.e. between Israel and the neighboring Arab countries, this period (1967 to the present) for reasons we will cover shortly, saw the reemergence of a direct conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis. It is during this phase of the conflict that the discourse produced by each national movement is in direct conversation with the other. As the great French scholar Michel Foucault argues, “discourse is not simply that which manifests (or hides) desire – it is also the object of desire; and since, as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.” Discourse is not simply a description of ongoing events. It in itself has power. In the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the ability of a Palestinian national group to shape discourse about its struggle gives it the ability to influence the actual path and strategies of the struggle itself. Similarly, the ability of an Israeli political party to control the discourse about the territories under its occupation is in itself a way to shape their future status.

It is important to note, however, that there almost always exists a gap between discourse and reality. As we will see in many cases throughout this study, just because a group changes its discourse does not mean its actions will reflect the discursive change.

---

Often in this conflict, discourse will be used to mask and sanitize contradictory actions on the ground.

The national political discourse analyzed in this study is primarily produced at the highest levels of the Palestinian national movement and of the Israeli government. My data will include speeches to international and domestic audiences, party platforms, foundational documents of nationalist organizations, peace negotiations and treaties, and political resolutions. And while positions will often be universally held amongst Palestinian and Israeli national leaders, neither side is a monolith. Within each nationalist camp there have always existed rival factions, parties and individuals who try and shape the official political discourse to reflect their imagined future and goals. It would take a much larger study than this to cover all of these different streams of discourse, so instead we will focus on a few major ones. On the Palestinian side, we will focus on Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the three largest factions of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and eventually the Islamic Resistance Movement, better known as Hamas, which would emerge in 1989. On the Israeli side we will focus primarily on the Labor party, which grew out of the socialist left wing settlers who arrived in historic Palestine in the first twenty years of the 20th century, and the Likud party, their right wing rivals who came in the ensuing ten years of settlement. I will not be covering every single document written by these producers of discourse but rather the ones that indicate a significant change in each side’s future vision. This means that there will be periods where certain producers of discourse will more or less fall out
of the story. For example, despite the multitude of documents produced throughout the Oslo process, few are of serious relevance because no new visions are presented. Rather, older visions are reinforced.

I am going to argue that the future visions put forward by various Palestinian and Israeli national political leaders since 1967 have always been irreconcilable. For the first twenty-five years of our period of study, the Palestinian and Israeli national groups claimed exclusive sovereignty over the entirety of historical Palestine. These two claims, because of their exclusivity, were inherently irreconcilable. Both sides could not get their way. There was an opportunity for this irreconcilability to end, or at least become merely contradictory, in 1989 when the Palestinian national movement renounced claims to sovereignty over the 78% of historical Palestine that became the state of Israel. Instead, the PLO claimed sovereignty over the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. However, when Israel recognized the Palestinian national movement in 1993, it chose not to make a reciprocal renunciation of claims over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel continued to see the occupied territories as Israeli land to give (or not give) away. Because this Israeli claim over the West Bank and Gaza Strip was enshrined in the Oslo Process upon which a permanent peace solution was meant to be negotiated, the claims remained irreconcilable. Israel’s demands for expansion under the guise of its security have always claimed more of the land of the occupied territories than the Palestinian national movement was willing to cede. After twenty years of negotiations based on this unbridgeable gap, the future visions of Palestinians and Israelis have begun to return to their original articulation of 1967.
The study is structured around significant events or discursive changes in the history of the conflict. The first chapter is a literature review of academic work on nationalism aimed at presenting the theory upon which Palestinian nationalism and Zionism emerged. The second chapter tells the story of the conflict from its 19th century inception up to the 1967 War, the beginning of our period of study. Chapter three traces the official Israeli, international and Palestinian reaction to the war and lays down the baseline future visions from which we will track changes over the course of this study. Chapter four describes the articulation of Palestinian nationalist goals after the 1968 takeover of the PLO by the three main factions we listed above. Chapter five describes the period after 1970 when the PLO was forced from its base in Jordan to Beirut and the accompanying discursive changes that ensued. Chapter six tells the story of the rise of the right wing Likud party and their time as the first non-Labor government of Israel in the state’s history. Chapter seven begins with the First Intifada (Palestinian revolution against the Israeli military occupation) in 1987 and describes the official adoption by the PLO of the desire to create a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. Chapter eight tracks the Oslo Peace Process that came about as a result of the Intifada and the rise of the two state solution paradigm. Chapter nine discusses the failure of the Oslo process and the second revolution these failures inspired. The epilogue describes what has occurred over the course of the last six months and discusses the discursive changes currently taking place in each national movement. Finally, the conclusion will outline the discursive changes we will have covered over the course of this study reassert that these future visions have always been irreconcilable.
Chapter 1: Literature Review

At its root, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a struggle between two national movements that seek to practice self-determination on the same piece of land. In order to fully understand the conflict and the discourse produced by each national movement, it is necessary to understand their history. When we trace the specific histories of these two national movements in the next chapter we will come to find that while disparate events led to the nationalization of the Palestinian and the European Jewish hopes, the nationalization process itself for these two peoples was remarkably similar. Histories and theories of nationalism will be useful here.

In the introduction we turned to Benedict Anderson and his seminal work on nationalism, *Imagined Communities*, for the definition of nationhood that we will be using throughout this work. Anderson describes the nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”¹ But Anderson is not the only thinker on the subject of nationalism. Most of his colleagues agree that nationalism, despite its tendency to present itself as both ancient and timeless, is a social construction with its roots in the 18th century. The debate, however, is over the extent to which the social construction of nationhood is based upon preexisting senses of community. Some thinkers argue that the nations that emerged in the eighteenth century were reorganizations of existing communities who were united by a shared ethnicity, religion, language, culture etc. Walker Connor, for example, describes nations as “a self-

¹ Anderson, 6
aware ethnic group.”² That is to say, he sees nations as an evolution of a preexisting group: once the “members are themselves aware of the group’s uniqueness,” it can become a nation.³ Others, such as Ernest Gellner, argue that it is the force of nationalism itself that creates the nation it claims to discover. Gellner states that nationalism “sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures.”⁴ No matter what side these thinkers take on the debate over the origins of today’s nations, few dispute that the emergence of these national movements depended on some level of social construction.

This becomes quite clear when we look at the examples of France and Germany. No one would deny that the French and Germans today are well-established imagined communities, that is, nations. However, to assume that this current sense of community bond amongst Frenchmen and Germans emerged naturally out of centuries of a shared culture and history would be categorically incorrect. Rather, this shared culture and history was created with what Eric Hobsbawm calls “invented tradition.”⁵ This invention of tradition is an innovative process which relies on “the development of a secular equivalent to the church – primary education,” “the invention of public ceremonies,” and “the mass production of public monuments.”⁶

² Walker Connor, “A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is and Ethnic Group, is a...” in Nationalism, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). 45.
³ Ibid., 45.
⁶ Ibid., 77-8.
In France, the revolutionaries used this process of invention to institutionalize the French Revolution. Primary education aimed to transform the peasants not only into Frenchmen, but “all Frenchmen into good Republicans.” That is, to make them members of the French nation. Public ceremony in the same context, embodied by Bastille Day, served to “transform the heritage of the Revolution into a combined expression of state pomp and power and the citizens’ pleasure.” For the Third Republic, the main public monument was the image of “the Republic itself (in the form of Marianne which now became universally familiar).” This and other monuments “traced the grass roots of the Republic... and may be regarded as the visible links between the voter and the nation.” This allowed the peasants particularly to see themselves as tied to the centralized far away state.

The same process occurred in Germany where the nationalization of what would become the German people in the wake of unification depended on the invention of tradition. In the wake of unification, the Second German Empire faced two political problems according to Hobsbawm: “how to provide historical legitimacy for the Bismarckian (prusso-Little German) version of unification which had none; and how to deal with the large part of the democratic electorate which would have preferred another solution.” The German Empire turned to invented tradition to “establish the continuity between the Second and First German Empires, or more generally, to establish the new

---

7 Ibid., 77.
8 Ibid., 78.
9 Ibid., 78.
10 Ibid., 78.
11 Ibid., 79.
Empire as the realization of the secular national aspirations of the German people; and to stress the specific historical experience which linked Prussia to the rest of Germany."¹²

This necessitated the combination of German and Prussian histories and the creation of national symbols and monuments as a means to symbolically tie the citizens of the new state together when all previously had in common was the experience of unification.

We see, therefore, that even in the cases of nations who seem the oldest and most natural, their emergence depended on social construction that took place in the 18⁰ century. It is ridiculous, then, to discount nations on the basis that they are new, less real or less legitimate than some “natural” counterpart. That a nationalist movement was articulated earlier and a nation created at the end of the 19⁰ century rather than the beginning of the 20⁰ century is irrelevant. All nations depend on social constructions and therefore no one nation is more legitimate or less legitimate than any other. Benedict Anderson makes this point very clearly in his work on the subject: “communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they were imagined.”¹³

As Anderson says, however, nations are distinctive in the way they came to be imagined. In the analysis of the thinkers we have looked at so far, either a dominant ethnic group asserts its identity over a wider and more diverse group, or state institutions use the school system and invented tradition to transform subjects of empire to citizens of a nation. While these processes certainly did occur in some cases (primarily in Europe),

¹² Ibid., 79.
¹³ Anderson, 6.
this is not enough to explain the creation of imagined communities outside of the continent. In the cases we will study, namely Zionism (the Jewish national movement) and Palestinian nationalism, there was neither a Jewish or Palestinian central state institutions nor dominant ethnic groups to force their will over a population at large. Rather, new ways of looking at the world and a shared set of experiences resulting from internal and external challenges and changes brought Jews to articulate Jewish nationalism and Palestinians to articulate Palestinian nationalism.

In order to understand this new worldview that allowed for the creation of the Palestinian and Jewish nation we must now return to Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*. Anderson in his definition of a nation describes it as “sovereign.” This notion of sovereignty is distinctly 18th century. It came about as a result of new Enlightenment ideas “destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realms.”

In the pre-national age, the primary frames of reference for individuals were religious communities and dynastic realms. The religious community was imagined through the medium of a sacred language and a written script. This meant that, unlike nations, the religious community was open. Because individuals were “sacrally malleable,” they could gain membership by learning the sacred scrip and by adopting the pertinent religion. However, because the vast majority of the members of any given religious

---

14 Ibid., 7.
15 Ibid., 15.
community were illiterate, these communities necessitated hierarchy. The literate were, in essence, spiritual translators who mediated between heaven and earth.\textsuperscript{16}

The decline of the religious community as the organizing force, although it did not in and of itself produce nations, allowed for the imagining of a new kind of community. This decline of the religious community, according to Anderson, came as a result of exploration of the non-European world which widened the conception of possible forms of human life and led to the territorialization of religious community in a way that foreshadowed national limits.\textsuperscript{17} Also, the use of the sacred languages, particularly Latin in Europe, declined and was replaced by a multitude of vernaculars. This led to a fracturing of the once unified religious community which created limits where none existed before.\textsuperscript{18}

Also important was the decline of the dynastic realm. Like the religious community, these entities, whose royal leaders gained their legitimacy from god, were far more plural and porous than the limited and sovereign states that we see today. Take, for example, the Ottoman Empire which stretched into Europe, Asia and Africa and ruled a multitude of ethic and faith groups. Enlightenment thinking, however, challenged the legitimacy of these dynastic realms. The leaders were forced to look elsewhere for their legitimacy to rule.\textsuperscript{19} They would find it in the subjects that would become citizens.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 16-17.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 21.
When we start to trace the origins of Jewish nationalism in the next chapter we will see the direct results of this new worldview. In late 18th century Poland, for example, the Jewish community was largely autonomous with traditional religious institutions governing most aspects of everyday life. It was therefore these religious institutions that held together the community. However, when the Russian empire annexed Poland and its sizable Jewish community, tsar Catherine the Great attempted, in a quite draconian way, to bring this population into the folds of the state as Russian citizens. She did this by dismantling the mediating institutions that kept the Jewish community autonomous and isolated from the state. The goal was to ensure that Jews would interact with the state and its laws the same way as the rest of the citizens of Russia and therefore be assimilated into the fold of the nation. And while anti-Semitism prevented this assimilation from actually occurring (as we shall touch on a bit later), the tsarist reorganization of the state changed self-perception of the Jewish community. Whereas before, Jewish faith and customs united them, the tsarist period taught Jews what it meant to be second class citizens of Russia. The community became based not on religious tradition but shared experience. This did not exclusively make Russian Jews turn to Zionism as opposed to any other form of social organization (indeed many turned to socialism as a new way of imagining society) but it did allow for a new way to imagine the community in which they lived. The religious community had been replaced and a new sort of imagined community was emerging.

A similar sort of re-imagination occurred amongst the Palestinians of the 19th century Ottoman Empire, although it occurred on an economic rather than religious level.
The centralization reforms undertaken by the Ottoman administration in the first half of the 18th century combined with the entry of the local Palestinian economy into the world capitalist markets had a profound effect on the community of the common Ottoman Palestinian peasant. The peasant changed from practicing more or less subsistence farming, producing what he needed for his own uses and a small amount extra to trade for what he could not make himself. Instead Palestinian farmers began to grow a single cash-crop, usually cotton, which tied him to the whims of global market prices. He found himself now in communion not only with his fellow villagers but also the merchants of the coastal cities on whom he depended for his livelihood. Similarly, the 1834 revolt against Egyptian rule that we will recount in the next chapter brought individuals into communion that had previously been isolated. Again, this in and of itself did not create the Palestinian nation but it did lay the groundwork for the transition from pre-national to national imagination.

What we are starting to see emerge, then, is the “imagined community” aspect of Anderson’s definition of nationhood. He argues that nations are not communities in the common sense because true community necessitates face to face interaction. Rather these communities are imagined. That is to say, “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”20 Anderson argues that “all communities larger than primordial villages of face to face contact (and perhaps even

---

20 Ibid., 6.
these) are imagined.”21 This psychological bond is central to the creation of the nation. Under pluralistic empires, there was no sense that all of the subjects, who practiced a variety of religions and lived in various locations, were part of the same community. As we noted above, the sense of community usually came from a shared religion. Members of nations, however, see themselves as equal members of a single group despite the fact that they will never see most of their fellow members. It is enough to know that they were born into the same nation.

Anderson attributes much of the credit for this change in individual imagination to the advent of print capitalism. The decline of the sacred languages was replaced by prioritized vernaculars which were, in turn, printed for a wide audience. This led both to a fracturing of the previously existent religious community that relied on the sacred language and a unification of those peoples who shared the vernacular languages. It gave individuals a means of communication with their fellow speakers of French or Spanish. It standardized these print vernaculars, meaning the languages themselves changed less over time than they had previously. And it gave these print vernaculars power over the related lower vernaculars, folding them into the dominant tongue.22 This allowed widely dispersed people to see themselves as members of the same language community, again laying the groundwork for the imagination of a shared national community.

It is not enough, however, to lay the root of all nationalism at the foot of print-capitalism. Nations with the same print vernacular emerged as distinct and different

---

21 Ibid., 6.
22 Ibid., 44.
imagined communities. Here we see the role of an additional factor, shared experience in shaping different nationalism and nations. Anderson discusses the different experiences of colonies and their imperial center that led to the establishment of distinct nations. Shared experience played a similarly critical role in the formation of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism.

This shared experience leads to the construction of narratives upon which nationalism are based. Discourse itself, the subject of this study, is in many ways an extension of narrative which redefines the past and projects a vision into the future. Daniel Bar-Tal and Gavriel Salomon eloquently and succinctly describe the form and function of narrative in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They write that narrative “does not necessarily tell a true history but rather describes a past that is useful for the group to function and even exist. It is a story that is biased, selective, and distorted, that omits certain facts, adds others that did not take place, changes the sequence of events, and purposely reinterprets events that did take place. In short, it is a narrative constructed to fit the current needs of the group.”23 The Palestinian and Zionist narratives present themselves as completely just and correct and seeks to nullify the narrative of the other. The narratives have their base in the shared experience of each imagined community.

The shared experience of the Palestinians has its roots in the economic and political pressures we outlined above, reaction to invasion in the same time period and

---

perhaps most crucially, reaction to the imperial control and Zionist occupation of Palestine in the beginning of the 20th century. Zionism, which was a minority concern amongst the global Jewish community until well into the 20th century, was a reaction as well. The thinkers behind Jewish nationalism were not influenced by colonization of their homes, but rather by the nationalization across Europe in the 18th century, the failure to assimilate in either Western or Eastern Europe and, most importantly, the constant threat of anti-Semitism. While it was just as likely that Palestinians would find themselves fighting for a Syrian nation and the Jews of Europe fighting as full members of a French or German nation, the shared experiences we will discuss in the coming chapter instead led to Palestinian and Jewish nationalists fighting for exclusive control over the same piece of land. And crucially, as Anderson emphasized, neither nationalism is more legitimate and neither one is more genuine. Each is a social construction based on a shared narrative that emerged in roughly the same period.

There is one fundamental difference in the way Palestinian nationalism and Zionism were imagined. Palestinian nationalism, as we will see shortly, was articulated by a population that lived within the land it claimed. Zionism, on the other hand, was articulated by European Jews who lived outside of the land of historical Palestine. Whereas Palestinian spacial and temporal ties to historical Palestine were inherent because of their presence in the land, the Jews of 19th century Europe had no physical ties to their claimed national homeland. While it is true that Zionism is in part based on the narrative that historical Palestine is the promised land of the Jewish people and that there has been a continuous, but small, Jewish presence in Palestine since antiquity, these facts
were not in themselves enough for the creation of a Jewish state. The success of Zionism as a national movement depended on the creation of spacial and temporal ties to the land in order to demonstrate its Jewishness. As this could not be done from Germany and Russia, colonial settlement in historical Palestine was necessary. These settlements were the physical representation of Jewish national claims to historical Palestine. This colonization came at the cost of the Palestinians who lived in the land. Despite what some Zionists slogans would suggest, Palestine a well-populated territory with a complex economy at the beginning of Zionist settlement. Without this colonization, Zionism would not have had a base upon which a Jewish state could be founded. Palestinian presence in the land meant that no colonization was necessary for the narrative of the Palestinian national movement. Rather than mass population transfer and settlement, existence in the land of Palestine, the economic and political pressures outlined above, and a set of crucial shared experiences provided the base from which Palestinian nationalism would grow. And while arguments can be made that either nationalism is more legitimate on the basis of this fundamental difference, that debate is not within the scope of this study. Rather, we will track the development of these two national movements and study the period from 1967 when they came once again into direct conversation.
Chapter 2: The Roots of the Conflict; 1834-1967

Historical Palestine sits at the far eastern periphery of the Mediterranean Sea. Spiritually, Palestine is at the center of the three major monotheistic religions. To Judaism, it is the land promised by God to the Israelites. Its heart is Jerusalem, where Herod’s Temple once stood, of which now only remains the Western Wall, the holiest site in the Jewish faith. To Christianity, Palestine is the birthplace of the son of God. It was the land in which Jesus conducted his ministry and Jerusalem was the site of his crucifixion. To Islam, Palestine was the core of the great Muslim empires of the Middle Ages. The city of Al-Quds, as Jerusalem is known in Arabic, was the place from which the Prophet Mohammad ascended to heaven on his Night Journey. Al-Quds was the first direction of prayer for Islam, before it was overtaken by Mecca, and sits only behind Mecca and Medina in terms of holiness in the eyes of the Muslim faithful.

Geographically, Palestine sits at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe. As such, it has been a vital holding for any empire seeking to control the flow of goods and people between these three continents in the era before air travel. At the heart of Palestine is the city of Jerusalem. Its centrality is not lost on the current stewards of the city. In the plaza that surrounds the Israeli city hall on Jaffa Street, just outside of the walls of Old City, there is a painted tile version of German theologian Heinrich Bünting’s clover leaf map (fig 1). Printed in 1581, this map literally places Jerusalem at the center of the world reflecting both its spiritual and geographic significance.
Fig 1 Heinrich Bünting’s 1581 depiction of Jerusalem.

The territory itself is about the size of New Jersey and is home to about 11 million people, 7.8 million inside of Israel and 3 to 3.5 million in the occupied Palestinian territories.\(^1\) As was often the case in the days before nationalism set out to draw hard lines over the entirety of the globe, the borders of Palestine were ever-changing. There are, however, general geographic regions that have remained a constant part of Palestine. East of Jerusalem is the semi-arid hilly region known officially by the Israeli state as Judea and Samaria and in common parlance as the West Bank. To the south is the Negev (Naqab in Arabic) Desert which extends down to Eilat on the shore of the Red Sea. To the west of the holy city is the low-lying coastal plain that extends from Gaza in the south to Acre in the north. To the north of the West Bank are the fertile valleys of the Galilee.

The Ottoman Empire was the last great imperial ruler of the Middle East. Initially a group of Turkic warriors based in Western Anatolia, the Ottomans took Constantinople from the Byzantines in 1453 and renamed it Istanbul. İstanbul would serve as the seat of the Ottoman Empire until its dissolution in the wake of World War I. At its height, the empire expanded west into the Balkans in Europe, as far east as modern day Iraq and Kuwait and south into Egypt and Algeria in North Africa. Palestine came under Ottoman rule in 1516 and the Ottomans would rule it for the ensuing four hundred years.

The foundation of both Palestinian nationalism and Zionism were directly connected to the larger culture of nationalism that developed in Europe in the 19th century. This culture of nationalism in Europe that was transforming the old empires into nation-states provided the model for organizing Ottoman Palestinians and European Jews into new imagined communities called nations. It was inevitable that Palestinians and European Jews would fall into this new movement. However, while the Palestinian and Israeli nations now are apparent and self-evident, there was never a guarantee that these particular imagined communities would form as we see them today. As much as nations like to present themselves as the awakening of ethnic groups that have existed eternally, that Ottoman Palestinians would see themselves as Palestinians and European Jews would see themselves as Jewish nationalists was never a certainty. Had events gone slightly differently, Palestinians could have seen themselves as members of a Syrian state. Similarly, Jewish nationalists might have been killing and dying to protect France

---

3 Ibid., 10.
or Germany as proud citizens. James L. Gelvin underscores this point brilliantly in his excellent history of the Palestinian Israeli conflict:

That in a world of nation-states Jews would become nationalists was inevitable. That they would become Jewish Nationalists was not. The same with Palestinian nationalism, which did not become a mass phenomenon until well into the period between World War I and World War II. That Palestinians would travel a nationalist path was also to be expected. But... the path they travelled to Palestinian nationalism was laden with obstacles and detours.4

The Inception of a Palestinian Identity

The creation of a singular Palestinian imagined community was partially a result of the internal and external pressure on the ruling Ottoman Empire during the 19th century. These pressures, which would have profound impacts on the way Palestinians saw themselves and their community, were on the one hand economic and on the other political.

The economic relationship was characterized by the entry of Palestine into the global market. In an earlier era, most of the villages of Palestine were small market economies that traded in a limited range of goods. Participants in this economic system produced for themselves almost everything they needed. They would then trade their surplus in the local market for the few things they could not make themselves. During the first half of the 19th century, villagers switched from this self-sustaining economic model to a market-based economic model. Rather than only producing what they needed, farmers would grow crops for the purpose of sale. They would then take the

proceeds from that cash crop to purchase the goods they no longer made for themselves.\textsuperscript{5} The demand from the newly industrialized European states for raw materials caused prices of certain specialized crops to rise sharply. This rising of prices in the global market is what made many Palestinian farmers turn to the growing of specialized cash crops. Two crops were particularly important in Palestine: cotton and oranges.\textsuperscript{6} The scholar Alexander Schölch covers this pivotal period in Palestine’s history in his book *Palestine in Transformation*. He describes in great detail the development of the Palestinian economy in the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century, before the arrival of Zionist settlers, and the role that European demand for Palestinian goods and Ottoman reforms played in the socio-economic transformation of the region.\textsuperscript{7} Far from being a desolate and uncultivated wasteland, Palestine, according to Schölch, had a vibrant economy emerging in the period between 1856 and 1882.\textsuperscript{8} This economic growth would come to have significant consequences regarding the development of the residents of Palestine into the Palestinian people.

Such was the lucrative nature of cotton production in the context of the massive textile demand during the industrial revolution that it was able to provide the means for local warlords to challenge the authority of the massive Ottoman Empire. James Gelvin relates the story of Zahir al-‘Umar, a Bedouin warrior who conquered the Galilee, the point of origin of the best quality cotton in the entire empire. Al-‘Umar expanded the

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 292.
production of cotton in the area under his control and traded the stuff to Europeans for weapons and material to renovate his capital city, Acre, and found the city of Haifa.\textsuperscript{9} After a short period of rule, the Ottomans had enough of al-‘Umar’s insolence and sent a force to displace him. His successor maintained the region’s dependence on cotton as the primary export.

Tying one’s economy to the whims of the international market had its ups and downs, however. The invention of the cotton gin at the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century allowed the American South to flood the world market with cheap cotton. This caused prices to plummet in Palestine, 90\% in the half century after the invention of the gin.\textsuperscript{10} However, the onset of the Crimean War in the 1850s caused demand for cotton, and therefore prices, to increase. The same occurred in the 1860s when the American Civil War took American cotton off the market. But when the war ended and cotton exportation from the southern United States resumed, prices plummeted yet again.\textsuperscript{11}

Palestine’s entrance into the global market did more than just economically tie the Palestinian \textit{fellaheen} (peasants) to the wars of Europe and the United States. This new market economy had drastic psychological effects on the resident of Ottoman Palestine that changed the way he or she saw a fellow resident of the region. Once again Gelvin is the perfect person to turn to when describing the effects this phenomenon:

\begin{quote}
The expansion of a market economy in Palestine enlarged what one historian calls the “social space” of its inhabitants, in effect changing their perception of their
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{9} Gelvin, 24.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{11} Kimmerling and Migdal, 14.
\end{flushright}
lived world as links between cities and countryside, and between inhabitants of the region and inhabitants of the world beyond, increased in number and importance.\footnote{Gelvin, 25-6.}

In other words, just as the advent of print capitalism in Europe allowed the subjects of the empire to imagine themselves as coterminous and in communion with a new imagined community, the advent of market capitalism redefined the resident of Ottoman Palestine’s community. Whereas before the Palestinian farmer was self-sustaining, growing barely more than he needs to support himself and his family, his entry into the market necessitates he move within a new community. Suddenly the Palestinian farmer is tied to the merchant class operating in the coastal cities of Jaffa and Acre. Before he never would have met these merchants (he probably still will not meet most of them) but now his livelihood depends on the merchant’s ability to sell the cash crop he produced. He now imagines himself as a member of the same community as these people he will never meet. While this entry into the market did not create the Palestinian nation on its own, it was an important factor in laying the psychological foundation necessary for the building of that nation.

The other important factor that influenced Palestinian identity formation under the Ottoman Empire was political pressure. Political pressure to modernize the Ottoman Empire came from forces both within and outside of the empire’s domain. Internal challenges to Ottoman control of Palestine came from the ruler of Egypt, Muhammad Ali. Muhammad Ali was the son of an Albanian pirate who seized power in Egypt after leading a joint British and Ottoman force to remove Napoleon’s troop from the region in
1798. Muhammad Ali was able to modernize and westernize the state intuitions in Egypt which allowed him considerable autonomy as a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. These new modern intuitions in Egypt included a by conscription military force, direct taxation on the population, the expansion of cash crop cultivation, and public works projects like roads and irrigation that expanded the area of cultivatable land.14

Unsatisfied with just ruling Egypt, Muhammad Ali sent his son, Ibrahim Pasha, to conquer Palestine as well. Control of this territory would give Muhammad Ali access to the fertile lands of the Galilee and control over the flow of goods between Europe, Asia and Africa. Ibrahim Pasha’s occupation of Palestine and parts of Greater Syria (the area of the Eastern Mediterranean also known as the Levant which is today made up by Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel) began in 1831 and lasted for ten years. Ibrahim Pasha brought the same modern institutions to Palestine that his father had introduced in Egypt a couple of decades earlier.15 The state monopoly of force in Palestine created by Ibrahim Pasha’s disarming of peasants and Bedouin meant more security. This security allowed more land to be cultivated, merchants to make stronger ties to European businessmen and an expansion of tourism to Palestine.16 This allowed for further expansion of social space as illustrated above and provided the framework of the modern state structure on which nationalism relies.

13 Kimmerling and Migdal, 6.
14 Gelvin, 27.
15 Gelvin, 26.
16 Kimmerling and Migdal, 7.
However, needless to say, the Palestinian peasant reaction to the forced conscription enacted by Ibrahim Pasha, which was often a death sentence due to the style of battle and poor sanitary conditions of the day, was not positive.\textsuperscript{17} In 1834, about three years into his occupation of Palestine, Ibrahim Pasha’s power was challenged by a popular Palestinian revolt. While this revolt did not do enough to unseat Ibrahim Pasha from rule in Palestine (that would take a British assisted Ottoman force seven years later), it was central in laying the foundation for the conception of Palestinian peoplehood. It is not by accident, then, that Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal begin their book \textit{The Palestinian People: A History} with this 1834 revolt against this foreign rule. They describe it thus:

The tough rule and the new reforms led to the 1834 revolt’s outbreak in the heart of the country, uniting dispersed Bedouins, rural sheikhs, urban notables, mountain fellaheen, and Jerusalem religious figures against a common enemy. It was these groups who would later constitute the Palestinian people.\textsuperscript{18}

This is not to say that the revolt of 1834 created the Palestinian people that we see today (a mass Palestinian national phenomenon would not be in full swing until the period between the two world wars). Rather, just as the new market forces expanded the social space of the Palestinian farmer or merchant, this revolt allowed the individual to identify himself as a member of a Palestinian community. The Palestinian attempt at self-determination and independence in Palestine was a long way off, but this became one of the shared experiences that would be important to the formation of a single Palestinian people. The Ottoman subject living in historical Palestine in the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century was

\textsuperscript{17} Kimmerling and Migdal, 6.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 7.
beginning to see himself as in communion with his fellow subjects in the region in a way that had not existed before the new economic system or modern state structure.

When the Ottomans finally expelled Ibrahim Pasha a decade after he took control of the region, they saw the merits in his new modern state institutions and maintained them. They imposed conscription and sought to maintain security in the region so as to continue the expansion of cultivated land in Palestine. They also built the famous Hijaz Railway that ran from Damascus to Medina and made stops in Haifa and Acre. This all allowed for the continued expansion of agriculture and increase of revenue going to the Ottoman coffers.¹⁹

However, the Ottomans were not quite satisfied with the status quo. Internal challenges, like those posed by Muhammad Ali, and external pressures from the European powers further pushed the Ottomans towards centralization and modernization. The imperial authority enacted the Tanzimat, or “reorganization” in 1839 to strengthen the Ottoman central government and integrate non-Turkish and non-Muslim subjects to stem the growing wave of nationalism sweeping though parts of its domain.²⁰ The Tanzimat reforms addressed nearly all aspects of rule including the legal system, the school system, tax collection, and even the creation of a national anthem, in order to make the empire mirror the centralized western empires and states of the mid-19th century. By far the most significant aspect of these reforms for the residents of Palestine were the changes they made to the system of land ownership.

---

¹⁹ Gelvin, 28.
The goal of the new land laws was to reorganize land ownership in a way that would streamline the collection of tax revenue throughout the empire. Before the reforms, much of the land of Palestine was state land, known as miri land.\footnote{Ibid., 21.} The peasant’s relationship to the land was based on a usufruct system of sorts. He had the right to live on the land, till it, and keep what it produced but he had no legal claim to the land itself and no right to pass it on to his descendants.\footnote{Gelvin, 30.} In practice, this state land was passed from generation to generation but the peasant had no legal deed that tied his name or his family’s name to the piece of land on which he worked. This was complicated, however, by the fact that village land was periodically redistributed about every two years.\footnote{Ibid., 31.} This lack of documentation and continuous redistribution of land made it nearly impossible for the Ottoman officials to determine who was responsible for paying the taxes on a particular piece of land. The answer the Ottoman state came up with to this problem was the 1858 Land Code. This new law allowed a peasant to register the land on which he worked with the state, thus legalizing ownership and assuming the tax burden for the land. It also gave the peasant the right to pass the land on to whomever he chose.\footnote{Smith, 2nd edition, 21.}

The consequences of this land code were immediate and drastic. The new code did not allow for communal ownership of land. Therefore, village sheikhs, the local leaders responsible for distributing lands to the various village families, would register the formerly communally owned land in their names. Additionally, peasants who were
unable to pay the registration fee for their land, who were unwilling to pay taxes on their land or who feared conscription into the Ottoman army allowed urban notables to register the land in their name. This created a new class of landholders who held huge tracts of land throughout Palestine and often lived as far away as Beirut or Damascus.\textsuperscript{25} The most famous of these notable families was the Greek Orthodox Sarsuq family of Beirut. The Sarsuqs bought up nearly seventy square miles of very fertile Galilee land and were all too happy to sell it for top dollar when the Jewish National Fund came calling a few decades later.\textsuperscript{26} The peasants who allowed these urban notables to register their land carried on farming it the way they did before, despite the new legal changes.

A second important law passed in 1867 gave non-Ottoman citizens the right to own land in the empire as long as they agreed to carry the tax burden of the land.\textsuperscript{27} These two laws would turn out to be a boon for the soon to appear Zionist settlers looking for land in Palestine.

This new classification of land as commodity also fundamentally changed the relationship between the peasant and the empire. This classification (peasant and empire) is appropriate for the imperial, pre-national age where diverse groups distinguishable by language, religion, ethnicity, and geography were united under a single imperial power. This imperial power did not see itself as representative of its subjects; its power came from the divine. The subjects did not see themselves as organically tied to the empire. They did not believe that they were of the same community as the kings and lords who

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 21.
ruled them. Relationships changed at different times across the globe into one of citizen and state. Eventually, as Benedict Anderson describes, enlightenment thinking undermines divine rule. Empires start to get legitimacy by representing the citizens they created. The new citizens begin to imagine themselves as coterminous with other citizens of the same state and, maybe more importantly, as fundamentally different from citizens of another state. The Ottomans attempted this transition from empire to state beginning in the mid-19th century. Central to this transition were the tanzimat reforms, among them the new land codes. This new state structure changed the relationship of the Ottoman subjects to the empire and to one another. These reforms sought to standardize the interaction between citizen and state by removing traditional forms of rule and mediating institutions to ensure that all Ottoman citizens encountered the state in exactly the same way. This attempt was embodied in the Hatti Humayun in 1856. This law ensured equal rights to all non-Muslim citizens of the empire. As Gelvin says, this new law “redefined imperial subjects as citizens who were bound to each other because of their residence in a common territory, their commitment to a common set of legal norms, and their common loyalty to the Ottoman state.” With this new way of conceiving the world and the community in which one lives came the ability for Palestinians to begin imagining themselves as part of the same imagined community.

28 Gelvin, 33.
29 Ibid., 33.
The Jews of 19th Century Europe

Just as the Palestinians of the Ottoman Empire found themselves caught up in the wave of min-nineteenth century nationalization, the European Jews were similarly affected by the nationalist zeitgeist. Europe during this time period was home to ninety percent of the global Jewish population. This Jewish population was for the most part confined to ghettos in the larger European cities and was subject to waves of persecution and anti-Semitism. Within these ghettos, the Jewish community regulated its own religious, social, and economic activities in isolation from the wider non-Jewish society. As the relationship between the ruled and the ruler changed in Europe, as it had in the Ottoman Empire, from one of subject and empire to citizen and state, so did the place of Jews in European society. In a system where all inhabitants are to be citizens of the same state, isolated semi-autonomous communities no longer fit. All citizens would deal with the state structure in the same way, without non-state mediating institutions, like those of European Jewish communities. Rather, in a process known as Jewish Emancipation, the Jews would be included into the citizenry at large and be encouraged to assimilate into whatever nation each state was creating. The first state to emancipate its Jewish community was post-revolutionary France. In 1791, the Jews of France were offered full French citizenship in the hope that they would cease to see themselves as a distinct population and instead as members of the French nation.

---

31 Gelvin, 36.
33 Gelvin, 37.
British, Swiss, Austrian, Italian, and German states would follow the French example in including the once distinct Jewish population as full citizens of the state. This ideal of Jewish assimilation into the nations of Europe was embraced by the majority of the Jewish population it affected. Assimilation progressed rapidly to the point that, by the mid-nineteenth century, Jews were able to stand for election into the British parliament. But this new destruction of social barriers did not totally reverse the sometimes tacit, sometimes explicit, anti-Jewish sentiments that had existed in European history for centuries.

This policy of assimilation, however, was a distinctly Western European phenomenon. In Eastern Europe, where the majority of the global Jewish population resided, assimilation, social, and legal equality were not policies, or even distant possibilities. It is therefore understandable why Zionism, a national movement based on the idea of Jewish resettlement outside of Europe, was more immediately accepted within the Jewish community of Eastern Europe.

Around the time that the French Republic was granting Jews full citizenship, the Russian Empire was passing laws establishing a new system to govern the Jews within the borders of its empire. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the territory that had constituted Poland was divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria. The Russian Empire had long endeavored to keep Jews out of Russian territory altogether, and, before

---

34 Gelvin, 37.
36 Ibid., 27.
37 Ibid., 27.
the annexation of this partitioned Polish territory, had largely succeeded. However, the desire for territory outweighed the competing desire to keep the empire empty of a significant Jewish population and Russia decided to absorb parts of Poland despite the Jewish community therein.\(^{38}\) This decision to absorb the new Jewish population did not indicate a changing Russian attitude towards Jews. Quite the opposite: Russians looked on Jews with suspicion because of their separatism and isolationism (which, ironically, was often created by Russian laws preventing Jews from participating in Russian society) and therefore the new Jewish population was a problem that needed to be dealt with. The solution of Catherine the Great to this perceived problem was the establishment of the Pale of Settlement. The Pale was an area on the western edge of the empire in which Jews were permitted to live. Jews were only allowed to live outside of the Pale with specific permission. Within the Pale, the Jewish community was frequently a victim of attacks by its non-Jewish neighbors.\(^{39}\)

Catherine the Great, however, was motivated to create the Pale of Settlement by more than anti-Semitism. From an economic perspective, the state saw a Jewish commercial class as potentially beneficial to the underdeveloped western extent of the empire. Also, Russian businessmen feared the competition that an influx of Jewish professionals would create.\(^{40}\) In a twisted way, the establishment of the Pale sought to achieve the same goals of emancipation in Western Europe. The Pale was seen as a means to break down the autonomous intermediary intuitions that dealt with the everyday

\(^{38}\) Gelvin, 38.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 38.
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 40.
aspects of Jewish life. These intermediary institutions had no place in the modern state structure where all individual citizens of the state are meant to be subject to the same rules and laws. With these traditional Jewish community and religious institutions undermined, it would be possible to make them full Russian citizens (once converted to Christianity, of course). One policy aimed towards Russifying Jews was conscription into the imperial army. The memo that accompanied the order for conscription was tellingly titled “Memorandum on Turning the Jews to the Advantage of the Empire by Gradually Drawing Them to Profess the Christian Faith, Bringing Them Closer to, and Ultimately Completely Fusing Them with, The Other Subjects of the Empire.” The state even opened a number of schools for Jewish students as a means to carry out this process of “completely fusing them with, the other subjects of the empire.”

Even though the policies aimed at destruction of the traditional Jewish institutions were relatively successful in the Pale, assimilation into Russian society never became a seemingly achievable reality as it did in Western Europe. Deeply held anti-Semitism by Russians prevented this from coming to pass. This anti-Semitic feeling manifested itself in a number of anti-Jewish riots, known as pogroms, beginning in 1881 and lasting until 1884. The victims felt that even though these rioters were brought before the law, they had the tacit approval of the tsar for their actions. Evidence for this was the passing of the anti-Jewish May Laws in 1882 which limited the area that Jews could inhabit and lead to many expulsions of those Jews living outside this area. The laws also limited the

\[41\] Ibid., 40.
\[42\] Quoted in Gelvin, 40.
\[43\] Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 28
land and home owning ability of Jewish individuals and limited the number of Jews that could be in a university at any one time.\textsuperscript{44} These restrictions, which were meant to be temporary but ended up lasting three decades, changed the demographic profile of the Jewish community in the Russian Empire. They resulted in a Jewish community that was disproportionately urbanized and engaged in commerce rather than agriculture. This urban population found itself more exposed to the political and social movements sweeping through the cities of nineteenth century Europe, movements such as socialism, trade unionism and nationalism, which would become so central to the Zionist movement in the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{45} Much in the way that the integration of the Ottoman Palestinians into the world economy and state modernization allowed for the foundation of a new Palestinian community, the Pale and the laws that forced the Jewish intermediary institutions out of power changed the self-image of the Jewish community. Shared culture and history, not religion, began to be the unifying factor of Jews in Eastern Europe and it is upon a sense of shared culture and history that a national movement is built.\textsuperscript{46}

The riots and anti-Jewish laws that made assimilation seem impossible naturally led to a wave of migration out of the Russian Empire. By far, the preferred destination for these migrants was the United States. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, 450,000 Russian Jews arrived in the United States.\textsuperscript{47} But the pogroms in Russia also instigated the first of five major Waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine, known as

\textsuperscript{44} Tessler, 40-1
\textsuperscript{45} Gelvin, 42.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{47} Tessler, 42.
aliyot. Literally translated, *aliyah* means ascent and to this day is used to describe a Jew who leaves the Diaspora to settle in historical Palestine. The settlers of this first *aliyah* could not really be called Zionists as they predated the articulation of Jewish nationalism and were therefore religiously and not nationally motivated. These settlers were aided by a proto-Zionist organization known as the Lovers of Zion. This group set up a number of agricultural settlements in Palestine but of the twenty to thirty thousand settlers who entered historical Palestine as a part of this *aliyah*, only three thousand went to inhabit these agricultural villages. These settlements quickly found themselves in dire economic straits. The Lovers of Zion turned to western Jews for cash. They found 1.6 million pounds in the pockets of Baron Edmond de Rothschild which propped up the settlements, but, as we shall see, did not provide the base upon which the success of the Zionist project was built. Rather, it took the efforts of Theodor Herzl to provide the institution framework of Jewish nationalism.

**Herzl and Zionism**

Theodor Herzl was perhaps an unlikely candidate to play the fundamental role he would come to play in the early days of the Zionist movement. Herzl was not the product of the Pale but of emancipated Western Europe. His father was a Hungarian merchant who moved his family to Vienna in search of the upward mobility assimilation offered Jews. Herzl himself was highly assimilated. He did not celebrate a bar mitzvah at the
age of thirteen as is Jewish custom but rather a “confirmation.” He received a secular education, went to law school and, after practicing law for a short period, entered the civil service. He eventually became the French correspondent for a Viennese newspaper. Herzl was not particularly interested in issues pertaining to the Jewish community for much of his life. Nor was he familiar with the writings of the intellectual leaders behind the early Zionist groups like the Lovers of Zion. He was far more preoccupied with his journalistic and literary career and wanted to become a contributor to German literature. This all changed with what came to be known as the Dreyfus Affair.

Captain Alfred Dreyfus was an assimilated Jew who managed to rise to a lofty position in the French army. In 1894, Dreyfus was wrongly accused of spying for Germany, found guilty of treason, and exiled to Devil’s Island. Dreyfus was eventually able to prove his innocence more than a decade after his original trial but the damage had been done well before that as far as Herzl was concerned. The initial accusation against Dreyfus was a result of anti-Semitism and public calls for his conviction were explicitly anti-Jewish. The French right, who lead the anti-Semitic charge against Dreyfus, believed that the granting of rights to Jews undermined the French nation. Many non-Jews fought in defense of Dreyfus but to Herzl, who covered the affair for his Viennese newspaper, the whole event illuminated the depth of anti-Semitism that existed in open

---

53 Gelvin, 49.
54 Ibid., 49.
55 Tessler, 44.
56 Ibid., 44.
57 Tessler, 45.
58 Smith, 2nd edition, 30.
and liberal France. The Dreyfus affair proved to Herzl that Jewish assimilation into European society was impossible. Two years after the event Herzl published Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State) in which he called for the creation of a Jewish state to absorb all of Europe’s Jews as an answer to what he called “the Jewish Question.”

This appeal to create a Jewish state was not directed to Jews at large. Rather, he aimed his message to wealthy Western Jews and prominent political leaders who he thought might give their financial and political support to an organization aimed at transferring Europe’s Jews to a new home. Initially, Herzl was not married to Palestine as the site of this new home. Amongst the other sites that Herzl was willing to consider were Argentina, East Africa and the western United States. He did acknowledge that should the Jewish state be located in Palestine, the historical religious tie to the land would attract Jews in a way that another site would not. Herzl knew, however, that for Jewish settlement anywhere to work there needed to be an institution dedicated to the success of Zionism.

In order to create this Zionist institution, Herzl issued a call for the leaders of local Jewish communities and Zionist organizations to convene in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. Of the two hundred or so attendees of this meeting, only a small number were the influential western Jewish leaders he wished to attract. Most of these leaders feared that Zionism would put the status and rights of assimilated Jews in danger. The majority of attendees, understandably, were from Eastern Europe, where assimilation was not a

59 Ibid., 30.
60 Ibid., 30.
61 Tessler, 47.
62 Gelvin, 51.
63 Ibid., 51.
64 Tessler, 47.
possibility and therefore the status of assimilated Jews was not an issue.\textsuperscript{65} The two most significant outcomes of what would come to know as the First Zionist Congress were the foundation of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and the articulation of the Basil Program. The World Zionist Organization became the institutional structure necessary to stimulate the Zionist movement. The Basel Program codified the goals of this new organization. The Program is not long, only four points, and reads:

The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law.

The congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

1. The promotion, on suitable lines, of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.
2. The organization and binding together of the whole Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, local and international in accordance with the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps towards obtaining government consent, where necessary, to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.\textsuperscript{66}

This program is particularly important for two reasons. The first is that it makes settlement specifically in Palestine the stated goal of the Zionist movement. The second is that it insists on obeying “public law” (meaning diplomacy) to achieve its goal. This insistence on diplomacy explains the use of the word “homeland” rather than state in the Program. The use of this word should not be misinterpreted to mean the WZO was abandoning Herzl’s goal of a Jewish state. Rather, it is more likely that the delegates at the conference were looking to assuage the concerns of the Ottoman government which

\textsuperscript{65} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition., 30.
\textsuperscript{66} Quoted in Gelvin, 52.
would look aversely on any national movement challenging control over its territory.\textsuperscript{67} Herzl and the WZO wanted to keep the lines of diplomacy open with the Ottoman sultan as a means to set about the colonization of Palestine. It is clear, as the establishment of a state is inexorably tied to nationalism and Zionism is Jewish nationalism, that a state was indeed the end goal of the WZO. The Ottomans were wary of Jewish settlers (as we covered previously, a number had arrived during the first \textit{aliyah} a couple decades earlier) and passed laws that only allowed Jews to purchase land in Ottoman territory outside of Palestine and only on the condition that they accepted Ottoman citizenship. However, because of Ottoman inefficiency and aid from Jews within the empire, the WZO was able to circumvent these stipulations.\textsuperscript{68}

Another vitally important development in the early history of the Zionist movement was the creation of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in 1901. This organization was designed to purchase and develop land in Palestine for exclusively Jewish use.\textsuperscript{69} The JNF still exists, owns and develops sizable chunks of land, both in Israel proper and in the occupied territories, and has taken on the status of a quasi-state institution in modern day Israel.\textsuperscript{70}

It is important to note, however, that Zionism was not by any means a mainstream Jewish movement in the early days of the WZO. Herzl had originally intended for the First Zionist Congress to be held in Munich but he was forced to relocate due to

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{67} Gelvin, 53. \\
\textsuperscript{68} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 31. \\
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 31. \\
\textsuperscript{70} See the Jewish National Fund’s website, jnf.com.
\end{flushright}
opposition from the German Union of Rabbis. The Union saw Zionism as “antagonistic to the messianic promises of Judaism.” He also faced opposition from the left, who, consistent with the communist worldview, saw the resolution of the Jewish Question in terms of class rather than national interest. Herzl was not daunted by this opposition and set about securing diplomatic support for the Zionist project. In 1901, He met with Sultan Abdul Hamid, the Ottoman ruler and a year later turned to the British. The British offered Herzl land in what is now Kenya for Jewish settlement; an idea Herzl favored and believed would not compromise the potential later establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. He was staunchly opposed in this by the Eastern European bloc of the WZO who remained committed to Palestine as the sole target for Jewish settlement. With Herzl’s death in 1904 and the transfer of the WZO’s leadership to this Eastern bloc, the Kenya project failed. Despite this failure, and the failure of Herzl to gain truly widespread support for Zionist aims, he is perhaps the most widely recognized and influential Zionist in the history of the movement. His name adorns street signs in towns across all of Israel and his reburial in Jerusalem in 1949 was the first state funeral in the history of the nascent Israeli state. The manifestation of Herzl’s commitment to Zionism would be the wave of ideological settlers that came to Palestine in the wake of his death.

---

71 Gelvin, 54.
72 Ibid., 54.
74 Ibid., 31
75 Gelvin, 56.
The Second and Third Aliyot

The first *aliyah*, a result of the Russian pogroms in the 1880’s, is particularly interesting when contrasted with the two *aliyot* that would follow it. As we noted before, these settlers could not be considered Zionist because they were motivated by religious rather than national impulses. The agricultural settlements founded as part of this wave of immigration struggled financially and turned to the help of wealthy western Jews such as Baron de Rothschild. Like the settlers, Baron de Rothschild was not motivated nationalist zeal. He was more interested in getting a return on the 1.6 million pound investment he made in the agricultural settlements. In order to do this he set about transforming these settlements from communities of subsistence farmers to large single cash crop plantations. The settlers who expected to be independent farmers in Palestine found themselves working as hired hands.\(^{76}\) Just as the adoption of cash crops by the Palestinians around this same time tied the farmer to the global market, Rothschild found his plantations subject to the whim of global crop prices. In search of cheap labor, the foremen of the plantations began employing Arabs, often five to ten Arabs for every Jewish laborer.\(^{77}\) This employment of non-Jews on the supposedly Jewish plantations was significant for two reasons. First, it contradicted the Zionist ideal of Jewish agricultural labor, as the right to own and work the land was not one granted to Jews in Eastern Europe. Secondly, the lack of employment opportunities led to 65% of Jewish laborers leaving Palestine by 1902.\(^{78}\) Around that time, Rothschild had become fed up

\(^{76}\) Ibid., 62.
\(^{77}\) Ibid., 62.
\(^{78}\) Ibid., 62.
with his uncertain investment and transferred it to the Jewish Colonization Association, a group interested in setting up worldwide settlements for Jews with no particular focus on Palestine.\textsuperscript{79}

The first aliya was significant for future waves of immigration in a few ways. It doubled the number of Jews living in Palestine which provided a framework for future immigration. It also proved that the large-scale plantation model was not effective for the Zionist movement. While this method may have been effective money spinners in the case of Algeria, where the French took advantage of cheap labor, it was too at odds with Zionism’s goals to successfully build a Jewish national community in Palestine.\textsuperscript{80} The circumstances of the first aliya, however, did create a unique relationship between Jewish settlers and Palestinian Arabs that would not be replicated in the subsequent waves of immigration. During this aliya, Jewish settlers found themselves receiving farming pointers from the Arab laborers alongside whom they were working.\textsuperscript{81} This would change in the following years as new, ideologically driven settlers made a concerted effort to promote exclusively Jewish labor on Jewish settlements.

The second aliya lasted from 1904 to 1913 and the third from 1918 to 1923. The trappings of each aliya were essentially identical and had it not been for the First World War interrupting them, would likely be counted as one and the same. Like the first aliya, the majority of these new immigrants came from Russia. Another similarity to the first aliya was the fact that the Jews who immigrated to Palestine were only a very

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 62-3. \\
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 63. \\
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 63.
small percentage of the total Jews leaving Eastern Europe during this time period. The second *aliyah* brought 35,000 Jewish settlers to Palestine, making the Yishuv (the pre-state Zionist community in Palestine) number 85,000 at the beginning of the First World War. The third *aliyah* would bring an additional 40,000 settlers after the conclusion of the war.

The experiences of settlers in the second and third wave were vastly different from those came in the first. These new settlers benefited from the institutional structure provided by the World Zionist Organization. They were given advice and assistance before leaving Europe and once they arrived in Palestine they learned from the experiences of the first wave settlers on the ground. These new settlers, a significant portion of whom were involved in revolutionary action in Europe, brought new ideologies to Palestine. These settlers were influenced by ideals of utopianism and socialism and applied these ideologies to the Jewish national project in two important ways: the conquest of land and conquest of labor.

The goals of the Zionist conquest of land are pretty apparent from the name. The idea was to fundamentally impact the land of Palestine through the founding of Jewish agricultural settlements. This meant opening up land for cultivation, draining swamps, building roads, and fighting off hostile neighbors. From this movement comes the oft-

---

82 Tessler, 61.
83 Ibid., 61.
84 Gelvin, 64.
85 Tessler, 61.
86 Gelvin, 65.
quoted phrase “making the desert bloom.” On the national level, this part of the movement was both practically and ideologically important. On the practical level, these settlements were a way of creating spacial ties between the Jewish nationalist movement and the land of Palestine through physical construction. It was a means of proving that Zionism, that the Jewish national project, had a legitimate claim to Palestine. On the ideological level, conquest of land was an important part of the negation of the experience of exile. To the settlers of the second and third aliya, exile was characterized by weakness and victimhood. To David Ben-Gurion, a second aliya settler who would become the leader of the Yishuv and eventually the first prime minister of the state of Israel, exile meant “dependence – material, political, cultural, and intellectual dependence – because we are aliens, a minority, bereft of a homeland, rootless and separated from the soil, from basic industry. Our task is to break radically with this dependence.” Ben-Gurion was alluding to the fact that in Eastern Europe, Jews were often prohibited by law from owning and working land. Therefore, working the land in Palestine was a way to “break radically” from the weakness of exile.

The conquest of labor was rooted in the same desire to break from the curse of exile and also had ideological and practical products. The ideological aim of the conquest of labor was to free the Jewish settlers from the tradition of economic dependence that held back the Jewish nation in exile. This mentality, also called Labor Zionism, was contingent on not falling into the trap of employing Arab workers that

---

87 Ibid., 66.
88 Quoted in Gelvin, 66.
undercut the first *aliyah*. This would cause unemployment amongst Zionist settlers, decrease in wages and disincentive for potential Jewish immigrants to Palestine.\(^{89}\) The stated goal of the Labor Zionists was complete separation of the Yishuv economy from the Arab economy in Palestine. The practical results of the Labor Zionist movement were the institutions created during the second and third waves of immigration to Palestine. Among these were the Histadrut, the federation of Jewish labor unions, which in the proto-state period provided not only resources related to labor but also health care and education for its members.\(^{90}\) Another important institution founded during this period, especially from a symbolic perspective, was the kibbutz. The first kibbutz, a sort of nationalist collective socialist farm, was founded in the Galilee in 1909.\(^{91}\) These havens of collectivism and egalitarianism would come to dot the Palestinian countryside in the pre-state period and a large number have survived on to this day. They live on as a symbol of the ideals of Jewish nationalism, despite the fact that only a small percentage of settlers ever lived or worked on a kibbutz.\(^{92}\) Also, Zionist political parties came into existence during this time period. Amongst these was the party that would become the Labor party which would rule Israel for the first few decades of its existence.\(^{93}\) This party, whose intellectual ideals are largely based in this second and third wave time period, is the producer of one of the two main streams of Israeli political discourse we will study after 1967.

\(^{89}\) Gelvin, 67.  
\(^{90}\) Ibid., 68.  
\(^{91}\) Tessler, 65.  
\(^{92}\) Gelvin, 69.  
\(^{93}\) Ibid., 68.
The Palestinian Reaction to early Zionist Settlement

While discussing the effects of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 on the nationalization of the Arab citizens of Ottoman Palestine, we mentioned that the code would come to have significant consequences with the advent of Zionist immigration. These consequences began to play themselves out at the turn of the 20th century with the second aliyah. The immediate consequence of the new land code, as discussed before, was the new stratification of Palestinian society. Urban notables registered large tracts of land in their name for peasants who could not afford the registration fee or tax on the land. The peasants who allowed others to register the land they farmed maintained the prior system of land control by usufruct. They were for the most part either unaware of or unbothered by this new transformation of land into a commodity. In general, there was no reason to be bothered by the new land system. When the land a peasant farmed was sold from one Arab landowner to another, the peasant continued to farm the land as if the deed to the land had not changed hands at all. Just like the old landlord, the new landlord needed someone to farm his land in order to make it productive.  

The creation of the Jewish National Fund and related organizations aimed at purchasing land in Palestine for exclusively Jewish use led to a new dynamic between landlord and peasant. The settlers of the second and third aliyaot were motivated by the desire to conquer the land of Palestine. This meant that when a Jewish land purchasing agent bought a piece of land, they expelled the Palestinian peasants who had been

---

working the land under the Arab landlord. In the eyes of the new Jewish landlord and the Ottoman legal code, the new owner had legal control over the land to do with it what he pleased. However, to the Palestinian peasant, whose family may have worked the land for centuries, it was an expulsion. As more land was purchased and these expulsions became more widespread, resentment on the part of the expelled peasants lead to action against the settlers.

One significant example of this was the sale of the land of al-Fula. The land in question was about 10,000 dunams (one dunam equals 1,000 square meters) located in the Galilee between Jenin and Nazareth. This piece of land was a small part of the holdings of the Beiruti Sursuq family who had bought nearly a quarter million dunams from the Ottoman government for a pittance in 1872. In 1910, they sold the land of al-Fula to the Jewish National Fund. The JNF immediately began evicting the Palestinian peasant farmers and replacing them with Jewish settlers. The JNF was met with unprecedented resistance from the Palestinian peasants, however. This resistance was a result of a number of factors. One was witnessing the dispossession in the Galilee area that accompanied the foundation a number of second aliyah settlements built over the preceding five years. Another was the political support of a prominent Nazareth based politician named Shukri al-‘Asali. Al-‘Asali, having heard about the sale, refused to hand over the deed to the land to the new owners and wrote an anti-Zionist open letter which was published in a prominent Damascus newspaper. Not insignificantly, al-‘Asali wrote

---

95 Ibid., 99.
96 Ibid., 107.
the letter, which would be republished in a number of regional newspapers, under the pseudonym Saladin, the name of the Kurdish hero who rid Palestine of crusaders nearly a thousand years prior. His letter appealed to a number of other unifying patriotic themes that were well known to the peasants who were undergoing a slow nationalization.97 Al-‘Asali even went so far as to send a number of Ottoman troops to the village land in order to prevent a band of Jewish militia-men, who were acting on behalf of the JNF, from removing the peasants from the land. However, there was little al-‘Asali could actually do to prevent the inevitable take over by the JNF, who had the letter of the law, and al-‘Asali’s superiors, on its side. The JNF was able, after a short delay, to remove the Palestinian farmers from the land of al-Fula and found the settlement of Merhavia.98 The peasants who were forced from the land did not fade away. They launched frequent attacks on the new settlements and when an Arab villager was killed by an armed settler, some local Arabs laid siege to the settlement until the Ottoman authorities arrested a few of the settlers.99

In terms of national identity formation, the sale of the al-Fula land and subsequent resistances both by elected leaders and Palestinian peasants was significant. The whole ordeal was covered widely in newspapers across the significant cities in the Levant region and al-‘Asali was able to gain election to the Ottoman parliament by campaigning on his actions regarding the sale of the land.100 To Rashid Khalidi, who recounts this incident in his book *Palestinian Identity*, the significance of the relatively local and small

97 Ibid., 108.
98 Ibid., 110.
99 Ibid., 111.
100 Ibid., 109.
scale issue of the al-Fula land sale in terms of Palestinian national identify formation should not be underestimated. He writes that the issue showed the “importance of the dispossession and consequent resistance of the Palestinian peasantry in making the issue of Zionism a central one in Arab political discourse before 1914."

But the issue and the reaction to it, though nationally significant, were still relatively local. In the wake of the First World War and the advent of British control over Palestine, Zionist settlement and the Palestinian reaction to it would become truly unified and national.

World War I

The dawn of World War I had drastic consequences on historical Palestine and created fundamental changes that would shape the path of the region for decades. A few months after the war broke out in Europe, with the British and French and Russian Empires on one side and the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires on the other, the Ottoman Empire, reluctant to ally with Russia, its traditional enemy, joined the war on the side of the Germans and Austro-Hungarians. The loss of the war by the Central Powers would spell the end of the Ottoman Empire’s nearly five hundred year reign. The French and English were keen to capitalize on the crumbling of the empire as a means to expand their own imperial holdings in the area. Russia too desired Ottoman land but their early exit from the war due to the Russian Revolution meant those territorial gains never materialized. As early as 1915, the allied powers set about making treaties aimed at dividing up the land amongst them. Of the numerous treaties and agreements made,

101 Ibid., 110.
three in particular are of interest to us here: the Husayn-McMahon correspondence, the
Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration.

The Husayn-McMahon correspondence was a series of letters between Sharif
Husayn of Mecca and the British commissioner of Cairo, Henry McMahon which began
in 1915. The British wanted a military challenge to the Ottomans from the Arab
portion of the Empire in order to weaken the Ottoman war effort. Sharif Husayn and his
sons’ interests in assisting the British war effort came from a desire to found and rule an
Arab state in the Middle East. The result of the correspondence was an agreement that
the British would supply Sharif Husayn with gold and weapons and in return he would
start the so called “Arab Revolt” against the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, McMahon
articulated support for the creation of Arab states within the borders of the empire.

Despite the urging of Sharif Husayn and his sons to McMahon to define the borders of
this would-be state, McMahon was deliberately ambiguous. He sought to protect the
aims of the British and French within the region. Palestine was not explicitly referenced
in the correspondence. Sharif Husayn interpreted the rough boundaries described to
include Palestine but both the British and the French had designs for the region.

McMahon therefore left Palestine out of any loose agreement. The revolt itself, due to
Sharif Husayn’s limited influence on the Arabs of the Ottoman Empire and challenges to
his authority by the Wahabbi’s in the Hijaz region, was rather minor. The Arab state
the Sharif and his sons believed was promised to them never materialized after the war.

---

102 Smith, 2nd edition, 44.
103 Ibid., 45.
104 Gelvin, 81.
105 Smith, 2nd edition., 43.
A few years later, the Sharif Husayn’s sons, Abdullah and Faisal, were installed as leaders of the Kingdom of Transjordan and Syria respectively. Faisal, however, was removed from Syria due to French interests there and installed in Iraq before being deposed by a revolution. Sharif Husayn was himself removed from power in Mecca by the Wahabbis about a decade after the war. The most significant aspect of this agreement for Palestine was the understanding by the Arabs that Palestine was supposedly promised to the Arab state. This understanding of Palestine as essentially Arab would shape Arab nationalist aims for decades to come.

The Sykes-Picot agreement would have more practical consequences on the governing of Palestine and the entire Middle East region. The agreement was named for its two principle negotiators, French diplomat Georges Picot and British Member of Parliament Sir Mark Sykes. Begun in late 1915, the secret negotiations were intended to determine areas of French and British control and spheres of influence in the Arab parts of the Ottoman Empire. It was ratified in May 1916. The agreement put the land that would become Jordan and parts of Iraq under a British sphere of interest and rest of Iraq and Kuwait under direct British control. The southwestern part of Turkey bordering the Levant region, the coast of Syria and Lebanon were put under French control and the rest of present day Syria and parts of northern Iraq were put under French control. Palestine was designated as an international zone (fig. 2). \(^{108}\)

\(^{106}\) Ibid., 47.
\(^{107}\) Ibid., 47.
\(^{108}\) Smith, 2\(^{nd}\) edition, 47.
Fig 2. The Sykes Picot Agreement. (Source: PASSIA).
The Balfour Declaration was the most significant and lasting document to shape historical Palestine that came out of World War I. Expressing British support for the establishment of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, the text of the Balfour Declaration was very carefully written:

Foreign Office, November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of the object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious' rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country".

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.\footnote{109}

Significantly, this document fulfilled Herzl’s desire that a Jewish state in Palestine would be founded by common law. Despite the use of the word “home” rather than state, Balfour believed a state would be the ultimate result of the declaration.\footnote{110} The last clause of the document is especially notable. It stipulates that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice...the rights and political enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” The inclusion of this came as a result of concerns by British law makers and some Zionists that this declaration would cause harm to Jewish communities outside of Palestine.\footnote{111} Also interesting about that sentence is the clause it balances. The clause regarding Jews and the overall text of the document give support to Zionist national aims and seeks to protect

\footnote{109} Quoted in Gelvin, 81.
\footnote{110} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 54.
\footnote{111} Gelvin, 82.
Jewish “political” rights. The clause that balances it references only the “religious and civil rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” In doing so it fails to acknowledge any national community existing in Palestine at the time, be it Arab or Palestinian, and it gives no support to political, or national, aims of those non-Jewish residents. The significance of this document in the success of the Zionist project should not be overlooked. Gelvin describes this aptly:

Nationalisms succeed or fail not because they are true or false but because of factors extrinsic to the nationalisms themselves: the adversaries against whom they are arrayed, the resources available to them and their supporters, the support they receive from the international community. Thus, it might be stated without exaggeration that if it were not for the Balfour Declaration, Zionism might very well have gone the way of Confederate nationalism.\(^\text{112}\)

In other words, the Balfour Declaration gave the Zionist project the base, both in common law and practical reality, upon which a successful national movement could be built. Without this base, it is difficult to see a circumstance in which Zionism would have successfully created the state of Israel. This preference towards the Jewish national community in Palestine by the British would have far reaching consequences for both the Zionists and the Palestinians that eventually could not be overturned, despite a future British desire to do so.

The British Mandate for Palestine

The postwar reality in the formerly Ottoman controlled Middle East rendered most of the agreements between the great powers obsolete. Much of the land that was supposed to be under French control according to the Sykes-Picot agreement was

\(^{112}\) Gelvin, 83.
occupied by British Troops. The Bolsheviks, who had taken control of Russia during the war, renounced all territorial claims made by the tsars in the region and made public the secret agreements of the Entente powers.\footnote{Gelvin, 84.} French and British territorial dreams were made even more complicated by Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points.” These postwar guidelines called for an end to secret agreements and the right of all peoples to self-determination.\footnote{Ibid., 84.} Also among Wilson’s goals was the establishment of a League of Nations to ensure global peace and security, in addition to open markets for the growing industrial sector of the United States. The Entente powers reluctantly agreed to the charter of the League of Nations, which reflected Wilson’s Fourteen Points. However, the League of Nations charter in a sense brought legitimacy to French and British territorial claims by providing a formula by which these powers could take control of territories deemed unready for self-determination. In what came to be known as the mandate system, these powers would be given temporary control of a piece of territory with the explicit goal of building social and political institutions that would make these countries fit for self-rule.\footnote{Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 61.} Once these institutions were established, the imperial power would cede control to the people and leave. Which country would take the reins in each mandate was supposed to be based on the opinion of the population within the territory designated to be a mandate.

Unsurprisingly, the British and French had little interest in hearing the preferences of the populations, preferring to divide up the territory themselves. They attempted to
block an American delegation to the region.\textsuperscript{116} A delegation, dubbed the King-Crane Committee, was eventually convened which interviewed Arabs and Jews in Greater Syria. What they found was that the population wanted the creation of a state in Greater Syria, with Faysal, the son of Sharif Husayn, as king and the United States as the mandatory power. They also noted the anti-Zionist feelings of the Arab population and recommended a drastic curtailing of Zionist immigration and the creation of a small Jewish community within an Arab state.\textsuperscript{117} The report was submitted to the Paris Peace Conference but never discussed by the diplomats. In the end, France took mandatory control of what became Syria and Lebanon and the British took control of Iraq and the Mandate for Palestine, which initially included modern day Jordan.\textsuperscript{118}

Following the requirements of the League of Nations, the British submitted a resolution that outlined how the mandate for Palestine would be administrated. The British were fully aware of widespread Arab opposition to Zionism but chose to ignore it, writing the text of the Balfour declaration into the draft of the mandate.\textsuperscript{119} The draft stipulated that the a “Jewish Agency,” initially meant to be the World Zionist Organization, be recognized by the administration of the mandate for the purpose of advancing Jewish interests and the establishment of the Jewish homeland. In 1929, the World Zionist Organization ceded its position to the newly created Jewish Agency. This organization, dominated by second and third \textit{aliyot} leftwing labor Zionists, operated essentially as the foreign office of the Jewish community in Palestine, controlled

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 61.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 62.
\textsuperscript{118} Gelvin, 88.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 88.
settlement and immigration and established state-like institutions such as schools and hospitals.\footnote{Ibid., 90.} Understandably, the rest of the population of the mandate had no interest in following British state building tutelage. The Arabs of the mandate, 89% of its total population, had little desire to work with an administration bent on establishing a foreign state in their midst.\footnote{Ibid., 91} But the Jewish Agency and the British Mandate had more opposition than just the Arab population who feared increasing immigration. The coming of the mandate coincided with another wave of Jewish immigration that carried with it ideals opposed to the leftist labor Zionism of the previous two decades.

The Fourth Aliyah and the Revisionist Zionists

One of these challenges from within Zionism came from the right wing settlers of the fourth aliyah. The fourth aliyah lasted from 1924 to 1928 and brought about 82,000 new immigrants to Palestine. These immigrants were not the revolutionaries who came in the second and third waves of immigration. These were middle class Polish Jews who fled as refugees to Palestine. They were older than the settlers of the second and third aliyot and did not subscribe to their socialist values. For the most party, they settled themselves in the cities rather than taking to conquering the land of Palestine. Their ideological spokesperson was an Odessa born Jew named Vladimir Jabotinsky, who became the driving ideological voice behind the movement that would come to known as Revisionist Zionism.\footnote{Gelvin, 72.} He was turned to Zionism after witnessing the Kishinev pogrom in 1903. Jabotinski saw passivity amongst the Jewish victims of the pogrom and was
disgusted. He decided to take action and began forming militaristic Jewish defense
groups. Jabotinski’s Zionism too was characterized by militarism. He went so far as to
found a youth group that shared many qualities with the rising number of fascist youth
groups throughout Europe. Jabotinski’s intellectual followers would come to found the
paramilitary Irgun and its spinoff Stern Gang in the early 1930s. These groups would
come to carry out numerous terrorist attacks against both the British and Arabs of
Mandate Palestine. These included the assassination of a British official in a hotel
bombing and one of the most infamous events in the 1948 war, the massacre at Deir
Yassin in which the Irgun and Stern Gang killed over one hundred Palestinians. This
much more proactive militaristic approach often set them at odds with the left wing
Zionists who were in favor of working with the British to establish a Jewish state. Such
was this antagonism that the Revisionist set up a rival New Zionist Organization that
worked independent of the labor controlled Jewish Agency.

It is this Revisionist Zionist movement that provided an intellectual founding for
the second creator of discourse we will come to study here, the right wing Likud party.
Its founder, Menachem Begin was a leader of the Irgun and became the first non-Labor
prime minister of Israel. His successor as prime minister was Yitzhak Shamir, another
Likud politician who led the Stern Gang during the Mandate period and the 1948 War.
It may be unfair to draw a direct ideological line from the Revisionist Zionist Jabotinski
to the Likud party of today. However, it is safe to say that the involvement of the

123 Smith, 2nd edition, 79.
124 Gelvin, 72.
125 Smith, 2nd edition., 79
126 Tessler, 547.
founders of the Likud party in the Revisionist movement means that at least part of the Likud ideological underpinning comes from the Revisionist movement inspired by Jabotinski and instilled in the immigrants of the fourth *aliyah*.

**Palestinian National Leadership in the Mandate**

During the mandate period, resistance to Zionist settlement escalated from the largely isolated instances described previously. This escalating resistance coincided with the founding of a number of Palestinian nationalist groups that reflected the growing independent Palestinian identity that was becoming more and more widespread throughout the first decade of the mandate. In the immediate wake of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, most Palestinians, as reflected in the findings of the King-Crane commission, favored a Greater Syrian state that would include today’s Palestinian territories, Israel, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. However, the establishment of the mandates cut Palestine from French controlled Syria. This, combined with the unique challenges faced by Palestinians from Zionist settlement, nurtured a latent Palestinian nationalist feeling that had been growing since the mid-19th century.\(^\text{127}\)

Two types of nationalist organizations sprung up in the first decade of the mandate. The first were formed by and reflected the aims of notable urban elites and professionals. The second were more populist in nature and appealed to local villagers and peasants.\(^\text{128}\) The initial impetus for the urban nationalist groups was the British army who helped to found Arab Clubs to enlist support for the Arab Revolt against the

\(^{127}\) See Kimmerling and Migdal, *The Palestinian People*, Chapter 1.
\(^{128}\) Gelvin, 96.
Ottoman Empire during the war. In the wake of the war, local notables took it upon
themselves to found nationalist Muslim-Christian Associations. Groups in Palestine were
also founded by Syrian exiles that were making their way back to Syria after the
completion of the war. For the most part, these groups shared common political stances:
opposition to the mandate, the Balfour Declaration and the separation of Palestine from
Syria. It is interesting to note, however, that the Muslim-Christian Associations that were
founded by local Palestinian notables insisted that in any Greater Syrian state, Palestine
would be an autonomous territory in a federation. The populist organizations shared
most of the sentiments of the elites – opposition to the mandate and the Balfour
Declaration – but they were led by members of lower strata of Palestinian society and
were militarily active, forming militias to fight the French in Syria and Zionist
settlement. Also, while the elite leaders of the urban nationalist societies were often
jockeying for political power and prestige with their elite rivals, the message of the
populists was characterized by calls for equality and opposition to the elite.

These types of groups came together in the beginning of 1920 at the First
Palestine General Congress to try to unite the nationalist effort. They were able to pen a
leaflet opposing the separation of Palestine from Syria and calling for Arab resistance to
Zionist settlement but the events of 1920 were perhaps the high point of the Palestinian
nationalist movement for a number of years to come. The efforts to unify these various
nationalist organizations was hampered by reluctance to work with the British to form

129 Ibid., 97.
130 Ibid., 97.
131 Ibid., 98.
132 Gelvin, 98.
national institutions due to opposition to British support of Zionism, high levels of autonomy amongst religious minorities due to Ottoman policies carried over by the British, and bitter rivalries amongst urban elite grappling for political power.\textsuperscript{133} The Arab Executive committee of the General Congress met intermittently throughout the decade but nothing much came of their efforts. The recommendations of the General Congress were ignored by the British and French which did not help promote the expansion of these united political efforts.\textsuperscript{134} Also, the elites that were the driving forces behind the organization of these Muslim-Christian Associations saw their power and prestige begin to wane as the decade progressed and the more dispersed popular organizations came to the forefront of the Palestinian national struggle.\textsuperscript{135}

The Western Wall Riots and the Origins of Revolt

A failure to provide a single united political front on the part of the Palestinians did not mean the end of resistance to Zionist settlement. On the contrary, tensions between the Palestinians and the Zionist settlers rose as the first decade of the mandate progressed. The consequences of the 1858 Ottoman Land Code were coming into stark focus for the Palestinian peasant as the Jewish National Fund began to buy up large tracts of land from both foreign and local Palestinian landowners. As the land they had worked for generations without holding a title was sold out from under them, Palestinian peasants were forced to leave their land by the new Zionist landlords who then put it in the hands

\begin{footnotes}
\item[133] Ibid., 100.
\item[134] Smith, 2nd edition, 74.
\item[135] Gelvin, 102.
\end{footnotes}
of Jewish settlers. The result of this was a rising landless population, increased urbanization, and growing unrest in the countryside of Mandate Palestine.

Urban tensions were on the rise throughout this period as well. They boiled over violently in the summer of 1929. The Western Wall in Jerusalem is the holiest site in Judaism as Jews believe it to be the last remaining wall of Herod’s temple. To Muslims, the wall is part of the perimeter of the Haram al-Sharif, the third holiest site in Islam. Prior to 1967, the Western Wall was one side of a narrow alley opposite houses belonging to Muslim residents of the quarter. Disputes over control of the wall between Muslims and Jews turned violent in August 1929. Each side feared the other wanted to restrict their access to the site. Jabotinski’s youth group, Betar, exacerbated these tensions by marching to the wall and flying the Zionist flag above it. This sent Muslims over the edge. Thousands of them marched to the wall the next day. Over the ensuing week, riots in Jerusalem, Safad, Hebron and Jaffa killed 133 Jews and 116 Arabs. A British investigation found Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the grand Mufti of Jerusalem and prominent Palestinian nationalist leader, directly responsible for the outbreak of the riots. As a result, the British outlawed Arab political participation in the mandate.

However, as the subsequent British Shaw Report found, the true cause of the Arab unrest in Mandatory Palestine was Jewish immigration and land purchases. This 1930

---

136 Smith, 2nd edition, 86
137 Ibid., 87.
138 Ibid., 89.
139 Ibid., 90.
report, which recommended much stricter regulations on Jewish immigration, was the first of a series of events and reports, culminating with the Great Revolt of 1936-39 that caused the British government to second guess its commitment to the aid in the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine and its overall involvement in the Palestine Mandate. In the wake of the Shaw Report, the British government, fearing the loss of tax revenue provided by Jewish immigrants, commissioned another report, this time to be penned by Sir. John Hope-Simpson. He quickly became sympathetic to the Arabs and critical of Zionist settlement and labor practices. The recommendation of his report were written into the Passfield White Paper, which criticized the immigration, colonization and labor practices of the Jewish community in Palestine. Zionist opposition to this White Paper was swift and furious. A number of high level Zionist leaders resigned and the British cabinet was attacked by members of parliament sympathetic to the Zionist cause. This pressure caused the cabinet to repudiate the Passfield White Paper in a letter essentially written by Zionist leaders.

A few years after the Passfield White Paper, Adolf Hitler became the chancellor of Germany. The anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws began waves of Jewish emigration from Germany, most not going to Palestine. However, Zionist leaders came to an agreement with the Nazi government to facilitate Jewish emigration specifically to Palestine and were even permitted to establish vocational training camps in Germany for those Jews immigrating to Palestine. The SS officer who facilitated this relationship was Adolf

140 Ibid., 91.
141 Ibid., 91.
142 Ibid., 92.
Eichmann. This was the same Adolf Eichmann whom the state of Israel would put on trial as the architect of Hitler’s final solution two and half decades later.\textsuperscript{143} As a result of this emigration from Germany and Nazi controlled Poland, the Jewish population of Palestine doubled between 1933 and 1935.\textsuperscript{144} Over this same period, economic conditions worsened for the Palestinian Arabs of the mandate. Unemployment was high and the landless population was growing. These challenging economic conditions, particularly for peasants who had to sell parts of their land to Jews in order to get by, combined with Palestinian frustration at the growing strength of the Jewish community provided the basis for the Arab Revolt in Palestine.

The Great Revolt

As economic hardship intensified for the Palestinians of the mandate, in contrast to the booming economy of the Jewish community and its growing strength, and increased immigration meant more Zionist land purchases and therefore more landlessness amongst Palestinian peasants, unrest was rife in the countryside and the villages of Palestine come 1936. The issue of the landless Palestinian population was the central factor leading to the coming revolt. The Palestinian peasants, who caught the worst of this economic suffering, were often forced to sell their own land and move to cities to find work.\textsuperscript{145} This need to sell to survive was also a consequence of the Great Depression that was sweeping the globe at this time. Most of the Palestinian population

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{143} See Arendt, Hannah \textit{Eichmann in Jerusalem}. \\
\textsuperscript{144} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 92. \\
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 97.
\end{flushleft}
of the mandate worked the land.\textsuperscript{146} When the depression came, the prices of the crops they produced plummeted. Because of the terms of the mandate, Britain was not able to put protective tariffs on agricultural products to keep prices high. Mandate Palestine was flooded with cheap agricultural goods making it impossible for the peasant farmers to compete. Many small farmers were unable to pay off their debts and were either foreclosed on or sold their land to Zionist agencies.\textsuperscript{147} Increased immigration also led to more large purchases by the Zionist agencies and as land prices increased, urban landowners decided it was the right time to sell.\textsuperscript{148} By the mid-1930’s, thirty percent of Palestinian farmers were completely landless. Of those who still had land, about seventy-five percent did not have enough to support themselves.\textsuperscript{149} In these hard economic conditions, all that was needed to start a revolt was a spark.

Two sparks came at the end of 1935. The first was the British discovery of a Jewish arms smuggling operation in Jaffa port.\textsuperscript{150} This discovery increased Arab fears that the Jewish community was preparing for war and caused significant alarm. The second spark came a short time later when a popular Muslim preacher, ʻIzz al-Din al-Qassam, was killed in a firefight with British soldiers.\textsuperscript{151} A preacher and registrar of marriages in Haifa and the surrounding countryside, al-Qassam used his sermons to preach opposition to the British mandate and Zionist settlement.\textsuperscript{152} Such was his

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{147} Gelvin, 105.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 105.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{150} Smith 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 96.
\textsuperscript{151} Gelvin, 103.
\textsuperscript{152} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 96.
popularity that he likely had more than one thousand followers at the time of his death and his funeral was the best attended in Palestine’s history to that point.\textsuperscript{153} Al-Qassam quickly became part of the Palestinian national lore. His revolutionary words and actions (he was killed preparing for open resistance) were immortalized in poetry and song and he remains an important Palestinian national symbol to this day (the homemade rockets of Hamas are dubbed al-Qassams).\textsuperscript{154}

The anti-British, anti-Zionist sector of Palestinian society, galvanized by the death of al-Qassam and alarmed by Jewish arms smuggling, called for general strikes and greater vigilance by the mandate authorities over arms smuggling.\textsuperscript{155} The British high commissioner, though concerned about the growing unrest amongst the Palestinian majority of the population, believed that he could appease the Arab notables by reviving the mixed Muslim, Jewish and Christian legislative council. This idea was rejected by both the British parliament and Zionist leaders.\textsuperscript{156} In the wake of this failed attempt at diplomacy, violence broke out in April 1936 with the killing of two Jews in Nablus.\textsuperscript{157} Violence quickly escalated as attacks lead to counter attacks and quickly to open revolt.

The revolt itself proceeded in a two stages. The first of these was focused in Palestine’s cities. Perhaps surprisingly, the feuding urban notables who had previously been able to provide a unified national front to match that of the Zionists came together

\textsuperscript{153} Gelvin, 107.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 107.
\textsuperscript{155} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 97.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{157} Gelvin, 109.
temporarily to form the Higher Arab Committee.\textsuperscript{158} This committee called for strikes and boycotts of Jewish businesses and goods which were organized and enforced by local committees in cities across Palestine. They also organized relief efforts for the families of striking workers to minimize the negative effects of these tactics on Palestinians.\textsuperscript{159} The strikes and boycotts were less than successful. Jewish business owners were perfectly happy to replace their striking Arab workers with Jewish ones, which contributed to the Zionist goal of making the economy of the Yishuv separate to that of the Palestinians.\textsuperscript{160} The strikes that were successful, such as the one that shut down Palestine’s only major port at Jaffa, backfired as well. The Jewish Agency was granted permission to develop Tel-Aviv as a port for Jewish goods, an action that further contributed to Jewish independence in Palestine.\textsuperscript{161} Over the summer, the revolt in the cities began to wind down and the Arab Higher Committee ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{162}

As the revolt in the cities wound down, the fighting moved to the countryside. Armed bands of Palestinian peasants and non-Palestinian Arab fighters numbering between nine and ten thousand roamed the Palestinian countryside attacking British troops and Zionist settlements.\textsuperscript{163} The British turned to force as a means to bring an end to the havoc these armed bands were causing (fig. 3).

\textsuperscript{158} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 98.  
\textsuperscript{159} Gelvin, 110.  
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 111.  
\textsuperscript{161} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 98.  
\textsuperscript{162} Gelvin, 111.  
\textsuperscript{163} Gelvin, 113.
Fig. 3: British soldiers search Palestinians for arms (Source: American Colony (Jerusalem) Photo Dept.)

They brought in 20,000 troops and worked with Jewish squads and Arab peace bands organized by a friendly Arab notable family.\textsuperscript{164} British forces punished whole villages for sheltering rebels and conducted targeted assassinations, deportations and mass arrests in order to snuff out the rebellion.\textsuperscript{165} These anti-insurgency tactics, amongst others such as dynamiting the houses of suspected rebels, were eventually adopted by the British sanctioned Jewish militia, the Haganah, and the Israeli government after the

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 113.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 113.
founding of the state, as a means to crush future Palestinian resistance.\textsuperscript{166} By the time hostilities ended, thousands of Palestinians in addition to hundreds of Jews and British soldiers were dead and most of the Palestinian national leadership was either arrested or deported.\textsuperscript{167} The Palestinian population at-large was also disarmed. The shattered state that the Palestinian community would find itself in after the Great Revolt was both a cause and a foreshadowing of the disaster that would befall the Palestinians a decade later with the 1948 War.

Between Revolt and Civil War

Just as the Western Wall Riots inspired British reflection on their role in Mandate Palestine, the events of the Arab Revolt in Palestine lead to a number of commissions and reports aimed at reevaluating British positions regarding the mandate. The first of these, the Peel Commission, was sent to Palestine during a lull in the revolt to discover the causes of unrest in both the Palestinian and Jewish community in Palestine.\textsuperscript{168} The Peel Report determined that the rift between the Jewish and Palestinian communities had grown to the point where a single Palestine mandate was unworkable and needed to be replaced.\textsuperscript{169} Palestinian demands for an Arab state in Palestine could not be reconciled with Jewish demands for unlimited immigration. The Peel Report predicted that as the current generation of young Palestinians and Jews are educated in their respective schools of nationalism, these rifts would expand along with a stronger desire for political

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{166} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 100.
\item \textsuperscript{167} Gelvin, 114.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 97.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Gelvin, 116.
\end{itemize}
independence and a hatred for whatever should stand in the way of it.\footnote{Ibid., 117.} The report determined that the only way to reconcile this increasingly volatile situation was to partition the Mandate for Palestine into a Palestinian Arab and a Jewish state.\footnote{Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 97.} Twenty percent of the mandate would go to the Jewish state and most of the rest would go to a Palestinian state to be united with Jordan. Jerusalem and a corridor to the sea would remain under British mandate authority (fig. 4).\footnote{Ibid., 99.}

The report was not particularly popular amongst Jews, Palestinians or British politicians. The leaders of the Yishuv eventually accepted the concept of partition despite strong opposition within the community. The leaders were not happy with the proposed territory of the Jewish state but saw this granting of statehood a legitimization of Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. A sovereign Jewish state would mean limitless immigration and as the population increased, these proposed borders could be adjusted accordingly.\footnote{Ibid., 99.} The Arab Higher Committee was strong in its opposition to the report. They did not understand why the Palestinians should give up an area with four times as much land as Jews and were as concerned as the Zionist leaders were certain that the borders of this Jewish state would eventually expand to encroach on the Palestinian state.\footnote{Gelvin, 117.} Rather than partition, the Arab Higher Committee maintained its demands for an Arab state in all of Palestine and an end to Jewish immigration.\footnote{Ibid., 117.}
Fig 4. The Peel Partition plan (Source: PASSIA)
In the wake of the Peel Report, the revolt reignited and entered a much more violent stage which the British chose to crush with the anti-insurgency tactics described above. After the revolt had been stamped out, the British issued a new document, the White Paper of 1939, which steered British policy in the mandate until its termination nearly a decade later.176

The White Paper and World War II

The White Paper represented a reversal in British support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. It read: “His Majesty's Government believes that the framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish State against the will of the Arab population of the country.”177 It therefore rejected the recommendation of the Peel Report that Palestine be partitioned into a Jewish and Palestinian state and instead favored the creation of a Jewish national home in a Palestinian state with immigration limited to 15,000 people per year over the ensuing five years.178 After that period, immigration would be dependent on Palestinian consent. Land purchasing by Jews would be limited to certain areas and be controlled by the high commissioner of the mandate in order to limit landlessness amongst Arab peasants.179 The White Paper, however, was even less popular than the Peel Report amongst the Palestinian and Jewish communities of the mandate. Jews believed it went against the promises of the Balfour

176 Ibid., 118.
177 Quoted in Smith, 2nd edition, 104.
178 Ibid., 104.
179 Gelvin, 118.
Declaration because of the limits on immigration and the reversal of support for a Jewish state. Palestinians opposed it because it did not meet demands for immediate independence and an end to all Jewish immigration.\textsuperscript{180}

Despite this strong opposition, neither the Palestinians nor the Yishuv were in much of a position to do anything about the White Paper in the years following its issuance. Britain’s harsh suppression of the revolt left the Palestinians leaderless and broken. Most of the important Palestinian nationalists and intellectuals were either executed or deported by the British and the countryside was in ruins.\textsuperscript{181} The Yishuv, for their part, were in a tight position as well. Despite their vocal opposition to the White Paper and the changes in British policy it articulated, the Yishuv found itself making a truce with British authorities in order to help the war effort against Nazi Germany.\textsuperscript{182} The more militaristic Revisionist groups like the Irgun and its break off faction, the Stern Gang, continued their attacks against the British throughout the war, including the assassination of the British Lord Moyne. However, the mainstream Jewish community tried to limit these attacks by deploying the Haganah alongside British forces against these groups.\textsuperscript{183}

This status quo and a drop in Jewish immigration meant that Palestine was relatively quiet throughout World War II. The Fifth Aliyah, which spanned the decade preceding the outbreak of the war, brought two hundred thousand Jews to Palestine, more

\textsuperscript{180} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 105.
\textsuperscript{181} Gelvin, 119.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{183} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 120.
than all the previous waves of immigration combined. Immigration during the war however, was only fourteen thousand people per year, less than the quota set by the White Paper.\(^{184}\) Contributing to this calm and stability was an economic boom in wartime Palestine. Submarine warfare in the Mediterranean Sea made shipping dangerous. This took Palestine temporarily out of the global market, protecting local farmers from international competition.\(^{185}\) This, combined with the large number of Allied troops stationed in Palestine driving up demand for local goods, meant rising prices and allowed for a number of small farmers to climb out of debt.\(^{186}\)

As the war came to an end, so did the prevailing calm in Palestine. The five years of limited immigration stipulated by the White Paper had come to an end which meant that the deadline for the independent Palestinian state it proposed was five years away. Palestinians wanted an end to all further Jewish immigration and a fulfillment of the promise of independence.\(^{187}\) The revisionist Irgun and Stern Gang stepped up their attacks against British civilian and military targets.\(^{188}\) David Ben-Gurion initially deployed his Haganah forces alongside the British against these groups but by the end of the war, he came to believe that armed resistance would be the only path to statehood.\(^{189}\) Also, Ben-Gurion was concerned by the loss of Haganah members who favored direct action to the Irgun and Stern Gang.\(^{190}\) By the end of 1945, the British had over eighty

\(^{184}\) Gelvin, 120.
\(^{185}\) Ibid., 121.
\(^{186}\) Ibid., 121.
\(^{187}\) Ibid., 124.
\(^{188}\) Smith, 2nd edition, 120.
\(^{189}\) Ibid., 128.
\(^{190}\) Ibid., 128.
thousand troops stationed in Palestine to deal with opposition by both the Jewish and Palestinian communities of the mandate.\textsuperscript{191}

Holocaust refugees quickly became an issue as the war wound down as well. United States President Harry Truman urged the British Prime Minister to settle one hundred thousand refugees in Palestine, as recommended by the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. The British government rejected this proposal as it was conditional on approval by both the Jewish and Palestinian communities. Jewish attacks against British forces intensified in the wake of this denial by the government, the most notable of which was the Irgun attack on the Kind David Hotel in Jerusalem, home of the British offices, which killed ninety-one people.\textsuperscript{192} This instability led to a realization by war-weary and massively indebted Britain that it could no longer maintain its overseas holding in Palestine. It decided it would need to enlist the help of the international community in solving the Palestine issue.\textsuperscript{193} It therefore turned to the United Nations, the new iteration of the organization that initially gave them control over the Mandate for Palestine, to solve the mess it found itself in.

The UN General Assembly created the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to study the issue and propose a solution. The committee was made up of representatives of eleven countries: Sweden, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Australia, Canada, India, Iran, Guatemala, Uruguay and Peru.\textsuperscript{194} The report

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 129.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., 132.
\textsuperscript{193} Gelvin, 121.
\textsuperscript{194} Gelvin, 124.
the committee produced was unified in calling for an end to the mandate but was divided about what should replace it. Eight members wrote the majority report which called for a partition into a Jewish and a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as an international zone. The minority group called for a single federal state made up of two entities and a united central authority to be prepared for three years by the United Nations.\textsuperscript{195} The British, for their part, did not wait for the committee’s recommendation to declare that it would be pulling out of Palestine in the middle of May, 1948.\textsuperscript{196}

The United Nations General Assembly narrowly voted to accept the partition, needing strong lobbying from the Zionists and United States to push General Assembly Resolution 181 over the two-thirds majority necessary.\textsuperscript{197} Even the branches of the United States government were divided when it came to the question of partition. Truman’s advisers argued that the United States had a moral obligation to the Jews considering the suffering of the Holocaust (although not enough of an obligation, it seems, to allow Jewish refugees into the United States).\textsuperscript{198} They also argued that a Jewish state would offer the U.S. a forward listening post in a hostile neighborhood as the rivalry with the Soviet Union was already beginning to heat up. Finally, domestic politics played a role (as they would come to do so often in the story of Palestine). Truman was afraid of losing New York and Illinois, two states with large Jewish populations, in the coming election. The United States State Department and intelligence community was wary of supporting partition, believing that it would put relations with

\textsuperscript{195} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 137.
\textsuperscript{196} Gelvin, 124.
\textsuperscript{197} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 138.
\textsuperscript{198} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 117.
the neighboring Arab states into jeopardy and would lead to a bloodbath that would take one hundred thousand American troops to end.\textsuperscript{199} The United States did go along with partition, however, as did the Soviet Union, who would be the first country offer Israel de jure recognition (and eventually a significant arms shipment during the 1948 war).\textsuperscript{200} The Palestinians and Arab rejected the resolution and the Yishuv accepted it, with an eye at changing its borders.

\textbf{Civil War, Nakba and Independence}

In the months from the passing of UN Resolution 181 in November up to the British withdrawal, a three way civil war broke out in mandate Palestine. Still crippled, leaderless, and disarmed as a result of the British reaction to the revolt nearly a decade earlier, the Palestinian community was hardly ready for it. They lacked institutions and leadership to match those of the Jewish community in Palestine. Bitter rivalries still plagued the potential Palestinian resistance as did a lack of material and monetary support from the relatively young Arab countries. Also, the Palestinians had a serious lack of military training and experienced soldiers.\textsuperscript{201} The Yishuv however, was far better suited to pursue its nationalist goals. In addition to training an army for decades in the form of the officially sanctioned Haganah and the paramilitary, underground Irgun and Lehi, the Yishuv had sent soldiers to fight alongside the British in World War II. While these groups had not been folded into a single force by the time of the passing of the

\textsuperscript{199} Gelvin, 125.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., 126.
\textsuperscript{201} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 140.
partition resolution in 1947, they did coordinate operations. The weapons they carried were newer and more advanced than those of their Palestinian rivals. The main challenge faced by the Jewish forces was maintaining contact with the scattered isolated settlements and Jerusalem surrounded by Palestinian areas.

The war that occurred between 1947 and 1949 has been the subject of many books by numerous Palestinian, Israeli and international academics. To give a full account of the war here would go well beyond the scope of this study, but it is necessary to give it some attention because of its significance to the Palestinian and Israeli historical narratives. There are practical consequences, most notably the establishment of the state of Israel and the creation of the Palestinian refugees, and ideological consequences, such as the Palestinian and Israeli sense of justness of goals and victimhood. Here we will outline the major events of the war and their implications for the future of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, briefly touch on the post-war status quo and then move on to the study of discourse after 1967.

Broadly speaking, the war can be divided into two stages. The first took place between the passing of the UN partition plan in fall 1947 and the end of the mandate in spring 1948 and was characterized by a three way conflict between the Palestinians, the Yishuv and the British Mandate forces. The second stage began at midnight on May 14th, 1948 with the final withdrawal of the British from historical Palestine. After this final withdrawal, Arab states sent troops into historical Palestine beginning the first Arab-
Israeli war. At the conclusion of the war in 1949, Israel had grown beyond the partition plan borders for the Jewish state to take 78% of historical Palestine and the rest, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would be split between Jordanian and Egyptian control, respectively.

In the immediate wake of the passing of the partition resolution, sporadic attacks by Palestinian irregulars took place against Jewish settlements and convoys.\(^{204}\) There exists debate, however, if these attacks signified the start of war or merely isolated incidents. According to the Israeli narrative, the war began with these Arab attacks. Palestinian academic Saleh Abdel Jawad citing UN and Yishuv sources, argues, convincingly, that the attacks that occurred between the passing of the partition resolution on November 30\(^{th}\) and the middle of December did not signify that the Palestinian population at large was gearing up for war.\(^{205}\) He relates Ben Gurion’s view that the Palestinian peasants, the majority of the Palestinian population at that time, would stay out of hostilities unless they were faced with direct force.\(^{206}\) He also relates a UN report that even at the highest levels of the Palestinian national movement there was a preference to avoid “serious outbreaks,” and states that “it is possible that the excitement would have subsided and little loss of life been caused” if Yishuv provocation had not occurred.\(^{207}\) However, on December 11\(^{th}\) and 13\(^{th}\), Jewish terrorist attacks on Palestinian

\(^{204}\) Smith, 8\(^{th}\) edition, 194.
\(^{206}\) Ibid., 81.
\(^{207}\) Quoted in Abdel Jawad, “The Arab and Palestinian Narratives,” 82.
cities and towns resulting in dozens of deaths signaled a point of no return.\(^{208}\) War had broken out in historical Palestine. These terror attacks, usually bombings or car bombings in highly congregated Palestinian areas, began to occur throughout the major cities such as Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem and would soon spill out into the countryside. These were not only carried out by the paramilitary Irgun and Lehi but also the mandate sanctioned Haganah, or Jewish defense force.\(^{209}\) The Palestinians adopted these tactics and answered in turn leading to waves of retaliatory acts.\(^{210}\) The first wave of Palestinian refugees occurred during this time period as 15,000 fled the violence and terror attacks in the cities despite calls from the Palestinian leadership to stay.\(^{211}\)

As the date of British withdrawal approached, the Zionist leadership was stuck with a dilemma. At the time of the passing of the partition plan, the Palestinians outnumbered the Jewish settlers in historical Palestine nearly two to one. Within the area that was supposed to become the Jewish state, the Yishuv only held a small majority (498,000 to 407,000) and a minority of the total land.\(^{212}\) The plan also put a number of Jewish settlements and the city of Jerusalem outside of this area. The Yishuv leadership felt that it could not rely on the United Nations to enforce partition and knew that future recognition would rely on the ability to bring this area under Jewish control. It resolved therefore in April of 1948 to go on the offensive and bring the areas of the proposed Jewish state under Haganah control and to expand the area of control to include those

\(^{208}\) Ibid., 83.
\(^{209}\) Smith, 8th edition, 194.
\(^{210}\) Ibid., 194.
\(^{211}\) Ibid., 195.
Jewish settlements located outside of the partition plan’s borders. According to a Yishuv directive termed Plan Dalet, the Palestinians that lived in those areas were to be expelled.

As with nearly every aspect of this conflict, there is significant controversy and debate surrounding Plan Dalet. The conventional Israeli narrative argues that the Palestinians who fled during the course of the war were not refugees at all and therefore have no right to return to their homeland. According to this narrative, the Palestinians either left of their own accord or after Arab encouragement. Furthermore, this willing dispersal of the Palestinians demonstrated that there existed no national tie to the land of historical Palestine amongst the Palestinians. This is important going forward because it is used as justification of the Israeli refusal to take any blame for the creation of the Palestinian refugees and the refusal to allow their return.

A group of Israeli scholars dubbed the New Historians, however, used Israeli state archives to dispute this claim. Even within this group there is debate. Perhaps the two most famous New Historians are Benny Morris and Ilan Pappé. Morris argues that the Yishuv forces acted according to Plan Dalet from April 1948 and purposefully expelled the Palestinians who lived within the area meant to become the Jewish state but that the Yishuv never officially adopted the plan. Pappé argues that Plan Dalet was officially adopted and therefore the expulsion of Palestinians was a premeditated ethnic

---

213 Smith, 8th edition, 197.
214 Ibid., 197.
Either way, it is widely accepted that the Jewish and later Israeli armies forcibly expelled a vast majority of the Palestinian refugees.

This forcible expulsion began before the establishment of the state of Israel in May of 1948 and occurred in Palestinian cities and towns alike. One of the most infamous episodes was the massacre at Deir Yassin. The village of Deir Yassin had a non-aggression pact with the Haganah but in April of 1948 the Irgun and Lehi attacked the village. After valiant eight hour battle between the severely outnumbered villagers and the Jewish forces, the two paramilitary groups took the village and killed 115 men, women and children. This event became a powerful propaganda weapon for the Yishuv throughout the war. Threats of a repeat of Deir Yassin were played via loudspeaker and radio in Palestinian cities and villages caused thousands of Palestinians to flee their homes out of fear. These threats were often followed through by the Jewish forces as dozens of massacres (Abdel Jawad documents nearly 70 throughout the war) occurred as the Yishuv’s forces expanded their control over more and more of the Palestinian countryside.

The urban Palestinians were not exempt from this expulsion either. After the Arab military command and British mandate troops left Haifa on April 21st and 22nd of 1948, threats of another Deir Yassin and the shelling of the old city market led to the

215 Ibid., 197.
216 Ibid., 197.
218 Smith, 8th edition, 197.
219 Ibid., 197.
expulsion of 50,000 Palestinians over the course of three days. All told, 300,000 Palestinians, of the 750,000 documented total, would become refugees before the establishment of the state of Israel in May of 1948.

On May 14th, 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared the birth of the state of Israel in the borders articulated by UN Resolution 181. With this, the next stage of the battle for Palestine began and the battle shifted for the first time from a Zionist-Palestinian conflict to an Arab-Israeli one. Plans for a joint Arab invasion of Palestine had been formulated by the Arab League. This invading force included troops from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and a minor Saudi contingency. Despite the clear population advantage these countries had over the Yishuv, they never were in a position to challenge the Zionists’ goals. The army the Arab states fielded never came close to matching that of the Yishuv in terms of manpower. With the exception of the British trained Arab Legion from Jordan, the Arab soldiers could also not match the Yishuv soldiers when it came to training and equipment. On top of that, the Arab states were either newly established or still under imperial pressure and therefore unable or unwilling to commit full military mobilization to the liberation of Palestine due to domestic concerns. Perhaps the most significant handicaps on the Arab were effort was the internal rivalries and suspicious amongst the Arab states. There was no coordination of military

---

221 Smith, 8th edition, 197.  
222 Ibid., 197.  
223 Smith, 2nd edition, 144.  
224 Gelvin, 130.  
225 Ibid., 130.  
226 Ibid., 130.
movement as each country was unwilling to put their troops under a rival’s control.\textsuperscript{227}

The primary rivalry was between Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia on one side and the Hashemite kings in Jordan and Iraq on the other. The other Arab leaders suspected, and rightly so, Jordan’s King Abdullah of coveting the areas granted to the Palestinians in the partition resolution.\textsuperscript{228} Abdullah had been meeting regularly with Zionist leaders since the creation of his territory in 1921 and as a result, he and Zionist officials had already negotiated the borders of their states. The king therefore deployed his troops in order to occupy the area allocated to him in the agreements. The only fighting that took place between Jordanian and Israeli troops was over Jerusalem, where no agreement had been reached, and when Israeli troops entered areas meant to go to the Arab state.\textsuperscript{229}

With the best trained and best funded Arab army negotiated out of the war, it did not take much time for the newly minted Israeli Defense Forces to beat back the Arab invasion. After about a month, the UN was able to bring about a truce accepted by both sides. In order to bypass an embargo on weapons shipping enforced by the United States and Britain, the Israelis turned east to the Soviets via Czechoslovakia to rearm themselves throughout the thirty-five day truce.\textsuperscript{230} When the Egyptians and Syrians chose not to extend the truce, the Israelis earned decisive victories, gaining control of the Galilee and the Negev Desert in the south ousting Jordanian and Egyptian forces and greatly

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., 130.
\textsuperscript{228} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 145.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 145.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 145.
increasing the territory under Israeli control beyond that which was allocated to in the UN partition plan.231

After the end of hostilities, the United Nations sponsored peace talks between the parties aimed at reaching a permanent resolution. No such resolution could be reached because of the issue of Jerusalem and the three quarters of a million Palestinians refugees created by the war. The Arab states demanded the repatriation of the refugees. The Israelis, who did not recognize Palestinians as a proper nation and saw them as just Arabs, argued that they could be resettled in another of the Arab countries.232 After the failure of the peace talks, the UN mediator lowered expectations and looked for armistice agreements with peace settlements to be agreed upon sometime in the future. These armistice agreements between Israel and the neighboring Arab states set informal borders of the state of Israel. These borders left Israel with 78% of the land of Palestine (the UN partition resolution granted them a little over 50%). The rest, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, came under the control of Jordan and Egypt respectively (fig. 5).233 This would be status quo for nineteen years until the War of 1967.

---

231 Ibid., 146.
232 Gelvin, 132.
233 Ibid., 134.
Fig. 5. Original Partition Plan and Post-War Armistice Lines (Source: PASSIA)
For the Palestinians, the Israeli War of Independence was the *Nakba* or disaster. The Israeli expulsion continued as it expanded its control beyond the land allocated in the partition plan. Three quarters of a million Palestinians were forced out by Israelis deliberate policy of expulsion and fear mongering.\(^{234}\) As we noted above, 300,000 of these were forcibly removed before the Arab states entered the war. Of the eleven Palestinian cities taken by Israel in the course of the war, all but one were either partially or fully cleansed of their Palestinian inhabitants.\(^{235}\) 470,000 refugees settled into camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The remaining were forced out of Palestine altogether into Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.\(^{236}\) Of the 133,000 Palestinians that remained inside of Israel, 25% became internally displaced persons, meaning that they were forced from their homes but did not leave the territory that would become Israel.\(^{237}\) All Palestinians that remained in Israel were kept under military law until 1966.\(^{238}\) The land and property left behind by refugees and “present absentees” (those who were internally displaced but did not leave the state) was quickly seized by the state of Israel. All in all, over five hundred Palestinian villages were cleared of their inhabitants and destroyed in 1947-8.\(^{239}\)

The most important thing to take away from the events of 1947-9 for our purposes, other than perhaps the armistice lines that defined Israel’s borders until 1967, is the creation of the Palestinian refugees. First of all, these refugees would become the

---

\(^{234}\) Smith, 2\(^{nd}\) edition, 146.
\(^{235}\) Abdel Jawad, “The Arab and Palestinian Narratives.” 90.
\(^{236}\) Smith, 2\(^{nd}\) edition, 146.
\(^{237}\) Gelvin, 135.
\(^{238}\) Ibid., 135.
\(^{239}\) Ibid., 138.
base of support for the Palestinian national groups we will study in the upcoming chapters. But more significantly, the issue of Palestinian refugees becomes one of main factors keeping the Palestinian and Israeli future visions irreconcilable. Because the Israeli narrative refuses to accept blame for the creation of the Palestinian refugees and refuses to acknowledge their claim to the land that is now Israel, the state of Israel will not accept the return of the Palestinians to their homes. On a practical level, the return of the Palestinian refugees would lessen the Jewish majority of the state of Israel, a red line Israel will not cross. For the Palestinians, the return from exile is the most cherished right the national movement pursues. When I was in the West Bank this most recent summers, posters commemorating the \textit{Nakba} read “No Peace Without Return.” A peace that does not fulfill this right is a red line the Palestinians will not cross.

\textbf{Post 1948 and the Arab-Israeli Conflict}

With the end of the war, the conflict took on a distinctly different style. Whereas during the mandate the conflict was between the Palestinians and the Jewish settlers, after the establishment of Israel the interstate Arab-Israeli conflict would emerge. As we noted above, historical Palestine was split between three separate sovereignties. Israel grew beyond its partition plan designated borders to take 78\% of the land. Jordan annexed the West Bank and the Egypt took administrative control of the Gaza Strip. This would remain the status quo for the ensuing nineteen years. Because our study focuses on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which went through a lull during this period, and not the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is not necessary to go into much detail on the events of these two
decades. However, it is important to set the stage for the fundamental change that would occur with the June 1967 War. During this period, the banner of the Palestinian cause would be carried not by the Palestinians themselves but rather alongside the banner of Arab nationalism. The most notable of these banner carriers was Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Nasser was a major in the Egyptian military during the 1948 war with the state of Israel. His unit was surrounded by Zionist troops and Nasser himself was seriously wounded.\textsuperscript{240} At the time, Egypt was a monarchy under British occupation. Nasser and his fellow officers were affected deeply by ineffectiveness and corruption of their government throughout the war and the hold over the region from European imperialism as represented by British occupation and Zionist colonization.\textsuperscript{241} In 1952, the Free Officers, organized by Nasser, overthrew the king and took power in Egypt. By 1954, Nasser had taken executive control over the country which he would hold until his death.\textsuperscript{242} While the issue of the Palestinians was not initially a priority for Nasser when he took office, this changed with the uncovering of an Israeli plot to destroy British and American installations in Cairo and a devastating raid of the Gaza Strip.\textsuperscript{243} From that point forward, Nasser’s political program, on a discursive level, became one of Arab unity and Palestinian restoration.

\textsuperscript{240} Gelvin, 170.
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., 170.
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., 171.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., 171.
A couple years after these pivotal events, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, which was majority owned by the British government, sparking outrage from the British, French and Israelis. These three countries conspired to invade Egypt and overthrow Nasser. International outrage and American pressure caused these three countries to pull back which raised Nasser’s profile and influence within Egypt and the Arab states. In 1958, Nasser made his only practical attempt at Arab political unity, creating the United Arab Republic (UAR) with Syria and entered into negotiations with Iraq for its inclusion into the new state. Despite the massive positive public reception of this news throughout the Arab Middle East, negotiations with Iraq broke down and subsequently Syria would leave the UAR in 1961. Six years later Egypt, Jordan and Syria would enter in the third Arab-Israeli war. After six days in June, the status quo of the region would be permanently shattered, historical Palestine would once again be united under a single sovereignty and Arab nationalism would falter and in its place would rise the Palestinian nationalist organizations.

---

244 Ibid., 172.
245 Ibid., 172.
246 Ibid., 172.
Chapter 3: A New Conflict, A New Discourse; 1967-1968

In 1967, everything changed. What had been divided between three separate sovereignties for nineteen years was in one fell swoop reunited through war and subsequent occupation. On June 5th, 1967 Israel launched an attack on the grounded air forces of Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Possessing total air superiority combined with the kind of miscommunication and lack of coordination that characterized the Arabs’ war effort in 1948, Israel only needed six days to double its territory by taking the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights (fig. 6). For the first time in two decades historical Palestine was once again a united territory, now under de facto Israeli sovereignty. It is with this fundamental change in the conflict that we begin our study of official political discourse.

For Israel and its citizens, the 1967 war was a moment of triumph. For one thing, the territorial gains in the Sinai and the Golan gave Israel serious leverage over their Arab neighbors. More importantly, however, Israel won the prize that had eluded them in the 1948 war: the eastern part of Jerusalem and the holy sites therein. For two decades, Israeli Jews had been unable to visit the Western Wall, their holiest site in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was and still is the national symbol of the state of Israel. Unifying it under the Israeli flag was an extremely emotional nationalistic event.

---

1 Gelvin, 174.
The Near East after the 1967 June War

Fig. 6: Israeli Territorial Gains of June 1967 (Source: PASSIA)
And while the Israeli Knesset (parliament) did not put the annexation of Jerusalem into law for another thirteen years, Israeli designs for the city were never in doubt. When Israeli defense minister Moshe Dayan reached the wall soon after its capture he stated: “We have returned to all that is holy in our land. We have returned never to be parted from it again.” ² Now that the city was in their hands, the Israelis had no interest in letting it go.

For the Arabs, the story in the wake of the war was completely different. In Arab parlance the 1967 War is referred to as the Naksa, meaning setback. However, this is little more than a euphemism for the total defeat of the Arabs at the hands of Israel. For all intents and purposes, these six days were the beginning of the end of Arab Nationalism as a political force. The great Palestinian academic Edward Said had this to say of the 1967 war: “In a matter of six days, everything that Abdel Nasser and his followers had created came apart. To be an Arab meant a sense of defeat, profound shock, and bewildering uncertainty.” ³ Such was the humiliating nature of the defeat, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the president of Egypt and the most influential Arab Nationalist, offered his resignation (an offer which the people of Egypt took to the streets to reject). ⁴ Nasser’s death a couple of years later was accompanied by the death of the first practical attempt at Arab political unity, the United Arab Republic, soon after. Nasser would be replaced by Anwar Sadat who played little more than lip service to Arab Nationalism and instead focused on Egypt and its economy. He did orchestrate the last military act of the

⁴ Smith, 2nd edition, 204.
Arab-Israel conflict in conjunction with Syria: the 1973 War which was aimed at retaking the Sinai and the Golan Heights from Israel. The Arab effort in this war’s early stages was relatively effective, which surprised both the Israelis and the Arab world. As the Israeli forces regrouped and drove towards Cairo and Damascus, a ceasefire was reached. Five years later, Egypt, the largest and most influential Arab state, signed a peace treaty with Israel (an act which resulted in its expulsion from the Arab League for a decade). This agreement was perhaps the final nail in the coffin for political pan-Arab Nationalism, the end of a process of decline that had started with defeat in 1967. While a feeling of Arab unity and solidarity still remains to this day, it is little more than sentimental, with no practical or political impetus.

For Palestinians, 1967 was, in a number of ways, a replay of 1948. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were once again created. A number of these people were refugees of the 1948 war who once again had to leave their homes. The war also brought Israeli occupation and military government to the Palestinians of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. For those Palestinians who were refugees from the land that became the state of Israel, this de facto unification of historical Palestine was a surreal experience. After nineteen years of separation from their former homes, refugees who now lived in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were all of a sudden able to return home. This return, however, was only temporary as the houses from which they fled were either demolished or repossessed and given to Jewish immigrants. The gut-wrenching

---

5 Smith, 2nd edition, 228.
6 Gelvin, 214.
7 Smith, 2nd edition, 220.
experience of seeing one’s home but being unable to stay was poignantly and powerfully portrayed by the great Palestinian short story writer Ghassan Kanafani in his novella *Returning to Haifa*. He tells the story of a Palestinian couple forced to flee from Haifa as Jewish forces cleansed the city in April 1948. In the melee, they left their five month old son asleep in their house. At first the couple was reluctant to visit Haifa in the wake of the 1967 War, fearing the grief and failure they would feel as they approached their old home. They could not, however, keep themselves away:

He turned toward his wife, but she wasn’t listening. She was turned away from him, absorbed in gazing at the road — now to the right, where the farmland stretched away as far as one could see, and now to the left, where to sea, which had remained so distant for more than twenty years, was raging near at hand. Suddenly she said:

“I never imagined that I would see Haifa again.”

He said:

“You’re not seeing it. They’re showing it to you.”

With that, Safiyya’s nerves failed her for the first time and she shouted:

“What’s all this ‘philosophy’ you’ve been spouting all day long? The gates and the sights and everything else. What happened to you?”

“What happened to me?”

He said it to himself, trembling. But he took control of his nerves and continued to speak to her quietly.

“They opened the border as soon as they completed the occupation, suddenly and immediately. That has never happened in any war in history. You know the terrible thing that happened in April 1948, so now, why this? Just for our sakes alone? No! This is part of the war. They’re saying to us, ‘Help yourselves, look and see how much better we are than you, how much more developed. You should accept being our servants. You should admire us.” But you’ve seen it yourself. Nothing’s changed. It was in our power to have done much better than they did.”

---

Here Kanafani deftly sums up the feelings of Palestine’s Arabs in the wake of both wars: the grief of expulsion, the bitterness of exile, the subservience of occupation, and the frustration at the inability to reclaim their homes. Instead, they return to see Haifa put on by the Israelis as an exhibition to show the superiority of the Jewish state.

Beyond the changes to everyday life the war brought, 1967 inspired the realization that the Arab states could do nothing to return Palestine to the Arabs. Nasser and his Arab Nationalism had failed to deliver on its promises and with their land now occupied by Israel and their armies roundly defeated, the Arab states could do nothing. A paradigm shift was occurring in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The conflict that had for nearly two decades been dominated by Nasser and the Arabs had begun to change. In the wake of the war, Palestinian groups, disillusioned with the Arabs and their failings, sprouted up with the goal of putting the fight for historical Palestine in the hands of the Palestinians. The conflict returned to the style it had taken during the mandate, a conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. It is here, with this paradigm shift, that we will begin our study of the discourse of the conflict because it is here that the two nationalisms which claimed the same piece of land reignited their direct conflict.

Official Israeli Discourse in the Immediate Aftermath of the 1967

From its birth in 1948 until 1977, Israel was ruled by the Labor party that grew out of the Labor Zionists of the second and third aliya. As such, this stream of Israeli political thought controlled the production of public discourse in the wake of the 1967 War. The international community and the United Nations took about five months to
finalize an official response to the events of the 1967 War, but Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol’s Labor government wasted little time in penning guiding principles for the state of Israel in light of this new arrangement.

The assumption in the Israeli camp was that the territorial gains of the war rendered the armistice lines of 1949 invalid. Israel had no intention of giving up any of the land captured in the war except in exchange for full peace treaties with its neighbors. Furthermore, they fully intended to expand the borders of the state beyond those of the preceding nineteen years, an action they perceived to be essential for the security of the state.10

One of the first and perhaps most famous future vision document presented to the Eshkol was what came to be known as the Allon Plan. Drafted by labor minister Yigal Allon in July, the plan called for Israel to annex the Jordan River Valley to block any potential Arab invasion from Jordan, and a corridor of land running west to Jerusalem. The remaining land of the West Bank and its inhabitants would be returned to Jordan (fig, 7).11

---

9 Smith, 2nd edition, 204.  
10 Ibid., 200.  
11 Ibid., 206.
Fig. 7 Map of the Allon Plan (Source: PASSIA)
Note that the plan gave no consideration to the desires of the Palestinian population of the West Bank. It was a purely unilateral act aimed at countering the issue of millions of new non-Jewish people under Israeli control. In this Israeli future vision document, the Palestinians were only found as Arabs to be handed off to another Arab state and therefore essentially non-existent in Israel’s imagination. The plan was never endorsed by the cabinet but it remained significant as the conflict would move forward.  

It was the first example of what would become known as the “Jordan Option” when negotiations with the Palestinians began decades later. The idea was to solve the problem by scuttling Palestinian national aspirations and giving Jordan what was left of the West Bank’s territory and population after Israel took its share.  

The failure of the Allon Plan was likely down to the government of Israel’s overall reluctance to give up that much of the land of the West Bank. What came to be favored over the Allon Plan was a policy of settlement and de facto annexation of the West Bank. At the time of the 1967 War, Menachem Begin (who we met previously as the leader of the revisionist Irgun paramilitary group and will meet again as the first Likud prime minister of Israel) was a minister without portfolio in the Eshkol government. He, along with other prominent Israeli leaders like Labor Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan, favored a policy of settlement building in the West Bank. The goal of these settlements, which Israeli citizens had begun to construct almost

---

12 The necessity of maintaining control over the Jordan River Valley to ensure the security of Israel is a demand maintained by Israel and its supporters to this day. See this video created by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs which defines Israel’s so called “defensible borders” as including the Jordan River Valley: . Currently, the Jordan River Valley is under complete Israeli control.  
13 Smith, 2nd edition, 206.
immediately after the conclusion of the war, was to create so called “facts on the ground.” The idea was to mirror the Zionist policy in the mandate period of proving Jewish, now Israeli, control over a piece of territory by building permanent structures on it.¹⁴

Just as Allon justified the annexation of the Jordan Valley in terms of Israel’s security, supporters of the settlement program used claims of security to justify expansion.¹⁵ The settlement population, and therefore direct Israeli control over territory, has steadily expanded over the course of the ensuing four and half decades of occupation to over well over half a million by 2012 (but we shall look more at the ramifications of this as we move forward in history). The important thing to note here in 1967 was that a policy of moving Israeli citizens to the West Bank to prove sovereignty was beginning to emerge in the immediate wake of the war. The framework for this policy of expansion was put into place mere weeks after the conclusion of the war. The Israeli Knesset determined that whatever land is under Israeli jurisdiction, law and administration is sovereign Israeli territory. It then gave the Israeli government the ability to extend Israeli jurisdiction, law and administration into the newly occupied territory, essentially expanding Israeli sovereignty in to this new territory.¹⁶ This decision at once opened up the newly occupied territories for Israeli settlement and required Israeli settlement to prove Israeli sovereignty over the land. It seems that Israel wasted little time in setting

---

¹⁴ Smith, 2nd edition, 206.
¹⁵ Gelvin, 188.
out to expand its control into the occupied territories with little intent of returning them to either the Arab countries or its Palestinian residents.

About a month after Allon came to the cabinet with his proposition, Prime Minister Eshkol himself outlined the “Principles Guiding Israel’s Policy in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War.” Right off the bat, Eshkol affirms the fact that Israel has no intention of returning to the pre-1967 borders:

The Government of Israel will endeavor to achieve peace with the neighboring Arab countries. We shall never permit a return to a situation of constant threat to Israel’s security, of blockade and aggression.

The implication here is that the armistice lines that defined Israel’s borders did not provide the state of Israel with a level of security it felt sufficient (meaning, obviously, land inhabited in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Palestinians would be taken by the state of Israel in order to reach this sufficient sense of security). Just as Israel had no intention of giving up any part of Jerusalem, it had no intention of drawing back to borders it felt were unsafe. As we see from day one, Israel’s policy in the occupied territories prioritized its sense of security over consideration for the wishes of the newly occupied people and showed clear intent to bring this new territory into the fold of the state of Israel.

In the same document, the prime minister addresses the issue of the Palestinian refugees and the Palestinians in the newly acquired territories.

---

18 Ibid., 171. Emphasis added.
“Israel will cooperate fully in the solution of the refugees problem... within the framework of an international and regional plan.

The government endeavors to maintain fair and equitable relations with the population in the new areas, while maintaining order and security.”¹⁹

What stands out immediately is that Eshkol does not refer to the refugees or the inhabitants of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as Palestinians. In fact, the term “Palestinian” does not enter mainstream Israeli political discourse until the late 1980s as we shall see later. It is clear that when Eshkol refers to the refugees here, his commitment to “cooperate” in finding a solution to the refugee problem neither states or implies any feeling of Israeli culpability for the existence of Palestinian refugees.

Regarding the population in the territories (again not identified as Palestinian), the government of Israel will try to keep fair and equitable, but only when order and security allow. Here not only does Israel’s sense of security supersede any self-determination for Palestinians, it also supersedes fair and equitable treatment.

A quick note about the use of the word “security” in Israeli political discourse: In almost all instances where Israeli producers of discourse discuss the expansion of Israeli territory, this expansion is justified in terms of the security of the state. The question of the security of the state has been engrained in the Israeli psyche since its inception. It is engendered in the Jewish citizens throughout their education almost to a level of institutionalized paranoia.²⁰ For example, Jewish Israeli high school students take class trips to Auschwitz as a reminder of the threats the Jewish people face. This is a process of education that culminates in mandatory service in the Israeli Defense Forces for all

---

¹⁹ Ibid., 171.
²⁰ The documentary film Defamation discusses the extent to which anti-Semitism and Israeli fears of anti-Semitism affect Israeli and US policy.
Jewish Israeli teenagers (an organization whose name reflects the centrality of the security mentality in Israel). The question, however, is how does the acquisition of territory inhabited by people hostile to the state of Israel or the settlement of Israeli citizens into this hostile territory contribute to the security of the state of Israel? So does the answer “security” fully explain Israel’s desire to expand its borders beyond those of the 1949 armistice line? Or does Israel simply want to expand its territory for the sake of expansion and uses security as an excuse? Since we cannot read the minds of the Israeli producers of discourse, we can only judge their intention on what they say and what their actions suggests. But it seems that from day one of the occupation of the territories, Israel had no intention or ceding all of its new holdings, whether for reasons of security or aspiration for expansion.

Palestinian Armed Revolution

As discussed above, the Arab defeat in the 1967 war meant that for the first time in nineteen years, the Palestinians would try to take control their own destiny and they would do this through armed revolution. To understand the major players in the Palestinian armed revolution that took the reins in the fight for historical Palestine in the wake of the 1967 War, we must first return to 1959. It was in that year that a young Yassir Arafat, along with a tight inner circle, founded Fatah. Arafat, ever the savvy nationalist leader, claimed to be born in Jerusalem and to be related to Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the most famous Palestinian nationalist leader of the mandate period. While these claims are dubious, what is known for sure is that he attended King Fuad University

21 Gelvin, 203.
in Cairo and graduated in 1951 with a degree in engineering. As early as 1951, Arafat recognized what it would take Palestinians another fifteen years to see: the Palestinians could expect nothing from the Arab states; they needed to take matters into their own hands if they were to free their homeland. To Arafat, the alternative strategy was unfolding around him. The 1950s was the age of anti-colonial revolution and national liberation. None of these revolutions were more significant to Arafat and his party than the Algerian revolution which began in 1954. The Algerian Revolution was a shockingly bloody affair with brutal French counterinsurgency answered in turn with Algerian attacks on both civilians and soldiers alike. Despite this, the strategy of armed struggle as practiced by the Algerian revolutionaries and articulated by Franz Fanon was adopted by Arafat and Fatah. This strategy would also be embraced by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the other two Palestinian groups we will study in this time period. Fatah did not muddy their message with Marxist, Maoist or Arabist aspirations. They focused strictly on the liberation of Palestine through armed struggle which presented a straightforward and appealing mission to Palestinians inside and outside of historical Palestine.

Fatah penned its constitution in 1964. The document proclaimed that the liberation of Palestine would come through popular revolution in the style articulated by Fanon and practiced in Algeria. This document made it clear, repeatedly, that the

\[22\] Ibid., 199.
\[23\] Ibid., 200.
\[24\] Ibid., 200.
\[25\] It is important to note that all of these groups were completely secular.
Palestinians would not take a back seat to the Arabs in the fight for Palestine. While the first article of the constitution affirms that the Palestinians are members of the Arab Nation, the second proclaims their independence from it: “The Palestinian people have an independent identity. They are the sole authority that decides their own destiny, and they have complete sovereignty on all their lands.”26 Because the Palestinians have the right to complete sovereignty on their lands, “the Palestinian Revolution plays a leading role in liberating Palestine.”27 This is sort of “stay off our turf” message to the Arab states is reiterated in the methods section of the constitution: “Fatah does not interfere with local Arab affairs and hence, does not tolerate such interference or obstructing its struggle by any party.”28 They were happy, however, to accept support from the Arab Nation as it was the Arab’s “national obligation” to give it.29 Fatah would need to wait until 1967 to take this leading role in the fight for Palestine.

The constitution also articulated the goals Fatah hoped to achieve through Palestinian led popular revolution. Fatah was unequivocal in its criticism of the enemy of its struggle: “The Zionist Movement is racial, colonial and aggressive in ideology, goals, organization and method... The Israeli existence in Palestine is a Zionist invasion with a colonial expansive base, and it is a natural ally to colonialism and international imperialism.”30 Clearly, the founders of Fatah saw Zionism, and the state it created, as part of a wider global imperialism and colonialism that was plaguing Africa and Asia at

---

27 Fatah Constitution, article 3.
28 Fatah Constitution, article 27.
29 Fatah Constitution, article 5.
30 Fatah Constitution, article 7, 8.
this time. The goal of the revolution, therefore, was the, “complete liberation of Palestine, and eradication of Zionist economic, political, military and cultural existence.” This racial, colonial entity would then be replaced with the establishment of “an independent democratic state with complete sovereignty on all Palestinian lands, and Jerusalem is its capital city, and protecting the citizens' legal and equal rights without any racial or religious discrimination.”

It is important to note here that the framers of the Fatah constitution never in the entire document use the terms Jewish, Judaism, or Jews. To them (in terms of political discourse anyway), Israel was not a Jewish state but a settler, colonial, Zionist one. Since the tactics of Zionism were colonial and imperialistic and the state it created separated the Palestinians from historical Palestine, it needed to be replaced. The Fatah future vision is a Palestinian state in all of historical Palestine, not without Jews but without Zionism. This is not to say, however, that Fatah were perfectly happy to live alongside all of the Israelis that had immigrated over the past half century. The document refers to Palestine as part of the Arab world and considers Israeli existence in Palestine “a Zionist invasion.” It is perhaps stretching the imagination, therefore, to believe that should Fatah’s popular revolution have been more successful, the state they created would have been welcoming to all of the hundreds of thousands of Israelis who inhabited the lands of historical Palestine. The important thing to realize, however, is that Fatah’s opposition to these people living in historical Palestine was not a result of their religious affiliation but

31 Fatah Constitution, article 12.
32 Fatah Constitution, article 13.
33 Fatah Constitution, article 8.
because they were in Palestine as a result of colonial settlement. Obviously this view of Zionism is completely at odds with the self-view of the Zionist movement which sees Israel as the culmination of Jewish history. To an Israeli, who sees Zionism as an expression of Jewish self-determination and not a settler-colonial movement, talk of eradicating “Zionist economic, political, military and cultural existence” seems to follow a long history of anti-Semitic rhetoric. My point is that to view this document or subsequent documents we will study as anti-Semitic is a misinterpretation. Palestinian opposition to Zionism was anti-colonial, according the Palestinian understanding of the situation in which they found themselves, not anti-Semitic. This is just one of the failures to see eye to eye that we will encounter as we move ahead in history.

One last note on Fatah’s original constitution of 1964: it is interesting to trace the evolution of the sentiment expressed in article 22 and echoed in other Palestinian political documents of this period. The article states that Fatah will oppose: “any political solution offered as an alternative to demolishing the Zionist occupation in Palestine, as well as any project intended to liquidate the Palestinian case or impose any international mandate on its people.”34 It is interesting because as of 2013, the Palestinian Authority, under the control of Fatah, has been actively negotiating for two decades for an alternative political solution to the conflict instead of demolishing the Zionist occupation in Palestine.

As Arafat and Fatah were advocating Palestinian resistance independent of Arab aspirations, Nasser was attempting to bring the issue of Palestine under Arab control. Nasser was concerned by guerilla raids into Israel by Palestinian groups which were

34 Fatah Constitution, article 22.
aggravating the already tense relationships between Israel and its neighbors. In an effort to avert a potential crisis caused by these raids, Nasser called together the leaders of the Arab states to create a body that would control the actions of Palestinian guerilla groups. Thus the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was created and a Palestinian diplomat by the name of Ahmad al-Shuqayri was installed as its leader. While nominally representing the national goals of the Palestinian people, the PLO, as imagined by Nasser, was a group subservient to the Arab League. The idea was for the Arab states to play the leading role in the fight for Palestine while ensuring the Palestinian nationalist groups would do nothing to jeopardize Arab aims. As we have discussed above, this all fell apart with the Arab defeat in 1967. Soon after, Yassir Arafat’s Fatah would come to dominate the PLO and he would become chairman for the following three and a half decades.

Resolution 242: Israeli and Palestinian Reactions

While the Israelis were drawing maps and seeking to establish facts on the ground and the Palestinians were claiming their place at the forefront of the battle for historical Palestine in the months following the war, the international community and the UN were writing their official response to the events of June 1967. This response finally came in November of 1967 in the form of UN Security Council Resolution 242. The resolution took so long to draft because it was written meticulously to contain a level of ambiguity.

35 Gelvin, 198.
36 Ibid., 198.
37 Ibid., 199.
38 Gelvin, 199.
that would ensure acceptance not only by Israel and the Arab states but also by both the United States and the Soviet Union. The main goal of the resolution was to lay the foundation of the so-called “land for peace formula.” The idea was that the Israelis would return the land they conquered in 1967 in exchange for recognition and peace treaties from the Arab states.\(^{39}\) The Israelis officially accepted Resolution 242 immediately (as did Egypt and Jordan) but the PLO did not. In order to understand why, we must first look at the text of the document.

After a brief preamble expressing the concern of the UN over the situation in the Middle East and emphasizing the inadmissibility of acquiring territory through war, UN Resolution 242 reads like this:

1. Affirms that the fulfillment 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;
2. Affirms further the necessity
   (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
   (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
   (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones.\(^{40}\)

There are two important things to note about this document in the context of Israeli and Palestinian future visions. First was that the resolution discusses exclusively the rights to sovereignty of states, thereby precluding the Palestinians from being a party

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 176.
\(^{40}\) Quoted in Gelvin, 176.
to the debate. The second is that Palestinians are not even mentioned in the text. They are referred to abstractly as a “refugee problem” that deserves a just resolution. To the PLO, this was a huge step back from previous UN resolutions, most notably Resolution 194, which called for the return of refugees to their homes. This combination of ignoring Palestinian national aspirations and backtracking on the right of refugees to return led to the rejection of the resolution as the basis for negotiation by the PLO (until 1988, anyways). We shall look at the wording of this rejection below but let us first look at Israel’s acceptance of the resolution.

**Israeli Reaction**

Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol signed on to the resolution on behalf of Israel a short time after its passage at the UN. However, the ambiguity of the resolution allowed for differing interpretations between Israel and the Arab states. Foreign Minister Abba Eban elaborated Israel’s interpretation of the document to the UN General Assembly in October of 1968. Because the resolution focused on the sovereignty of states and made no specific mention of the Palestinians, the response of the foreign minister primarily discussed the prospects of peace with Israel’s neighbors and not with its newly occupied population. But just as Resolution 242 made peripheral mention of the Palestinians, the response of Foreign Minister Eban had a thing or two to say about the future of the Palestinians as seen from official Israeli eyes.

---

41 Gelvin, 176.
Eban early on in his speech reiterated the sentiment found so often in Israeli political discourse over the last 45 years: Israel would not return to the status quo that existed in 1967. Eban picked up on the phrase “secure and recognized borders” from Resolution 242 to justify this refusal. To Eban, this was proof of international support for changing the current borders, the so-called 1967 borders, to ones that satisfy Israel’s sense of security. He cites an unnamed United States resolution draft author as pointing out that the term “safe and secure borders” meant the creation of borders “different from the old armistice demarcation lines.” His American drafter went on to state that “secure and recognized boundaries... had never existed in the Middle East. They must, therefore be fixed by the parties in the course of the peacemaking process.” In the mind of the Israelis, this was the international support they needed to permanently change the borders from the lines that existed before the war. This understanding of Resolution 242 would come to have serious consequences for Palestinians despite their official absence from the document.

Reading further into Eban’s speech to the UN, we find that he actually does use the word Palestinian twice (although only when quoting the Egyptians). Following the pattern of Resolution 242, when Eban does talk about Palestinians in any length, he refers to them as refugees. Point six of the nine-point peace plan Eban delivered as part of this

---

43 Ibid., 173
44 The fact that the resolution stipulated that Israel must withdraw “territories occupied in the recent conflict” rather than “the territories occupied” was also interpreted by Israeli diplomats as international support for annexation of certain territories to create “secure borders.” This, however, is slightly neutered by the official French version of the resolution which includes this definite article.
45 Eban, “Nine-point Peace Plan,” in Lukacs A Documentary Record, 176
particular speech to the UN was about refugees. Two crucial points arise from Eban’s proposal to solve the refugee problem. The first is that Israel refused (and to this day refuses) to take any responsibility for the creation of the refugees. Because Eban does not see Israel as culpable, he does not believe that Israel should be exclusively responsible for solving the problem, as is evident in his proposal to solve the refugee question.

The second point Eban makes is that the refugee question should be removed from the overall peace process. His statement on refugees begins: “The problem of displaced populations was caused by war and can be solved by peace.”46 This does not mean that the problem of refugees will be solved with peace negotiations, however. The Israeli plan as articulated by Eban was to call “a conference of Middle Eastern States...together with the Governments contributing to refugee relief and the specialized agencies of the United Nations in order to chart a five-year plan for the solution of the refugee problem in the framework of a lasting peace and the integration of refugees into productive life. This conference can be called in advance of peace negotiations.”47 The Israelis, who since the end of the 1948 war favored resettlement of displaced Palestinians into neighboring Arab countries rather than allowing return to the territory that became Israel,48 aimed to depoliticize the Palestinian refugee before any direct peace negotiation began. With the refugee (which to the Israeli producers of discourse was coterminous with Palestinian) off the political table when negotiations took place, the Israeli

46 Ibid., 179
47 Ibid., 179. Emphasis added
48 Gelvin, 132.
government would not have to worry about demands for repatriation of refugees from the Arab states.

Eban re-emphasizes these two points (Israeli innocence in the creation of refugees and the separation between the peace process and the future of the refugees) about a year later. Towards the end of 1968, Ambassador Gunnar Jarring approached the states involved in the 1967 War on behalf of the UN to check on each state’s willingness to fulfill the provisions of Resolution 242. Abba Eban once again was the speaker on behalf of the Israeli government, this time answering the questions of Ambassador Jarring. Amongst his answers was a reiteration of the Israeli demand never to return to pre-1967 borders, insisting that “secure and recognized boundaries have never yet existed between Israel and the Arab states... they should now be established as part of the peace making process.”49 Regarding refugees, Eban seemed to have hardened his language regarding the two points articulated above. His renunciation of Israeli guilt was more explicit: “The refugee problem was caused by the wars launched against Israel by Arab States, and has been perpetuated through the refusal of Arab States to establish peaceful relations with Israel.”50 He is also more explicit about the Arab states’ position towards the refugees in the context of the peace process: “In view of the special humanitarian nature of this issue we do not make agreement on plans for a solution of the refugee problem contingent on agreement on any other aspect of the Middle Eastern problem. For the same reason it should not be invoked by the Arab States to obstruct agreements on other problems.”51

50 Ibid., 6.
51 Ibid. 6
Here Eban’s effort to depoliticize the Palestinian refugee is quite explicit, citing it as a humanitarian concern rather than a political factor. The last sentence expresses Israeli frustration at Arab use of the refugee issue as a political issue to be dealt with in a political forum.

So what can we take out of the Israeli reaction to Resolution 242? The first point is that Israel refused to return to the de facto borders that existed from 1948 up to 1967. As we move forward and the PLO comes to claim the land of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for a Palestinian state, this talk of secure borders begins to have serious consequences on Palestinian national aspirations. Secondly, the Israelis only saw the Palestinians in the context of Resolution 242 as a refugee problem rather than as an independent nation or a political force. In taking on this problem, the Israeli position, based in its refusal to take responsibility for its creation, was to depoliticize and resettle the refugees in the Arab countries in which they found themselves. That position on the refugees will hardly change over the ensuing decades but the realization that the Palestinians were an independent national political force would grow.

Palestinian Reaction

Resolution 242 was rejected by the PLO. At the time, the organization was still under the command of Shuqayri, meaning it had not yet been taken over by the Palestinian factions. The first issue that the PLO had with the resolution was the ambiguity that allowed it to be accepted by both Israel and the Arab States:
The resolution as a whole is in the nature of a political declaration of general principles and is more like an expression of international intentions than the resolution of an executive power. Its treatment of the question of the withdrawal of Israeli forces is superficial, rather than being a decisive demand. It leaves Israel many loopholes to justify her continued occupation of Arab territories, and may be interpreted as permitting her to withdraw from such territories as she chooses to withdraw from and to retain such areas as she wishes to retain.\(^{52}\)

Clearly, the PLO had the same interpretation of the resolution as the Israeli government regarding the treatment of Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory: the resolution gave Israel room to maneuver when it came to keeping and conceding territory. While this was a boon to Israel and its future aims, it was unacceptable to the PLO who had a diametrically opposed vision for the future of Palestine. Point two of the PLO’s rejection focused on this:

The resolution more than once refers to Israel’s right to exists and to establish permanent, recognized frontiers...this imposes on the Arab countries undertakings and a political and actual situation which are fundamentally and gravely inconsistent with the Arab character of Palestine, the essence of the Palestinian cause and the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland.\(^{53}\)

At the time of Resolution 242, the PLO aimed to create an Arab state in the entirety of historical Palestine (as we move on to 1968, we will see how the PLO came to define the character of this imagined Arab state). How, then, could they accept an international resolution advocating for the permanence of a state in territory they claimed? Additionally, “the resolution ignores the right of the refugees to return to their homes...thereby annulling the resolutions adopted by the United Nations over the past

---

\(^{52}\) The Palestine Liberation Organization “Statement Rejecting U.N. Resolution 242” in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 290.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 290.
twenty years.” And most importantly to the PLO, the resolution “ignores the existence of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination.”

Overall, Resolution 242 was a step backwards in the eyes of the PLO. Not only did it solidify Israel’s permanence and ability to control larger swaths of territory, it went back on previous UN documents and resolutions calling for the return of Palestinian refugees and the rights of Palestinian self-determination. Whereas the ambiguity of the document served Israel’s future vision of an expanded Israeli state with new borders despite the will of the newly occupied people, it hampered the desire of the PLO to return to historical Palestine and exercise Palestinian self-determination in land it claimed as its own. It made the problem of the Palestinians one of resettling refugees rather than issue about land.

But just as the failure of the 1967 proved to be the end of Arab involvement in the overall conflict, so too did Arab involvement in the PLO end. By the end of the year, the Egyptian installed chairman Ahmad al-Shuqayri was forced to step down. Over the next year of interim leadership, the PLO absorbed the Palestinian commando groups, most notably Fatah who came to dominate the organization. This new-look PLO quickly began creating discourse that reflected this new state of affairs.

---

54 Ibid., 291.
55 Ibid., 291.
56 Smith, 2nd edition, 213.
Chapter 4: Israeli Plans and PLO Rebirth; 1968-1970

Fatah had begun its military agitations against Israel before it was officially absorbed into the PLO. Early on in its history, Fatah began conducting random bombing operations in Israel, causing little damage and few casualties but inciting significant Israeli concern and reprisals.\(^1\) Although these activities exceeded any actions by the Shuqayri-led PLO, Fatah lacked widespread support for its revolutionary activities before the 1967 war.\(^2\) In July of 1967, Arafat himself entered the West Bank to direct Fatah’s actions but effective Israeli suppression and little Palestinian support prevented Fatah from having much impact.

In the wake of the war, however, the new situation resulted in a shaky alliance between King Husayn of Jordan and Yassir Arafat. King Husayn, who feared that Israel would annex the West Bank, which he had controlled for the previous nineteen years, allowed Arafat’s Fatah to use Jordan, where Palestinian support was higher, as a base of operations for attacks against Israeli targets in the West Bank and Israel proper.\(^3\) He hoped that these attacks would discourage Israel from maintaining control of the land. Once Israel was convinced that retention of the West Bank was a bad idea, Husayn would happily discard Fatah and retake control of the territory.\(^4\) Arafat and Fatah, however, used the opportunity to expand its operations against Israel while using Jordanian

---

\(^1\) Smith, 2\(^{nd}\) edition, 188.
\(^2\) Ibid., 188.
\(^3\) Ibid., 212.
\(^4\) Ibid., 212.
sovereignty as a shield against the kind of suppression that occurred in the Israeli occupied West Bank. ²

Husayn’s decision to allow Fatah to attack Israeli positions from Jordan came back to bite him. On one hand, as time went on, it became harder and harder to limit Palestinian activities. On the other, Israeli reprisals on Jordanian territory began in February of 1968. ⁶ The most significant of these occurred in March of that year, and it seemed to validate the Fatah position Palestine that could only be freed with Palestinian hands. Israel launched a huge reprisal attack against the Jordanian village of al-Karameh to destroy a Fatah camp located in the village. The Israeli force was met with strong resistance by Palestinian guerillas and Jordanian artillery. While Israel was able to destroy the camp, that the Palestinians were able to push back the mighty Israeli military, something the armies of the Arab states could not do, and inflict over one hundred casualties created a stir in the area. ⁷ The serendipitous fact that the name of the village meant “dignity” only added to the propaganda value of the event. ⁸ In the wake of the battle, thousands of new volunteers turned out to join Fatah or rival Palestinian militant factions and began taking control of Palestinian refugee camps across Jordan. ⁹ This battle put the Palestinian militant organizations into the forefront of the conflict. ¹⁰ With

² Ibid., 212
³ Ibid., 212.
⁷ Gelvin, 199.
⁸ Ibid., 199.
⁹ Smith, 2⁹th edition, 212.
¹⁰ Interestingly, the battle has become an important national propaganda myth in Jordan as well. Each year, the anniversary of the battle is marked by King Abdullah and the campus of the University of Jordan hosts a recently built monument to the Jordanian soldiers killed in the battle.
their new numbers and popular support, these guerrilla organizations were able to take control of the PLO.

Fatah’s success on the battlefield of al-Karameh did not, however, mean they had a monopoly on Palestinian paramilitary resistance to Israel. Their biggest rival, and our second main producer of Palestinian national political discourse, was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). A Marxist-Leninist revolutionary organization, the PFLP condemned the conventional wars waged by the Arab states against Israel as “the war of the bourgeoisie.” The PFLP plan of action written in 1969, with its commitment to revolutionary war and its bitter indictment of the Arab bourgeoisie’s ties to global imperialism, reads like it was pulled directly from the pages of Franz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*. Unlike Arafat’s Fatah, which aimed to steer well clear of the Arab state affairs, the PFLP sought to use a broad Arab revolutionary movement to radicalize the Arab governments in the fight for Palestine. This comes across rather clearly in the group’s founding document:

> The Palestinian struggle is a part of the whole Arab liberation movement and the world liberation movement. The Arab bourgeoisie and world imperialism are trying to impose a peaceful solution on this Palestinian problem but this suggestion merely promotes the interests of imperialism and Zionism, doubt in the efficacy of people’s war as a means of liberation and the preservation of the relation of the Arab bourgeoisie with the imperialist world market.

And later:

\[\text{References}\]

12 Smith, 2nd edition, 212.
The Arab bourgeoisie is quite prepared for a limited satisfaction of the needs of the national struggle as long as it respects the limits that the bourgeoisie sets. A clear illustration of this is the material help that Saudi Arabia offers Fatah while Fatah declares that she will not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab countries.\textsuperscript{14} The PFLP never had any intention of staying out of the internal affairs of other Arab countries. Their revolution was a class war as much as a national one and it included the revolutionary movement of all Arabs, not just Palestinians. As such, the PFLP would not stand for the Arab bourgeoisie or any other state preventing this revolution. And while the main field of the revolution is Palestine and “the decisive battle must be in Palestine,” the plan finishes by essentially calling for the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy in Jordan:

The problem of the revolution in Palestine is dialectally connected with the problem of the revolution in Jordan. A chain of plots between the Jordanian monarchy, imperialism and Zionism have proved this connection. The struggle in East Jordan must take the correct path, that of class struggle. The Palestinian struggle must not be used as a means of propping up the Jordanian monarchy... This is the only way in which Amman can become an Arab Hanoi: a base for the revolutionaries fighting inside Palestine.\textsuperscript{15}

The reference to Amman as an Arab Hanoi, along with the general anti-imperialist revolution flavor of the document very much speaks to the age in which it was written. The fifties and sixties were the time of decolonization and national revolution. The PFLP, like Fatah, saw the Palestinians as revolutionaries fighting the colonizing Zionist forces. To look for the state of Israel in these documents is counterproductive. It is not there. There is no belief by these Palestinian paramilitary fighters that the state of Israel is in any way permanent. It is colonial entity established by the Zionist movement that needed to be replaced with an Arab Palestinian state. As we saw with the PLO

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 341
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 342
rejection of Resolution 242 and here with the PFLP’s treatment of the king of Jordan, any
document or entity that stands in the way of the decolonization of Palestine must be
opposed or dealt with.

It is probably productive here to return to an issue raised in the discussion of the
Fatah founding document. Just like Fatah, the PFLP never mentions Jews or Judaism in
its charter. PFLP opposition to Zionism was not based on the Jewish character of the
movement but rather its colonialist character. This colonialist character is what was
preventing Palestinian refugees from returning to their homeland and preventing
Palestinian self-determination and needed to be replaced for the PFLP vision to be
realized. This vision begins to take shape as the Palestinian factions, led by Fatah and the
PLFP come to control the PLO in 1968.

The New Palestinian National Covenant

Following the resignation of Ahmad al-Shuqayri from the PLO, the organization
underwent a facelift. On the strength of the propaganda victory that was the Battle of
Karameh, the Palestinian militant factions swept into control of the PLO. Fatah took 33
of the 57 seats allotted to the paramilitary groups (out of 105 total seats) which made up
the PLO’s ruling body, the Palestinian National Council (PNC).16 Eventually, in 1969,
Arafat would be elected head of the executive committee. This did not mean, however,
that Arafat’s Fatah was able to steer the direction of the PLO. A fierce rivalry evolved
between Arafat and the founder of the PFLP, George Habash, who remained committed

16 Smith, 2nd edition, 213.
to radicalizing the neighboring Arab regimes and overthrowing those who would not commit to the liberation of Palestine. There was nothing that Arafat could do to sway Habash from this course despite Arafat’s larger base of popular support. Each of the numerous groups on the council had the support of an Arab country and each had its own strategy and goals. The council therefore became not an executive, determining the course of the revolution, but an umbrella organization within which all of the factions were represented.\(^{17}\) The PNC had no ability to deploy or coordinate the operations of the various militias that were nominally under their authority. While this perhaps is a haphazard and unorganized way to run a revolution, it meant that the PLO had no single home base that Israel could attack in order to stamp out Palestinian resistance.\(^ {18}\) However, this new PLO was able to unite enough in 1968 to revise the original 1964 Palestinian National Covenant.

The covenant set out the goals of the PLO and the methods by which they were to be achieved. Compared to the original 1964 charter penned under the Egyptian and therefore Arab nationalist influenced Shuqayri, the revisions deemphasized pan-Arab goals and focused on armed struggle as the means to liberate Palestine. It acknowledged that the goals of Arab nationalism and Palestinian liberation were complementary goals but made it clear that the Palestinian people would take the reins of achieving the latter.

The covenant first set out, however, to define exactly what “Palestine” is and who the Palestinians are. This self-definition is invaluable for our purposes as it establishes a

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 213.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 213.
baseline PLO future vision, the evolution of which we can trace over the ensuing forty-five years. As we look at this document, it is important to understand that it was penned in the age of decolonization and anti-colonial national revolution. The document reflects the Palestinian attitude that its struggle was against a colonial usurper, not a race or a religion.

The covenant opens with the assertion that the Palestinians have a legal right to their homeland of Palestine and the right to exercise self-determination within it. It defines this homeland as the “Palestine with its boundaries that existed at the time of the British mandate.” The Palestinians, those who have the right to self-determination in Palestine, are “the Arab citizens who were living permanently in Palestine until 1947, whether they were expelled from there or remained. Whoever is born to a Palestinian Arab father after this date, within Palestine or outside it, is a Palestinian.” Additionally, “Jews who were living permanently in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians. [For the dating of the Zionist invasion, considered to have begun in 1917] [sic].”

The first thing to notice is that this definition makes explicit a distinction between Jews and Zionist settlers that had been implicitly expressed in both the Fatah and PFLP founding documents. It states clearly that the PLO’s struggle is against Zionism and not Jews. To the PLO, Judaism is a faith, not a nationality:

---

20 Ibid., 292.
21 Ibid., 292.
Judaism, its character as a religion of revelation, is not a nationality with an independent existence. Likewise, the Jews are not one people with an independent personality. They are rather citizens of the states to which they belong.\textsuperscript{22}

It is because of this understanding of Judaism that the PLO indicates that there are Jewish members of the Palestinian nation. This statement is not merely an inclusive message to Palestinian Jews, however. By arguing that the Jews are members of a faith rather than a national group, the PLO aimed to delegitimize claims to the land of historical Palestine made by Zionism as a national movement (just as the Zionists aimed, and still aim today, to delegitimize Palestinian national claims to the land by arguing that Palestinians are merely a part of the Arab nation and have no specific tie to Palestine).

The enemy of the PLO was Zionism. To the PLO in 1968, Zionism was, “a political movement organically related to world Imperialism and hostile to all movements of liberation and progress in the world. It is a racist and fanatical movement in its formation: aggressive, expansionist, and colonialist in its aims; and fascist and Nazi in its means.”\textsuperscript{23} Here we see the grounds of PLO opposition to Zionism. As we have discussed before, Zionism represented colonialism, expropriation, and expulsion to the Palestinians. The state that was created by the Zionist movement, Israel, was standing in the way of Palestinian self-determination and return to historical Palestine. Israel was, to the 1968 PLO, a temporary colony that needed to be replaced. It was “the instrument of aggression” that was preventing the establishment of a “peace based on justice.”\textsuperscript{24} It was on this basis that the PLO pledged itself to, “restore Palestine and liberate it through

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 294.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 294.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 301.
armed struggle.”\textsuperscript{25} The PLO commitment to armed struggle was meant to be absolute and unchanging. The covenant described armed struggle as “the only way to liberate Palestine” and indicated that it is “a strategy and not a tactic”\textsuperscript{26} to be discarded when a political solution is available. Armed struggle was, “a defensive act necessitated by requirements of self-defense,”\textsuperscript{27} aimed at combating the imperialist and colonialist Zionist movement. Liberation meant the liberation of all of historical Palestine. The covenant declared the 1947 partition of Palestine, the basis for the foundation of Israel, “null and void,” because it ran, “contrary to the wish of the people of Palestine and its natural right to its homeland.”\textsuperscript{28}

So here we see the Palestinian baseline vision from which we will track change. In 1968 according to the foundational document of the PLO, the Palestinians desired to exercise self-determination and sovereignty in all of historical Palestine. Palestinians were those born in Palestine before 1947 and their descendants, including Jews who resided in Palestine before the beginning of Zionist immigration and their descendants. The means to achieve this self-determination was a campaign of armed struggle against the state of Israel. This strategy of armed struggle would not be discarded in favor of an expedient political solution that did not liberate all of Palestine. This was meant to be absolute and unchanging.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 292.  
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 292.  
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 292.  
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 294.
The PLO issued a set of resolutions in the wake of the drafting of the national covenant. Included in these resolutions was a grim prediction of what would become of Palestine and the Palestinians should armed struggle be jettisoned in favor of a political solution. The particular political solution that had been floated was the idea of the creation of a Palestinian political entity within the territory occupied in the 1967 War. We saw in the founding Fatah document that such as solution would be unacceptable and it is reiterated in these resolutions:

The Zionist movement along with imperialism and its tool, Israel, is seeking to consolidate Zionist aggression against Palestine and the military victories won by Israel in 1948 and 1967 by establishing a Palestinian entity in the territories occupied during the June, 1967 aggression. This entity would owe its existence to the legitimization and perpetuation of the state of Israel, which is absolutely incompatible with the Palestinian Arab people’s right to the whole of Palestine, their homeland. Such a spurious entity would in fact be an Israeli colony and would lead to the liquidation of the Palestinian cause once and for all to the benefit of Israel. The creation of such an entity would, moreover, constitute and interim stage during which Zionism could evacuate the territory of Palestine occupied during the June 5 war of its Arab inhabitants, as a preliminary step to incorporation it in the Israeli entity. In addition, this would lead to the creation of a subservient Palestinian Arab administration in the territories occupied during the June 5 war on which Israel could rely in combating the Palestinian revolution... the National Assembly hereby declares its categorical rejection of the idea of establishing a spurious Palestinian entity in the territory of Palestine occupied since June 5... The assembly hereby declares, moreover, that any individual or party, Palestinian Arab or non-Palestinian, who advocates or supports the creation of such a subservient entity, is the enemy of the Palestinian Arab people and the Arab nation.\(^{29}\)

We shall see as time goes on and the conflict progresses how spot-on this prediction becomes. But for now it is enough to know that the original Palestinian future vision left no room for a solution of this kind. The last important thing the new covenant and the subsequent PNA resolutions did was reaffirm the rejection of UN Resolution 242 by the 1967 PLO. It reiterated more or less the same conclusions regarding the resolution

as standing in the way of Palestinian self-determination in Palestine and reducing the issue of one of refugees rather than land.

Israel’s Demands and US Pressure.

We now move into 1969. The PLO was still operating with Jordan as a base and exercising de-facto sovereignty over large parts of Amman, a state of affairs leading to frequent Israeli reprisal attacks into Jordan. The organization was dominated by Fatah but the PFLP was causing significant havoc agitating for an overthrow of King Husayn in Jordan, a state of affairs which the King would not tolerate for long. Israel had expanded the municipal borders of Jerusalem to include the Old City and parts of East Jerusalem. Most importantly, Israel controlled the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and it was unclear what it intended to do with this territory.

We have raised the question previously if Israel ever intended to relinquish control of the territories it conquered in the 1967 War. Judging by the speeches given by Israeli military leaders when their forces reached Jerusalem, the Israelis would never let the Holy City out of their control. However, their acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 242 indicated that they would agree to cede control of “territories occupied in the recent conflict.” Israel made it clear that it would be at the very least incorporate enough occupied territory to create so-called “secure borders.” Beyond that Israel’s stance on the future of the occupied territories was unclear. In May of 1969, Abba Eban gave a speech on this very issue to the Knesset:
Three demands which Israel will not waive are a permanent presence at Sharm el-Sheikh, a unified Jerusalem despite concessions to Jordan over the Holy Places and a Golan Heights forever out of Syrian hands.\textsuperscript{30}

It seems, then, that in 1969, Israel’s territorial aims went beyond simply establishing secure borders. Or, if, the goal was safe and secure borders, then it is clear that those imagined borders expanded beyond the territory of historical Palestine and into the occupied territory of Syria and Egypt. We have discussed the issue of Jerusalem previously. From day that East Jerusalem came under the control of Israel, the Jewish state had no intention of giving it up. The other two specific demands are new to the discourse. They both fundamentally undermine the formula put forth in Resolution 242 aimed at creating a permanent peace in the region. Sharm el-Sheikh, internationally recognized as Egyptian territory, sits at the base of the Sinai Peninsula at the opening of the Gulf of Aqaba, Israel’s access point to the Red Sea. The Golan Heights, recognized as Syrian territory, is a plateau that overlooks the Galilee and runs straight downhill to Damascus. An argument can be made that Israel’s security is stronger by maintaining control over these two regions. However, the idea behind Resolution 242 was that in exchange for peace treaties, Israel would return territories to the respective Arab states. To demand a permanent presence in both of these areas runs directly contrary to this formula. Therefore, even though maintaining a permanent presence may in the short term have security benefits for the state of Israel, this presence would simply prolong the state of conflict by preventing the drafting of peace treaties. Israel seems to making the choice to expand its territory rather than follow the international formula for a lasting peace. Negotiations are a two way street, however, and the Arab League’s committal at

\textsuperscript{30} Abba Eban, “Knesset Statement on Occupied Territories,” in Lukacs, \textit{A Documentary Record}, 181.
Khartoum in 1967 to no recognition, negotiation, or peace with Israel also prolonged the state of conflict (despite this declaration, Egypt’s president Anwar al-Sadat was willing to enter into negotiations to regain lost territory as early as 1971 and as we, covered previously, Jordan’s Husayn was willing to turf out the PLO if it meant he could negotiate the West Bank back into his hands). But since our concern is mainly with Israeli discourse regarding the Palestinians, this issue is less of a concern for us. Suffice it to say that Israel’s territorial ambitions extended beyond historical Palestine, independent of the stipulations of Resolution 242.

It seems that the United States government was concerned over this issue of conquered land. U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers put forward the U.S. understanding of Resolution 242 in an address in December of 1969. While American political discourse on the conflict is not within the scope of this study (that would be a book in itself), the Israeli reaction to this proposal illuminates certain aspects of the Israeli future vision.

Rogers in his plan is trying to toe the line between Israeli and Arab demands. He states that “to call for Israeli withdrawal as envisaged in the U.N. resolution without achieving agreements on peace would be partisan towards the Arab [states]. To call on the Arab [states] to accept peace without Israeli withdrawal would be partisan towards Israel.”

He goes on to state that the United States supports the provisions of the resolution requiring Israel withdraw from occupied territories. Rogers was, however,

---

31 Smith, Charles, D., 212 and 224.
sympathetic to Israel’s desire to change its boundaries from the 1949 armistice lines. He acknowledges that these were, “armistice lines, not final political borders.” However, he breaks with the Israeli vision when describing the shift in armistice lines. While the Israelis are adamant that they will not return to the pre-war armistice lines, Rogers is more flexible. He states that the resolution “neither endorses nor precludes these armistice lines as the definitive political boundaries.” That is, the United States is not opposed to using the armistice lines as the basis for final borders. He continues: “any changes in the preexisting lines should not reflect the weight of conquest and should be confined to insubstantial alterations required for mutual security. We do not support expansionism.” Here is a phrase that we will shortly see drew the ire of the Israelis. On the one hand, it contradicts the drastic changes to Israel’s envisioned in the Allon Plan and Eban’s speech to the Knesset. On the other, it terms significant changes in Israel’s borders “expansionism,” rather than justifiable by security concerns, as argued by Israel.

Rogers covered two more issues beyond the borders and withdrawal that are of interest to us here: refugees and Jerusalem. Regarding refugees, Rogers acknowledges that “there can be no lasting peace without a just settlement of the problem of those Palestinians whom the wars of 1948 and 1967 have made homeless.” However, he puts forward no plan to bring about the settlement of this issue. He simply warns that should it continue then the problem will become increasingly serious as more generations of young Palestinians grow up as refugees. Note that Rogers is far more willing to use the

33 Ibid., 58.
34 Ibid., 58.
35 Ibid., 59.
36 Ibid., 59.
word “Palestinian” in the official discourse than Israeli officials. However, in line withIsraeli officials and Resolution 242, Rogers gives no consideration to Palestinian desires for self-determination.

The U.S. vision for Jerusalem has significant breaks with that of Israel. Rogers first makes it clear that the U.S. would not “accept unilateral actions by any part to decide the final status of the city.” This statement is likely aimed at the Israelis as by this point they had already expanded the municipal boundaries of the city to include Arab East Jerusalem and the beginnings of Israeli settlements were appearing in this newly controlled area. Rogers shared the Israeli desire for a unified Jerusalem. He states: “we believe Jerusalem should be a unified city within which there would no longer be restrictions on the movement of persons and goods. There should be open access to the unified city for all persons of all faiths and nationalities.”

The crucial difference is that while the Israelis see a united Jerusalem under Israeli control, Rogers describes a Jerusalem where “administration of the unified city should take into account the interests of all its inhabitants and of the Jewish, Islamic and Christian communities. And there should be roles for both Israel and Jordan in the civic, economic, and religious life of the city.”

A Jerusalem with Jordan influencing not only religious but civil and economic aspects of the city is vastly different from the Israeli vision of a unified Jerusalem under Israeli control.

37 Ibid., 59.
38 Ibid., 59-60.
The Israeli government took issue with Rogers’ framing of the situation in the wake of the 1967 War. The response of the government first of all emphasized Israel’s belief that the war and the lasting tension were due to exclusively to Arab aggression. They believed the state of conflict was a result of the Arab governments’ lack of intention to make peace with Israel rather than its occupation of Arab land. They were quite offended at Rogers’ implication that Israel actions were expansionist in their goals:

The Six Day war, or the situation created in its wake, cannot be spoken of in terms of expansion or conquest. Israel cried out against aggression which threatened its very existence, and used its natural right of self-defense.  

Despite this aggression, the Israeli government states that it is willing to negotiate lasting peace treaties with the neighboring Arab governments, so long as those negotiations are “without prior conditions by any party.” This is an Israeli demand we have encountered before. That time the concern of the Israelis was that the Arabs would use the refugee situation in negotiations. Here the context implies that amongst those prior conditions from which Israel wants to be freed are the 1949 armistices lines that had defined Israel’s borders. Instead, as we have repeatedly seen, the Israelis believe negotiations will establish new, permanent borders. Those borders are to be discussed only by the involved parties, however. The government of Israel took serious issue with U.S. and other countries meddling in the peace process:

39 Government of Israel “Statement Embodying a Reaction to the U.S. Secretary of State Roger’s Address” (December 11th, 1969) in Lukacs A Documentary Record, 182.
40 Ibid., 182.
The position of Israel is: The negotiations for peace must be free from prior conditions and external influence and pressures. The prospects for peace will be seriously marred if states outside the region continue to raise territorial proposals.\footnote{Ibid., 182.}

That is to say, Rogers’ suggestion that the negotiations could be based on the 1949 armistices lines, the so-called 1967 borders, was in the eyes of the Israelis damaging to peace as it imposed prior conditions on the negotiations from which Israel wished to be free. Clearly, as we have seen several times in the two and half years since the conclusion of the war, Israel intended to see drastic changes from the armistice lines that had define its borders for the first nineteen years of its existence, rather than the insubstantial ones suggested by Rogers. The government here does not make its vision for these lasting borders clear. But this combined with other documents and statements make it clear that they refused to return to any situation similar the one that predated the war.

The Israeli government had equal disdain for the United States putting in its two cents over the future of Jerusalem. In the eyes of the Israeli government, allowing Jordanian say over non-religious aspects of the city was out of the question. To the Israelis, only a Jerusalem united under Israeli control would be an open and unified city:

Jerusalem was divided following the conquest of part of the city by the Jordanian Army in 1948. Only now, after the unification of the city under Israeli administration, does there exist freedom of access for members of all faiths to their holy places in the city.\footnote{Ibid., 182.}

Clearly Israel does not believe that anything but its control of the city would ensure the freedom of movement and worship to all faiths. Israel, however, does not want to control Jerusalem simply because it thinks it is going to be the best steward for
the Muslims and Christians who want to worship there. When the Israelis took the eastern half of the city in 1967, they saw control of the city as their national right because of Jewish ties to the city. They had no intention of letting it slip away not because of concerns over the accessibility of holy sites to all but because of nationalist claims. It is because of these national claims that Israel moved to influence the final status of the city by extending its municipal boundaries to include both halves of the city and began the settlement of the Eastern half.

The PLO’s 1969

A few significant events occurred in the Palestinian camp in 1969 as well. One was the writing of the PFLP’s program of action which we have already covered. In the same year, Fatah released a slight adjustment to its 1964 constitution clarifying its position and future vision. These were known as the Seven Points. For the most part these points reiterated issues that were covered in the original Fatah constitution and the PLO covenant. They once again reaffirmed the Palestinian rejection of Resolution 242 and any solution that does not free all of historical Palestine from Zionism. They tied the Palestinian struggle to those anti-colonial and national liberation struggles sweeping the globe at the time and affirmed Palestine’s Arab character.

However, two of the seven points were crucial clarifiers of the Palestinian vision. Point two states:

Al Fatah, the Palestine National Liberation Movement, is not struggling against the Jews as an ethnic and religious community. It is struggling against Israel as the expression of
colonization based on a theocratic, racist and expansionist system and of Zionism and colonialism.\textsuperscript{43}

This statement is indeed a slight softening of the same sentiment regarding Jewish people found in the 1968 PLO national covenant. While that statement argued that the Jews were not one people, merely the citizens of the states in which they lived, this point acknowledges the ethnic solidarity of the Jewish people. This understanding by Fatah moves closer the Zionist understanding of the Jews as an ethnic and national community, although Fatah did not acknowledge the Jewish national claims to the land of historic Palestine. Point five provided a similar clarification and softening of the Palestinian vision:

\begin{quote}
Al Fatah, the Palestine National Liberation Movement, solemnly proclaims that the final objective of its struggle is the restoration of the independent, democratic State of Palestine, of whose citizens will enjoy equal rights irrespective of their religion.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

Here we see a more concrete vision from Fatah. Previous statements had argued that Palestinians had a right to self-determination in historical Palestine. Those statements had defined who qualifies a Palestinian and therefore who has a right to qualifies to exercise self-determination in Palestine. This point gives a picture of the shape this self-determination would take, should Fatah get its way. Fatah presents, as an alternative to the state of Israel who privilege rights along the lines of religion, political solution where all citizens exercise the same rights. But does “all” include those Jews who came to Palestine as Zionist settlers? We have seen before that the term “Palestinians” does not include those Jews who settled in Palestine after 1917. Would

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 373.
this new state absorb Jews who were not Palestinian or not of Arab descent? And if it did, how would this democratic state be Arab in character, a feature of Palestine repeatedly affirmed by the PLO and Fatah? These questions were put to Fatah leader and PLO chairman Yassir Arafat in a newspaper interview a few months after the release of the Seven Points.

The interviewer asks Arafat: “Al Fatah has offered an alternative to the Jews in Palestine – that is the creation of a progressive, democratic State for all. How do you reconcile this with the slogan “Long live Palestine Arab and Free?” 45 Arafat’s answer to this question focused on what he believes is the failure of the Zionist movement and the possible alternative solutions. Arafat believes that the state of Israel has failed in its mission to answer Herzl’s Jewish Question. He argues that the state does not have the capacity to absorb all of the world’s Jews. He states that there are two solutions to this issue. The Zionist movement can either “carry on an expansionist policy which will enable it to absorb all the Jews of the world or... admit the failure of its experience and try to find a solution for those Jews who have been uprooted from their countries of origin to be settled on the land of Palestine.” 46

Fatah, Arafat states, offered one solution to this question: “the creation of a democratic Palestinian State for all those who wish to live in peace on the land of peace.” 47 Here it is clear that this imagined Palestinian democratic state would include

45 Yassir Arafat, interview by Free Palestine, August 1969, in Laqueur and Rubin The Israel-Arab Reader, 374.
46 Ibid., 374.
47 Ibid., 374.
those Jews who settled in Palestine, not just Palestinians and Jews of Arab descent. The state would remain Arab in character because the global population of Palestinian Arabs, combined with the Jewish Arab population settled in Palestine, would ensure that the common Arab language and culture would be maintained in Palestine. A state that was not Arab in character, Arafat warned, would be a foreign entity like the crusader states before. These foreign entities did not last.

Another significant event occurred in 1969 within the Palestinian national movement beyond this vital clarification of Fatah’s future vision. The PFLP experienced a split. Nayif Hawatmah led many of the younger members out of the PFLP and formed a new group, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP, the group would come to be known as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine or DFLP). Hawatmah agreed with the PFLP strategy of building a broad support of Arab revolutionaries. However, Hawatmah saw himself as more true to the Marxist-Leninist principles upon which both groups were based. The DFLP would become the third largest faction in the PLO and an important producer of political discourse over the course of the conflict. It would be a DFLP leader who would lead the push to accept a Palestinian state in less than all of Palestine some five years after the group’s founding. But we shall get to that shortly.

---

49 Ibid., 213.
1970 would become one of the major turning points in the history of the Palestinian national movement. The events of 1970 remain so politically charged in Jordan that they are spoken about in hushed voices to this day. King Husayn of Jordan grew increasingly frustrated in the late 1960s with the actions of the PLO in Jordan. The patterns of PLO attacks in the West Bank from Jordan and corresponding Israeli reprisals on Jordanian territory resulted in heavy civilian casualties and significant damage to Jordanian infrastructure. The PLO demanded tolerance and a level of autonomy that King Husayn found dangerous to his sovereignty. On top of that, Husayn still desired to retake control over the West Bank and was willing to make peace with Israel to get it.\(^1\) He was only prepared to offer the Palestinians in the West Bank minimal control under Jordanian sovereignty once he got the territory back. This was unacceptable to the Palestinians who were completely opposed to peace between any Arab state and Israel.

George Habash and Nayif Hawatmah, the heads of the PFLP and DFLP respectively, decided that now was the time to overthrow Husayn’s Hashemite monarchy.\(^2\) In an effort to embarrass the King and show the level of their power in the country, the PFLP and DFLP conducted hostage takings and plane hijackings in Jordan.\(^3\) Arafat’s Fatah, acting according to their charter, tried to stay out of the affairs of the Arab states. However, left with the choice between their fellow Palestinian guerillas and the

---

\(^1\) Smith, 2\(^{nd}\) edition, 221.
\(^2\) Ibid., 221
\(^3\) Gelvin, 209.
Jordanian monarchy, Fatah was forced to through its support behind its countrymen.\textsuperscript{4}

The Jordanian reaction to this assault on its sovereignty was severe. In what became known as Black September, civil war erupted in Jordan. Jordanian troops assaulted the PLO, shelling Palestinian refugee camps leading to the deaths of three thousand Palestinian civilians and fighters.\textsuperscript{5} PLO estimates for the number of killed run into the tens of thousands.\textsuperscript{6} By the summer of 1971, the Palestinian factions were forced to pull out of Jordan all together and move the PLO base in Beirut, Lebanon where it remained until it was once again forced out in 1982.\textsuperscript{7}

The Palestinian National Council released a statement in the midst of this ordeal, days before they were forced to move to Lebanon. The main concern of this document was the assault on Palestinian fighters and civilians in the refugee camps in Jordan. The council was convened in order to address this issue. It decided it needed to change its makeup to promote national unity, an issue which had plagued the Palestinians since the Mandate and throughout the 1948 war. It tried to bring all of the Palestinian revolutionaries under the control of a single Executive Committee (again mirroring past experiences):

\begin{quote}
The Executive Committee was elected as a supreme command of the Palestine revolution. Representation... has been widened to insure more collective action and bar individual action and also to insure the participation of all forces in facing the dangerous conditions threatening the Palestine revolution and people.\textsuperscript{8}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{4}] Ibid., 209.
\item[\textsuperscript{5}] Smith, \textit{2nd edition}, 221.
\item[\textsuperscript{6}] Gelvin, 209.
\item[\textsuperscript{7}] Ibid., 209.
\item[\textsuperscript{8}] The Palestine National Council, “Statement, 13 July 1971,” in Lukacs, \textit{A Documentary Record}, 301.
\end{itemize}
Clearly the Black September assault on the Palestinians in Jordan prompted somewhat of an existential crisis within the PLO. It determined that it needed to change its model from an umbrella organization to one of more direct control over individual actions. The goal was to affirm the PLO’s place as the national representative of the Palestinian people in the face of Jordanian and wider Arab challenges by expanding its control. It condemned these Arab states for limiting the actions of the revolution and demanded they conform to previous agreements between the PLO and the Arab states. The final point it hammered home was one that we have seen in every Palestinian document we have studied so far: absolute opposition to Resolution 242 leading to any settlement between Israel and the Arab states. To the PLO, as we have seen repeatedly, the only just solution is one that allows Palestinian self-determination in all of historical Palestine. A solution between the Israel and the Arab states would make this solution impossible as it would a final acceptance of Israel’s permanence, a fact the PLO refused to acknowledge at this point (it would change its stance later with its own acceptance of Resolution 242 at a later date).

This reconstruction of the PLO seems to have been only partially successful. The PLO was unable to remain in Jordan, forced to flee to Lebanon only a few days after this resolution was issued. Also, the PLO remained more of an umbrella organization than a unified front as this executive committee was never truly been able to control the actions of the individual groups under its control. On the other hand, the PLO was able to thrive in Lebanon (until Israeli intervention in 1982) and would have its place as the sole
representative of the Palestinian people recognized by not only the Arab states but also the United Nations in 1974.

The Settlements

Before we analyze the significant paradigm shift in the Palestinian ideology that occurred in 1974, it productive to first review the state of the Palestinian and Israeli future visions after five years of Israeli occupation. The Palestinian vision is relatively clear. The aim was to defeat Zionism though a protracted armed revolt and replace the state of Israel with a secular democratic Arab state in the whole of the territory that was the Palestine Mandate. The preferred means by which to do this were different amongst the various Palestinian factions. That state would be open not only to Palestinians within the territory and the refugee of 1948 and 1967 but also the Jews who immigrated to Palestine since 1917, i.e. Israeli citizens. There was also an absolute rejection on the part of the PLO of any political solution between the Arab states based on Resolution 242 and a refusal to establish a Palestinian state on anything but the whole of historical Palestine.

The Israeli vision was ambiguous to say the least. It is clear that they indented to maintain exclusive civil and military control of a united Jerusalem (Jordan would be permitted to share religious considerations). It was also clear that Israel intended to expand its borders to include significant swaths of occupied territory. It failed to make clear what territory it intended to absorb but it had designs as far afield as the Golan Heights and Sharm al-Sheikh. In fact, when the Labor Prime Minister at the time, Golda Meir, put forward a rough plan including the retention of the Golan, Sharm al-Sheikh,
parts of the West Bank and the return to Egypt of a demilitarized Sinai Peninsula, she was attacked by right wing politician and future prime minister Menachem Begin for lenience. Additionally, the Israeli Knesset had given the state the power to expand Israeli sovereignty to whatever territory the state had under its control. It began the process of asserting that sovereignty over Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip through the building of settlements.

By 1972, more than 10,000 Israeli citizens lived in the occupied territories of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and East Jerusalem in settlements constructed in the wake of the 1967 War. These were advocated for by different Israeli groups for different reasons. Moshe Dayan, Labor party politician and minister of defense, and Begin, who would become the first non-Labor prime minister of Israel in 1977, desired permanent control of all of the territory of historical Palestine and settlements were the way to instill this control. Others, such as Yigal Allon, whose plan was discussed previously, believed that the settlements should be installed in specific regions for security purposes. By the beginning of 1973, forty-four settlements had been constructed in the occupied territories with another fifty planned to be completed by the end of the year. Most of these planned settlements were meant to start out as military camps in the West Bank and Sinai but over time shift to be civilian residences. Here we see, as Charles D. Smith writes, that “the Allon Plan, envisioning only defensive perimeters on

---

9 Smith, 2nd edition, 227.
the West Bank, was being manipulated to further create facts on the ground for retention of the area."\textsuperscript{12} In fact, when King Husayn of Jordan proposed a United Arab Kingdom in the form of federation with parts of the West Bank, Allon saw this as a positive idea. The Israeli cabinet as a whole, however, rejected it as it impinged on “the historic right of the Jewish people over the land of Israel.”\textsuperscript{13} Note that the notion of the land of Israel here extended to the occupied West Bank.

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan wanted to take the settlement process a step further in order to entrench Israeli control over the territory. He advocated for the selling of land to Jewish Israeli individuals and opening up the territory to private investment. Up to this point, land had been taken by the military government of the occupied territories, labeling it abandoned, and turned it over to the Israeli government for the purpose of settlement. He also desired to expand Israeli control of the Sinai with the construction of a large city to be called Yamit and by annexing the part of the Sinai that included the Egyptian oil fields. Initially, this proposal faced significant opposition from Meir and her cabinet but the public calls to absorb the occupied territories were so strong that it would have been politically devastating for her party to go against them in what was an election year.\textsuperscript{14} This policy was enshrined as the labor platform for the 1973 election in the form of the Galili Plan, issued in August of 1973. It is probably these permanent designs on the occupied territories, and the de facto rejection of Resolution 242 they represented, that made Anwar Sadat, who became president of Egypt after the

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 227.
\textsuperscript{13} The Knesset, “Resolution Rejecting King Hussein’s United Arab Kingdom Plan” (March16th, 1972), in Lukacs A Documentary Record, 183.
\textsuperscript{14} Smith, 2nd edition, 227-8.
death of Nasser in 1970, launch his October attack on Israel. We will look in depth at the ramifications of the Galili plan for the Palestinians shortly but first we should return to January of 1973 to see how the PLO encountered the policy of Israeli settlement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

First let us note that the Palestinians also rejected King Husayn of Jordan’s federation plan as, in the view of the PLO, it impinged on their right of self-determination and proved, if the events of Black September were not proof enough, Jordan was an accomplice of the state of Israel. At this point (January of 1973), the Palestine Liberation Organization was still committed to the establishment of a “democratic Palestinian society” in the whole of historical Palestine through armed struggle. It remained opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state in part of the land of Palestine and the threat to the struggle it represented. However, this political program issued in January of 1973 by the Palestine National Council referred to a new growing threat to the Palestinian revolution: settlements. The PLO saw the settlement project for what it was; an attempt to exercise and assert Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territory, in an effort to undercut Palestinian ties to the land. It resolved, therefore:

To struggle against the settlement mentality and the projects it harbours either for the liquidation of our people’s cause as far as the liberation of our homeland is concerned or for the distortion of this cause by proposals for entities and for the establishment of a Palestinian State – in part of the territory of Palestine.

And:

17 Ibid., 303
To oppose the policy of evacuating the Arab population of the occupied territory, and to resist with violence the building of settlements and the Judaization of parts of the occupied homeland.\textsuperscript{18}

We see here that between the political resolutions released in 1971 and this program in 1973, the expansion of settlements and the threat it posed to the Palestinian national movement came on to the PLO’s radar. The pressure of this Judaization in the occupied territories seemed to be effective enough to rouse Palestinian concern. The PLO, which for the most part operated from bases outside of historical Palestine, feared that this process would dilute the Palestinian identity and its tie to the land within the occupied territories. As such, it warned against the joining of Israeli labor organizations and working on Israeli settlements, desiring instead to promote Palestinian economic and cultural institutions.\textsuperscript{19} It also resolved to shield Palestinian peasants from the pressure of occupation to “check the trend to emigrate.”\textsuperscript{20} Clearly the PLO saw the settlements as a serious threat not only to their designs on the whole of historical Palestine but also the ties of the Palestinians within the territory to the land on which they lived and worked.

The Israelis accompanied their attempts to undercut Palestinian ties to the land on the ground with speeches aimed at denying that any true Palestinian tie to historical Palestine existed. It has been outline above and demonstrated thoroughly elsewhere\textsuperscript{21} that a Palestinian identity and a corresponding Palestinian nationalist movement claiming ties to the land of historical Palestine existed well before the 1948 War that resulted in the

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 303.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 304.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 304.
\textsuperscript{21} See Rashid Khalidi \textit{Palestinian Identity}, James Gelvin \textit{The Israel-Palestine Conflict}, and Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal \textit{The Palestinian People, A History}. 
creation of the state of Israel and perhaps even before the Zionist movement was articulated in the late 19th century. Yet in April 1973, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir gave a speech to the Labor Party in which she at once denied the contemporary existence of the Palestinian people and rejected any responsibility of Israel regarding the creation of the Palestinian refugees. The first section of this speech is unequivocal on this:

*We Israelis make no pretensions of determining whether there is or is not a ‘Palestinian entity.’ This decision is the privilege of the Arabs themselves. As a result of the war imposed upon us in 1948, some of the Arabs of Palestine left and wandered to other places. Nonetheless, I reject the contention that ‘two and a half million Palestinian Arabs are wandering about the world without a homeland.’*

Here she acknowledges that the war the resulted in Israel’s existence did lead to the departure of some people (for which Israel has no blame to take). However her characterization of these peoples as “Arabs of Palestine” rather than Palestinians or Palestinian Arabs indicates her belief that these people had no national character or identity that distinguished them from the Arabs in the surrounding states. She reaffirms this view a sentence later:

*The Palestinian Arabs live amongst their brethren with whom they share a common religion culture and language. The Arabs themselves declare that they are a single Arab nation.*

As such, those Arabs who became refugees have a homeland in the form of any of the Arab countries in which they choose to live. This is contrasted, in Meir’s view, with the Jews who only have a single homeland, Israel, “in which the Jewish people can be

---

23 Ibid., 396.
sovereign and in which every Jew can live with his fellow-Jews in independence."\textsuperscript{24} The refugee problem, therefore, is easily solvable. The only thing holding it back is a refusal by the Arab states to integrate the Palestinian refugees into their countries. They do this, Meir says, “for use against us.”\textsuperscript{25} That is to say, the Arabs are keeping the Palestinians from integrating so as to gain political power in the realm of negotiations.

Not only does Meir believe that the Palestinians had no national tie to Palestine and that they have a multitude of homelands in anyone of “eighteen independent states,” she believes that they are perfectly able to, and currently do, practice the self-determination they seek. She points to Jordan, where the state granted refugees and residents of the West Bank citizenship in the wake of the 1948 War:

The Palestinian Arabs have in Jordan every opportunity for nation selfexpression [sic]... Some 600,000 or more citizens of Palestinian origin are now living on the East Bank of the Jordan. For many years now, never less than half of the members of the Jordanian parliament have been of Palestinian origin, as are the majority of the members of the present Jordanian cabinet.\textsuperscript{26}

This, then, is the model situation in the eyes of Israel. The refugee population should be integrated into their country of residence and they then can practice self-determination in the political institutions of that country. Since they are living among fellow Arabs, they are in their national homeland. The Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban in a speech later in the year takes this a step further and essentially declares that Jordan is Palestine:

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 396
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 396.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 397.
The situation is that, since 1948, the Palestinians have had their Arab State in which they have been a majority. There is, therefore, no sense in the attempt to portray them as having been denied independent Arab expression of their identity all these years.\textsuperscript{27}

Should the state of Jordan then choose to call itself Palestine and the Palestinians express themselves in that way, that is of no concern to Israel. In this way, Golda Meir and her foreign minister Abba Eban, present Palestinian self-determination in the territory of historical Palestine as a moot point. There is no need for an independent Palestinian political entity as Palestinian political aspirations can be exercised in any Arab country in the region. As such, Meir opposes the establishment of any Palestinian state in historical Palestine:

Between the Mediterranean Sea and the eastern desert, there is room for two States only: A Jewish State and an Arab State – Israel and Jordan. We oppose the establishment of an additional Arab State in the region between Israel and Jordan.\textsuperscript{28}

The final shape of those two states would be decided by a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.

There are obviously numerous problems with this framing of the situation. First of all, as we alluded to before, a Palestinian identity which claimed ties historical Palestine, distinct from the identities of its Arab neighbors, was well developed over a decade before the establishment of the state of Israel. To claim in 1973 that there was no Palestinian people living in exile from the land they called their home was factually incorrect. Secondly, if Black September proved one thing, it was that this Palestinian national movement was unable, and unwilling, to practice self-determination in Jordan.

\textsuperscript{27} Abba Eban, “Statement to the Knesset Regarding the ‘Legitimate Rights of the Palestinian People,’” in Abdul Hadi, \textit{Documents on Palestine}, vol. 2. 405.
\textsuperscript{28} Meir “The Palestinian Issue” in Abdul Hadi, \textit{Documents on Palestine}, vol. 2. 397.
Throughout the PLO documents that refer to the situation in Jordan, the talk was of replacing the monarchy with a government supported by the Jordanian national movement. The Palestinian national movement supported this because it wanted a friendly base from which to pursue its own goals, not because it wanted to set up a Palestinian government in Amman. Finally, while the Palestinian national movement supported the freedom of refugees to work and their country of residence, Palestinians in refugee camps maintained a distinct Palestinian identity and a feeling that they are living in exile. This is apparent today as any child in any refugee camp can tell you from which village in Palestine their grandparents or great-grandparents fled. The refugee condition was not maintained by the Arab governments as political tool but through a Palestinian desire to return to the land they called home (although the treatment of Palestinian refugees in these Arab countries has often been extremely poor). Despite these flaws, much of this mentality remains pervasive in current Israeli political discourse.

The Galili Plan

Now that we understand the goals of the settlement project and the Palestinian reaction to it as well as the prevailing Israeli mentality towards the national aspirations of the Palestinians, we can move on to the Galili Plan. As we touched on before, this document became the Israeli Labor Party Platform for the 1973 election. It was written to accommodate public calls to absorb the occupied territories in to Israel. And it was the platform on which the Labor Party won reelection.
This document was, more than anything else, a plan for the economic, civil and political incorporation of the occupied territories under Israeli control. Crucially, this plan would not, “be conditional on any change in the political status of these areas or the civil status of the inhabitants and the refugees.”

That is to say, this was a unilateral plan of action that would move forward despite the fact that the final political status of the territories was yet to be determined.

The Galili Plan aimed to promote economic and civil integration of the territories in a number of ways, the main ones being the construction of settlements and industrial areas. It promised that “new settlements will be established and the network of settlement will be reinforced. Efforts will be made to increase their population by developing trade, industry and tourism.”

The plan also promised that “more intensive action to unify lands for the requirements of existing and planned settlements (purchase, state lands, absentees’ lands, exchanges of lands, arrangement with inhabitants) will be expanded” and that “the Israel Lands Authority will be recommended to expand purchases of land and real estate in occupied areas for the purposes of settlement, development and land exchange.”

Beyond promising to expand settlements and land purchasing, the plan promoted economic and civil integration by “encouraging Israeli business in the territories” with “facilities and incentives... to encourage Israelis to

---

30 Ibid., 186
31 Ibid., 186.
establish industrial projects in the occupied areas.”\textsuperscript{32} It also promised to expand the borders of Jerusalem and to investigate building “a deep sea port in Southern Gaza.”\textsuperscript{33}

The most notable aspect of this plans and provisions is their feeling of permanence. By the plan’s own admission, it cared little for the eventual final status of the territories. While that question was still being discussed, this plan provided the means for permanent private and government acquisition of land accompanied with a transfer of Israeli population to the occupied territories. As we have noted before, this settlement project was a means of exercising Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territory, mirroring the same strategy of the original Zionist settlers in Palestine. This was coupled with economic investment in the territory, further integrating the occupied territory into Israeli infrastructure. And while the deep sea port in Gaza was never built, the proposal to build such a large and permanent piece of trade infrastructure in Gaza betrays the Israeli mentality regarding the future of the occupied territory. These different initiatives show an Israeli intent to change the permanent status of the occupied territory by exerting Israeli sovereignty over the land through economic and civil integration and by doing ensure the permanent retention of the land by the state.

The other important aspect of the plan regarding the Palestinians was the civil and political integration for which it called. It called for municipal representation for the “inhabitants” of the territories and promised aid in “the field of developing democratic

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 185.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 187.
forms in social and municipal life.”\textsuperscript{34} It also promised “work for the inhabitants of the occupied territories in Israel and in Jewish economic areas in the occupied territories” with “working conditions and wages similar to those in Israel.”\textsuperscript{35} The plan called for improvements in “the essential services (health, electrical, etc.)” in the territories and to help rehabilitate the refugees through the improvement of these services and, interestingly, “improving the refugees’ housing situation,” by “establishing places of residence for the refugees near the camps.”\textsuperscript{36}

The suggestion of including the Palestinian “inhabitants” of the territories in municipal representation is an attempt to undercut Palestinian nationalist goals by offering some level of political expression under Israeli sovereignty. This had been an ongoing plan of the Israelis that previously the PLO denounced, calling it an attempt to “impose coexistence between the people and the occupation, to legitimize the occupation, and consequently to perpetuate the occupation of the part of Palestine occupied in 1967.”\textsuperscript{37} It was an attempt to normalize the occupation and a way to ward off political issues that might jeopardize Israeli control of the territories in the future. Similarly, the treatment of the refugees as a humanitarian issue, as one that can be treated with an improvement of essential services and permanent housing, was an attempt to undercut the refugee situation as a political issue. If the Israeli government could successfully integrate the refugees into the general society of the occupied territory, they would, in

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 185.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 185.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 185.
theory, lose the desire to return to their homes in what is now Israel. It was an attempt to turn the temporary status of refugee into a permanent status of West Bank or Gaza Strip resident.

Overall, what we can glean from the Galili Plan is an intention on behalf of the state of Israeli to exert Israeli sovereignty and control over the occupied territory through permanent infrastructure before the final status of the territory was decided. By doing so, Israel would make it harder and harder to determine what parts of the land were Arab and what parts were Israeli. In 1973, Ariel Sharon, future Likud prime minister, stated that Israel would “make a pastrami sandwich of [the Palestinian territories]. We’ll insert a strip of Jewish settlement in between the Palestinians and another strip of Jewish settlement right across the West Bank so that in 25 years’ time neither the U.N. nor the U.S., nobody will be able to tear it apart.” The Galili plan of that same year was an effort to simultaneously prove Israeli control through economic investment and settlement and to undercut Arab and Palestinian claims by integration of the territory on economic, civil and political levels. We see, therefore, not only Israeli intent, but concrete action, aimed at absorbing a large part of the occupied territory permanently into Israel. What is especially interesting about the plan is that it never once references the security of the state of Israel, which is the usual justification for territorial expansion in international documents. Here it is simply a given that Israel intends to expand and

---

integrate the occupied territory for the sake of expansion, based on the understanding that this is land to which Israel has the rightful claim.

The National Authority

In his speech to the Knesset regarding the legitimate rights of the Palestinian community, Abba Eban referred to a perhaps ironic reality regarding the situation in 1973:

The interesting thing is the unanimity – of opposition to the idea of setting up a third State with the borders of historic Eretz-Israel. Israel, Jordan, the inhabitants of Judea and Samaria, all the Powers, the Palestinian organizations – all of them agree that there is no place for three States in that area.39

The area which he refers to as “Eretz-Israel” is the original Palestine Mandate which included historical Palestine and what is now Jordan as a single piece of territory. He is correct in this observation. When this speech was delivered the official PLO platform was to oppose the creation of a Palestinian state in between Israel and Jordan. However, it is common knowledge that in 2013 the stated goal of both the Israeli and Palestinian political leaders is the establishment of a third state; a Palestinian state. What happened? It was the Palestinians who first began to change their stance on the issue, amid much controversy amongst the Palestinian factions, and open up to the idea of the establishing of an independent Palestinian political entity in the occupied territories. The push for this change came from the DFLP and their leader Nayif Hawatmah.

We have seen in pretty much every PLO and Palestinian faction document that we have looked at so far a virulent denunciation of the establishment a Palestinian state in

any territory other than the whole of historical Palestine. I want to return to a quote from the PNA resolutions in 1968 that I included above to illuminate the strength of this opposition:

The Zionist movement along with imperialism and its tool, Israel, is seeking to consolidate Zionist aggression against Palestine and the military victories won by Israel in 1948 and 1967 by establishing a Palestinian entity in the territories occupied during the June, 1967 aggression. This entity would owe its existence to the legitimization and perpetuation of the state of Israel, which is absolutely incompatible with the Palestinian Arab people’s right to the whole of Palestine, their homeland. Such a spurious entity would in fact be an Israeli colony and would lead to the liquidation of the Palestinian cause once and for all to the benefit of Israel. The creation of such an entity would, moreover, constitute an interim stage during which Zionism could evacuate the territory of Palestine occupied during the June 5 war of its Arab inhabitants, as a preliminary step to incorporation into the Israeli entity. In addition, this would lead to the creation of a subservient Palestinian Arab administration in the territories occupied during the June 5 war on which Israel could rely in combating the Palestinian revolution... the National Assembly hereby declares its categorical rejection of the idea of establishing a spurious Palestinian entity in the territory of Palestine occupied since June 5... The assembly hereby declares, moreover, that any individual or party, Palestinian Arab or non-Palestinian, who advocates or supports the creation of such a subservient entity, is the enemy of the Palestinian Arab people and the Arab nation.40

Not only is this an emphatic rejection of this idea, it provides a pretty grim picture of what the future would hold for the Palestinians should they agree to the creation of a Palestinian state in between Israel and Jordan. However, the events of Black September 1970 in Jordan were a shock to the system of the Palestinian revolution. This shock was interpreted in different ways by the different factions but the DFLP saw two significant consequences that put their goals in danger. The first was concern that the PLO expulsion from Jordan meant that there was no longer a secure base from which to operate. The second was the feeling defeat of the PLO in Jordan opened the door for a permanent settlement between the Arab states and Israel, as the prevailing feeling

amongst the Palestinian factions was that Palestinian paramilitary activities were preventing a permanent peace agreement. It was with the idea of overcoming these two concerns that DFLP came to formulate the so called “Transitional Plan.”

Essentially the Transitional Plan was an attempt to ensure the survival of the Palestinian revolution despite unfriendly Arab states or peace agreements by creating a permanent base of operations within historic Palestine. The DFLP saw this plan as a practical answer to the reality of the power relation between the Palestinian factions and the states of Jordan and Israel. It called for the expression of Palestinian self-determination in the parts of historical Palestine occupied in 1967, namely the West Bank and Gaza Strip by founding of a Palestinian state thereon. The DFLP saw this occupied territory as the central link of the Palestinian struggle and to establish a Palestinian state within this territory would protect against a peace agreement that would split the territory between Israel and Jordan. A peace agreement would simultaneously ensure Israel’s permanence in the eyes of the Arab states, thus defeating the PLO’s struggle for control of the whole of historical Palestine, and prevent Palestinian self-determination in any part of their homeland. As we have noted before, advocating for a Palestinian state was a controversial position, paramount to treason in the eyes of the PLO. The DFLP, even writing in 2010, took great pains to argue that this plan was not a denunciation of armed struggle. The name “Transitional Plan” itself addresses these concerns by indicating

---

42 Ibid., 15.
43 Ibid., 17.
that a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is not necessarily the final goal but an intermediary step from which a popular revolution could be launched from within historical Palestine.

Nayif Hawatmah took this plan to the PLO in 1974.\textsuperscript{44} He succeeded in convincing the PNC to include the core of the Transitional Plan in the “10 Point Program” issued during that session. The PNC, however, substituted the ambiguous term “national authority” for “state” to describe the political entity that would be established “on every part of Palestinian land to be liberated.”\textsuperscript{45} The PLO made it clear that it was not accepting this in exchange for conceding its aims to found a Palestinian state in the whole of historical Palestine but rather a step in that process:

Any liberation step that is achieved constitutes a step for continuing [the efforts] to achieve the PLO strategy for the establishment of the Palestinian democratic State that is stipulated in the resolutions of the previous national conferences.\textsuperscript{46}

This plan as it was adapted by the PLO from the original DFLP idea was therefore ambiguous at best. The leaders of the PLO choose to not define too specifically the form that this national authority would take. Arafat himself appeared to be open to a settlement of the conflict involving a state in the occupied territories but shied away from articulating this out of fear of losing control of the PLO.\textsuperscript{47} In fact, the PFLP did split away from the PLO because of its adoption of the Ten Point Program, blaming the plan’s acceptance on the “surrenderist leadership” of the PLO who sought to legalize their

\textsuperscript{44} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 233.
\textsuperscript{45} The Palestine National Council, “Political Program, 8 June, 1974” in Lukacs, \textit{A Documentary Record}, 309.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 309.
\textsuperscript{47} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 233.
“pursuit of the course of deviation and surrender,” rather than following the principles of the PLO.\(^{48}\) There also started to appear a split amongst the rank and file of the Palestinian revolution between those who lived in the West Bank and favored a solution that maintained what little was left of Palestine and those refugees who came from what was now Israel and favored the complete liberation of the territory.\(^{49}\) For the sake of PLO unity, Arafat and the PLO leadership maintained this uncertainty regarding a political solution for a number of years. However, the significance of the 1974 cannot be overstated. It planted the seeds for a paradigm shift. While this plan was only spoken of as an intermediary step to a future Palestinian state in the whole of historical Palestine, it laid the groundwork for the shift towards the later renunciation of this goal. It also opened the door for negotiation with the PLO for a peaceful settlement, their acceptance of Resolution 242 as the basis for a permanent solution to the conflict and the final goal of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While most of these events would not occur for at least a decade, their origins are in the Transitional Plan that the DFLP brought to the PLO in 1974.

International Legitimization of the PLO

The other significant developments of 1974 for the PLO came in the form of international recognition. For the first time, the Arab states recognized the PLO’s right to self-determination over the occupied territories on the basis of the Ten Point Program. At the Rabat Conference in October, the Arab League resolved to “affirm the right of the

---

\(^{48}\) PFLP, “Statement by the PFLP Announcing its Withdrawal from the Executive Committee of the PLO” (September, 26\(^{th}\), 1974) in Lukacs, *A Documentary Record*, 314.

\(^{49}\) Smith, 2\(^{nd}\) edition, 233.
Palestinian people to establish an independent national authority under the command of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in any Palestinian territory liberated.\textsuperscript{50} This was significant because the Arab League was recognizing Palestinian sovereignty to the West Bank rather than Jordanian sovereignty, under which it had been between 1948 and 1967. This also meant that Husayn could no longer negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians, much to the chagrin of those American diplomats who preferred to neutralize the Palestinian national movement under the Jordanian state.\textsuperscript{51} Husayn accepted this decision but he would not officially renounce a claim to the West Bank until 1988.\textsuperscript{52} This recognition by the Arab states was “categorically rejected” by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who promised that “the aims of the Palestinian National Charter will not be achieved.”\textsuperscript{53} This rejection was reflected in Israeli policy that treated the Palestinians as if they were under Jordanian control all the way up to the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{54} To this day the so-called Jordanian option persists in Israeli political circles which advocates giving the heavily populated parts of the West Bank to Jordan rather than allowing the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The other significant legitimization the PLO gained in 1974 was recognition by the United Nations as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. On top of that, the PLO was granted observer status in the UN General Assembly. Yassir Arafat

\textsuperscript{50} Arab League, “Arab League Summit Conference Communique” (October 29th, 1974), in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 464.
\textsuperscript{51} Smith, 2nd edition, 232.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 300.
\textsuperscript{53} Yitzhak Rabin, “Israel Knesset Statement Following the Rabat Conference” (November, 1974) in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 188.
\textsuperscript{54} At the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, the Israelis insisted that the Palestinian delegation be a part of the Jordanian negotiating team and refused to talk to any Palestinians with ties to the PLO.
addressed the UN on the occasion of this recognition. For the most part, his speech was a reiteration to an international audience of the guiding principles of the PLO. He emphasized that the PLO made a distinction between Zionism as a colonizing force and Judaism as a religion. He denounced the expansionist policies of Zionism and its mistreatment of Palestinians. He affirmed the PLO’s commitment to armed struggle and tied the Palestinian revolution to the numerous contemporary anti-colonial revolutions in Asia and Africa. He insisted that the Jews currently living in Israel had every right to be a part of the secular democratic Palestinian state envisioned by the PLO. In the spirit of the Ten Point Program, he implored the world to support Palestinian efforts at self-determination in Palestine as is their right according the foundational documents of the UN and to aid in returning the Palestinians from their imposed exile. While Yassir Arafat’s speech did not contain anything particularly new regarding the Palestinian future vision, it did include one of his most famous lines:

Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom-fighter’s gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.55

The peace he was offering was in the form of a secular democratic state in the entirety of historical Palestine; a state which would include Jews inspired by Zionism who settled in Palestine.

As the decade moved forward, attempts at a permanent settlement based on Resolution 242 between Israel and the Arab states began to be pushed for more strongly by the Americans. No one, not even the factions within the PLO, could agree on the role

55 Yassir Arafat, “Speech to the UN General Assembly” (November, 1974) in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 333.
the PLO should play in these negotiations. The Jimmy Carter administration believed in the establishment of some sort Palestinian “homeland” alongside Israel as part of the overall settlement of the conflict.\textsuperscript{56} This, as we have touched on before, was an idea about which the PLO was only lukewarm. Menachem Begin, who would be the first Likud prime minister of Israel, was set on annexing the West Bank and compared the PLO to the Nazis, stating that even if the PLO accepted Resolution 242, he would never negotiate with them, nor would he concede the territory of the West Bank to foreign control.\textsuperscript{57} Before we talk too much about the peace efforts and Palestinian and Israeli views regarding them, we must analyze the ideological base of Begin’s newly in power party and the change that represented to Israeli politics.

\textsuperscript{56} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 252.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 251.
Chapter 6: Likud and the Dreaded Permanent Peace; 1977-1986

For the first three decades of Israel’s existence, it was ruled by the Labor party. Before the state of Israel was officially established, the labor party’s ideological fathers, the Labor Zionists of the second and third ailyot, dominated the politics of the Yishuv in Mandate Palestine. But they were not without rivals. We have met the Revisionist Zionists before. These were the settlers of the fourth aliyah who came from the ghettos and the Pale of Eastern Europe, rather than the enlightened liberal Western European breeding ground of the Labor Zionists. They were not utopian or socialist but conservative, middle class Jews who caught the brunt of anti-Semitism in Poland and Russia. Their right-wing militaristic spokesperson was Vladimir Jabotinski who advocated military action against the Palestinians and British alike to ensure the creation of the Jewish state. His followers established a number of paramilitary groups, the most notable of which was the Irgun, most famous for the bombing of the King David Hotel, led by Menachem Begin. Menachem Begin sat in first Knesset as party of his Herut party, the ideological offspring of the Revisionist Zionist Irgun and the ideological father of the Likud Party.¹ He was the main opposition leader from 1948 until 1977 when he finally took the office of Prime Minister as the head of the Likud.²

His rise to power was closely tied with the situation of the Israeli Jews of Arab origin. For the most part, the powerful ruling Labor Party elites were of European decent, known as Ashkenazi. The Arab and Eastern Jews, known as Mizrahi Jews, were

¹ Tessler, 207.
² Smith, 2nd edition, 251.
looked down upon and discriminated against by the Ashkenazi, having lived in camps for the early years of the state’s existence and experienced little social mobility, stuck for the most part doing menial, unskilled labor.³ Begin, an Ashkenazi but fellow Labor outsider, was able to capitalize on these feelings of alienation amongst the Mizrahim and gain their support. Additionally, the unification of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Israel into a single sovereignty and single economic zone meant an influx of Palestinian workers to take the low-wage, unskilled jobs once performed by the Mizrahim, thus pushing them up the social ladder. The Mizrahim feared that should Israel return the territory to the Arab states, they would pushed back down by the Ashkenazim into the lowest social strata of Israel. It was this fear in part, along with the outsider identification, which led 75% of Mizrahim voters to throw their support behind Begin in the 1977 elections.⁴

Whereas the Labor Party platform from 1974, the Galili Plan, was ambiguous when it came to the future of the occupied territory, Begin’s Likud Party platform was direct. The Galili Plan advocated settlement of the territory irrespective of the future political status of the land through which they aimed to strengthen Israeli control over the land. Begin believed in settlements as well but to him, Israel’s permanent right to the land was self-evident.

The right of the Jewish people to the land of Israel is eternal and indisputable and is linked with the right to security and peace; therefore, Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] will not be handed to any foreign administration; between the Sea and the Jordan there will only be Israeli sovereignty.⁵

³ Ibid., 244
⁴ Ibid., 244.
This is the first point of Begin’s platform. Here we see a significant discursive break with the Labor Party. While there were, without doubt, Labor politicians who advocated for complete retention of the territories and their policies indicate the aim their integration, the public discourse produced by the Israeli left wing focused on retention of territory and settlement for the sake of secure borders. Even if the policies regarding the territories was largely the same between the two parties, to say no to the international community, who advocated for the return of “territory occupied” during the 1967 war according to Resolution 242, was a bold and new stance.

This position clearly left no room for the Palestinians to establish any sort of independent state, or national authority as the PLO preferred to call it, in the West Bank. But just in case this was not clear from the first point of the platform, Likud stated explicitly its opposition to any such entity being formed:

A plan which relinquishes parts of western Eretz Israel undermines our right to the country, unavoidably leads to the establishment of a “Palestinian State,” jeopardizes the security of the Jewish population, endangers the existence of the State of Israel, and frustrates the prospect of peace.6

Here we again see that to Begin and Likud, Israel’s claim to the West Bank is inherent. To Begin, the West Bank is not a separate territory but an integral part of the state of Israel, never to be relinquished and certainly never to be home to a Palestinian state.

It is important to note here that this is the same party that currently leads the coalition government of Israel which supposedly supports the establishment of a

6 Ibid., 591.
Palestinian state as part of a peace agreement. Obviously positions change and stances soften, but if we are going to hold the PLO responsible for positions articulated decades ago but no longer held, we have a responsibility to do the same for the Likud party. Just as the PLO aimed to negate Jewish self-determination based as expressed through Zionism, the Likud party promised to prevent any expression of Palestinian self-determination in historical Palestine.

The other significant takeaway from the Likud 1977 party platform was the framing of the settlement project. As we have discussed before, Labor supported settlement as a means to promote security and strengthen Israeli ties to the occupied territory. To Begin, these ties were self-evident, just as legitimate ties to Palestine were self-evident to the settlers before the establishment of Israel. Begin saw the settlement project as a revival of the Zionist ethos that provided Israel’s foundation:

 Settlement, both urban and rural, in all parts of the Land of Israel is the focal point of the Zionist effort to redeem the country, to maintain vital security areas and serves as a reservoir of strength and inspiration for the renewal of the pioneering spirit.\(^7\)

Like Labor, Likud speaks to settlement for the sake of security. But he equates the original Zionist mission to settlement of the occupied territory and calls for a renewal of that spirit. He goes on to call the younger generation of Israelis to the task of “inhabiting and cultivating the wasteland,”\(^8\) language that harkens back to the old Zionist slogan of “making the deserts bloom.” Whereas Labor is vague about the future of the occupied territory, Begin is clear. In calling back to the rhetoric of the original Zionists,

\(^7\) Ibid., 591-2.
\(^8\) Ibid., 592.
he is asserting that Israel’s right to the occupied territory is as indisputable as its right to Jerusalem or Tel-Aviv. This is a right he promised to never concede.

But what about the millions of Palestinians who live within the territories Begin claims as Israel’s own? He promises they will never see an independent state in the occupied territory, but permanent military rule over a significant population hardly fitting with the secular, western, democratic values on which the state of Israel claims to be based. In December of 1977, Begin, now prime minister, put forward an “autonomy plan” for the occupied territories to reconcile these issues. He stated that with the establishment of a permanent peace, military rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be replaced with “an administrative autonomy of, by and for the Arab residents.”

This administration would be run by a council elected by the Palestinians regardless of their citizenship status. It would control the civil aspects of Palestinian life including education, transport, housing, industry, commerce, health, labor, law and would operate a local police force. Israel would have final military say as “security and public order in the areas of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza will be entrusted to the Israeli authorities.”

Palestinians living in these territories would be able to choose between Israeli or Jordanian citizenship. Citizens living in Israel would be permitted to purchase land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and residents of the Palestinian areas who accepted Israeli citizenship would be allowed to purchase land in Israel. Regarding refugees, a committee

---

10 Ibid., 606.
would be established to determine regulations to determine the volume of refugees permitted to immigrate to Israel.¹¹

Begin asserted Israel’s demand of sovereignty over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip but recognized that “there are at least two other demands for the sovereignty over these areas,” those being Palestinian and Jordanian.¹² He stated, therefore, that for the sake of peace the question of sovereignty is left open. However, he does not intend that sovereignty actual fall to anyone but the state of Israel. He argues that should these contradictory demands remain, there was no chance of an agreement being reached. The only way, to Begin, is “administrative autonomy for the Arabs of Eretz Yisrael; and for the Jews of Eretz Yisrael – genuine security.”¹³ This can only be achieved under Israel sovereignty. And although he recognizes that a Palestinian claim to sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza Strip exists, he refuses to deal in anyway with the spokes-organization of Palestinian nationalism, the PLO. He promises never to cede any control of any territory to the PLO even if peace agreements are reached, calling it “history’s meanest murder organization, except for the armed Nazi organizations.”¹⁴ As such, whoever chooses to enter into this agreement with Israel must accept the fact that “the IDF will be deployed in Judea, Samaria and Gaza.”¹⁵ So while Begin seems open to discussing sovereignty over the occupied territory, the territory would be under Israeli

¹¹ Ibid., 606.
¹² Ibid., 607.
¹³ Ibid., 608.
¹⁴ Ibid., 607.
¹⁵ Ibid., 607.
military control. If the Jordanians and Palestinians refuse to accept this then no agreement will be reached.

Begin’s plan here is in many ways a foil to the PLO’s plan for Palestine. The PLO sought a secular democratic Palestinian state on the whole of historical Palestine to replace the Zionist Israel which it saw as racist, expansionist and colonialist. This state would allow for the return of refugees to their homes and would be open to Jews who renounced Zionism. Begin is putting forward a plan for a single state in the whole of historical Palestine as well. This state would be a Zionist Jewish state. The Arab areas would be autonomous but ultimately under Israeli sovereignty and military control. While his plan allowed for the return at least a few refugees and Israeli citizenship, it is hardly the expression of Palestinian self-determination the PLO desired. Rather it was a way to incorporate the Palestinians as subjects of the Israeli state to negate Palestinian nationalist goals. This is the situation that so many PLO documents warned against. It was a solution that would create a subservient Palestinian political entity as a means to allow permanent Israeli control over the entirety of historical Palestine, with no prospect of Palestinian independence or self-determination. These two visions were completely irreconcilable. However, they were, in a sense, mirrors of one another. The main goal of each was the negation of nationhood of the other. And each nation refused to allow their ties to historical Palestine to be negated.
The Dreaded Permanent Peace

To understand the next significant shift in the history of Palestinian and Israeli discourse, it is necessary to first take a quick review of the events in Egypt since 1967. As we have mentioned before, the great Egyptian Arab national leader Gamal Abdel Nasser died in 1970 and Anwar al-Sadat took his place as president. Sadat chose to move away from Nasser’s Arab nationalist goals and sought to accommodate U.S. diplomatic pushes regarding Israel and in return receive American economic aid. Sadat was willing to enter into conditional negotiations with Israel as early as 1971 despite Arab League resolutions vowing never to negotiate with Israel. Israel’s insistence on negotiations without preconditions and their permanent designs on the occupied Sinai Peninsula, Egyptian territory, frustrated Sadat. The issuing of the Galili Plan in August of 1973, a document that seemed to reject Resolution 242 as the means for establishing peace agreements between Egypt and Israel, angered Sadat. Sadat desired to return the Sinai to Egyptian control and was willing to go against the demands of the PLO and the Arab League to do so.

In October of 1973 Sadat launched an attack against the Israeli positions in the Sinai coordinated with a Syrian attack in the Golan Heights. The attack and its early success came as a shock to everyone involved. Sadat’s forces were able to break through the Israeli blockade on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal and maintained this position in

---

16 Smith, 2nd edition, 223.
17 Ibid., 228.
18 Ibid., 228.
Israeli controlled territory when the inevitable ceasefire came around.\textsuperscript{19} Israel was able to recover quickly and to reach the outskirts of both Damascus and Cairo, giving it a tactical and military victory but the surprising success of the attacks meant significant political and strategic gains for Egypt. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was able to negotiate two partial withdrawals between Israelis and the Egyptians in 1974 and 1975.\textsuperscript{20} Attempts by the Carter Administration in 1976 and early 1977 to bring Israel, Jordan, Syria, Egypt and the PLO (pending their acceptance of Resolution 242) into a single conference were not successful. Sadat was convinced by these failures that the best way to regain the Sinai was direct negotiations with Israel.\textsuperscript{21} In November of 1977 Sadat announced to the Egyptian National Assembly, with Yassir Arafat in attendance, that he would visit Jerusalem. Two weeks later he completed this trip and spoke to the Knesset.\textsuperscript{22} This was the first step in a bumpy road to the Camp David Accords in 1978 and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979.

The steps to an Egypt Israel peace were not as simple as Egypt declaring its recognition and peace with Israel and in exchange receiving control of the Sinai. Sadat demanded Israel recognize the right of Palestinians to some level of self-determination, likely as a defense against the Arab states accusing him of abandoning the Palestinians and their cause.\textsuperscript{23} However, Menachem Begin was by this time prime minister of Israel. As we have already seen, Begin would never let an independent Palestinian entity be

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 228.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 230-231
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 254.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 254.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 254.
established. Begin sought from any agreement with the Egyptians the ability to selectively apply Resolution 242; an agreement that would allow it to return some territory as stipulated in the resolution while maintaining control over the West Bank.\(^\text{24}\)

His plan for autonomy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was therefore vague. Sadat, however, seemed willing to accept vague promises as long as he would regain the Sinai for Egypt and did not push Begin for specifics. In September of 1978, representatives of Egypt and Israel came to Camp David to hammer out two agreements: one on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and a second as a framework for the drafting of an Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty which would eventually be signed in 1979.\(^\text{25}\)

That final treaty made no mention about the rights of Palestinians to self-rule or the future of the West Bank, which was a huge win for Begin. Israel was able to selectively apply the return of territory provision of Resolution 242, ceding the Sinai but maintaining control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

This came as a significant blow to the PLO. Permanent peace that recognized Israel on the basis of Resolution 242 was in many ways the worst nightmare of the Palestinian national liberation movement. That document reduced the Palestinian issue to one of refugees and did not acknowledge the national rights of the Palestinians and so the creation of an agreement based on Resolution 242 was perhaps a fatal challenge to the PLO’s vision of a single Palestinian state on the whole of historical Palestine. The first point of its March 1977 political declarations reaffirmed its rejection of Resolution 242

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 254.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., 255.
for these reasons. These declarations did soften the stance, however, the participation of the PLO in international peacemaking efforts. While previously there was an absolute refusal to engage in these efforts, these 1977 declarations, issued before Sadat’s trip to Israel, stated that the PLO wished to participate in any conferences concerned with the issue of Palestine on the basis of UN General Assembly Resolution 3236. This resolution issued in 1974 recognized the right to self-determination of the Palestinians, addressing in what their eyes was the central defect of Resolution 242. Going along with this focus on the Palestinian right to self-determination, the March 1977 declarations also affirmed “the determination of the PLO to abort any settlement achieved at the expense of the firm national rights of our people.”26 Within two years, however, the Egyptians agreed to a peace settlement that did just that. And while the Palestinian National Council declared that “any settlement or agreement affecting the rights of our Palestinian people made in the absence of this people will be null and void,”27 there was really little the PLO could realistically do to nullify the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty.

The PLO did, however, attempt to isolate Egypt. A number of Palestinian factions came together in the wake of Sadat’s trip to Jerusalem to call for the creation of a “steadfastness and confrontation front” made up of Libya, Algeria, Iraq, Yemen, Syria and the PLO to oppose Sadat’s actions and boycott his regime.28 Egypt was actually

27 Ibid., 335.
28 Various Palestinian Factions, “Six-Point Programme Calling for the Formation of a ‘Steadfastness and Confrontation Front’ in Opposition to Sadat’s Negotiations with Israel” (December, 1977) in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 335.
suspended from the Arab League after the peace treaty was signed. It only regained membership a decade later.\footnote{Gelvin, 214.}

It is hard to overemphasize the significance of Egypt in particular making peace with Israel. Egypt was the largest Arab country and for decades the heart of Arab national spirit. It was not a coincidence that the headquarters of the Arab League were located in its capital. It had lead the way in two wars against the state of Israel and Nasser held the cause of the Palestinians at the heart of his political programs (on a discursive level anyways). Therefore, for Egypt, of all the Arab countries, to make a permanent peace with Israel was quite a shock. It reflected, however, Sadat’s priority on domestic rather than international or pan-Arab issues. He wanted to regain the Sinai and gain U.S. aid to boost the Egyptian economy. This choice may have cost him his life. The man who assassinated him in 1981 cited the peace agreement as his primary motivation.\footnote{Tessler, 556.}

Civil and political society of the West Bank rejected the Camp David Accords as did the Palestine National Council because of the “grave threats to the cause of Palestine and Arab national liberation” they represented.\footnote{The Palestine National Council, “Political and Organizational Program, 23 January, 1979” in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 339.} To the PLO, Camp David, and the subsequent peace treaty, condoned the actions of Israeli expansion and dispossession in historical Palestine and nullified the “inalienable right of the Palestinian Arab people to
their homeland.”

By remaining vague regarding the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the agreement seemed to give Begin free reign to operate and expand as he pleased in the occupied territory. Camp David and the peace treaty granted him recognition by the largest Arab country and the tacit approval by the international community of his selective reading of Resolution 242. This was a freedom he grasped with both hands at the start of 1980s.

Jerusalem Law and Land Grab

With Egyptian recognition and an election approaching in 1981, Begin turned to consolidating and strengthening Israel’s hold over the occupied territories. As we have discussed before, the Labor Party had put forward in its time in office plans for the integration of the occupied territory and Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. In the wake of the 1967 War, the municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem were expanded to include the holy sites of the eastern part of the city. They were steadily expanded to include more and more of East Jerusalem as numerous settlements were established housing tens of thousands of Israeli settlers. Official Israeli discourse since the moment that the Western Wall came under Israeli control emphasized the centrality of the city to Israel and Zionism and promised that the city would never be divided or ceded to foreign control.

---

32 Ibid., 339
In 1980, Begin’s government put these promises and slogans into Israeli law with the passing of “Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel.”\textsuperscript{33} The law declared that “Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel.”\textsuperscript{34} It also declared that Jerusalem was the seat of “the President of the State, the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court,” and that “Jerusalem shall be given special priority in the activities of the authorities of the State so as to further its development in economic and other matters.”\textsuperscript{35} Just as with Begin’s explicit position on the retention of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, here we see the Likud prime minister putting into writing what the Labor party implied with their actions. The Labor party never had any intention of giving up any part of Jerusalem and the settlement of the occupied half of the city was sponsored by successive Labor prime ministers. Begin, however, chose to leave nothing to doubt and annexed Jerusalem officially.\textsuperscript{36}

In the last year of his first stint in office, Begin also set about solidifying Israeli control over the West Bank. He did this primarily through massive land grabs. At the time, Israeli settlement was conducted under the auspices of the Israeli Agricultural Ministry. The ministry would be given private Palestinian land that had been seized by

\textsuperscript{33} Israel Knesset, “Law Proclaiming Jerusalem the Capital of Israel” (July, 1980), in Lukacs, \textit{A Documentary Record}, 198. Israel has never drafted a constitution, decided in 1950 to write it in pieces, with each piece called a “basic law.” To date, Israel has passed 11 basic laws.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 198

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 198-9

\textsuperscript{36} The law itself has not been recognized by the international community as it violates Resolution 242 and the inadmissibility of the conquering of territory through war. As result most foreign embassies are located in Tel-Aviv rather than the Israeli proclaimed capital in order to avoid potential tensions this recognition of annexation would arouse. There have been numerous attempts by the US congress to move the American embassy to Jerusalem, all vetoed by the sitting president.
the military administration of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for “training purposes.”

The Agricultural Ministry would then build settlements on this seized land. Ariel Sharon, then the head of the ministry, wanted to drastically expand the settlement project by accessing public and state land held by the Israeli government for settlement. He found, however, that most of the land seemed to be held by Palestinian individuals and that the state actually controlled little land in the occupied territories. In 1980, Begin’s government changed this by seizing huge tracts of land, totaling nearly 40% of the entire West Bank, and declaring it “state land” to be handed over to settlers after three weeks. If the rightful owners wished to dispute this seizure, they were required to come forward and prove their ownership before the three weeks had expired. Begin knew this was at best an unlikely action for the Palestinians and in this way huge new areas of the West Bank were opened to Israeli settlement.

Begin won reelection in 1981, but barely. He made Sharon his minister of defense that year.

These actions were almost diametrically opposed to the spirit of the plan for the West Bank and Gaza Strip as articulated in the Camp David Accords. Begin needed, however, to put forward the semblance of cooperation with the accords. The Knesset released a set of fundamental policy guidelines about a month after Begin’s reelection. Within these points, the government promised to “diligently observe the Camp David Agreements” and to work on “the implementation of the agreement on full autonomy of

---

37 Smith, 2nd edition, 259.
38 Ibid., 259.
39 Ibid., 260.
40 Ibid., 260.
41 Ibid., 260.
the Arab residents of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza district.” Autonomy did not mean independence, however, as the document makes very clear:

The autonomy agreed upon at Camp David means neither sovereignty nor self-determination. The autonomy agreements set down at Camp David are guarantees that under no condition will a Palestinian State emerge in the territory of Western Eretz Yisrael.

This point is very telling in two ways. First it betrays the Israeli reading that the Camp David Accords recognized Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The second is that its description of the West Bank as “Western Eretz Yisrael” rather than “east of the state of Israel” demonstrated the Israeli view that the West Bank is an integral part of the land of Israel and therefore not occupied territory.

Once this autonomous authority is established in the occupied territory, then

“Israel will present its claim and act to realize its right of sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza district.” Here there is no mincing of words. The Knesset of Israel in 1981 believed that the West Bank and Gaza Strip were parts of the state of Israel over which it had the right of sovereignty and settlement. It would not allow the establishment of a Palestinian state in this land because that would infringe on Israel’s natural right to the territory. The best it would offer was some form of autonomy under Israeli sovereignty. If this was not enough of an attack on Resolution 242, the government also promised that “Israel will not descend from the Golan Heights, nor will

---

43 Ibid., 199. Emphasis added.
44 Ibid., 199.
it remove any settlements established there,” and that “Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel, indivisible, entirely under Israeli sovereignty.”

Begin’s first five years provides a blunt clarification of Israel’s policy in the occupied territory. While he did not change the course of action set out by the Labor Party, he certainly said aloud what was previously understood implicitly. Under Begin, promises were made for permanent retention of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, hundreds of thousands of acres of Palestinian land was seized by the government for settlement, and the Golan Heights and Jerusalem were annexed. And while security was a voiced concern of Begin and his government, that was not the primary reason behind these actions. These were undertaken due to the belief that all of this land was rightfully Israel’s, and this was a right it would not concede despite the stipulations of Resolution 242 or the Camp David Accords.

A Difficult Few Years

What had been a successful half decade for Begin and the Israelis of recognition, expansion and annexation was period of adversity for the PLO. Not only did they have to deal with Sadat’s recognition and peace with Israel, they once again found themselves embroiled in civil war. Just as with Black September in Jordan, this civil war in Lebanon would lead to the expulsion of the PLO; exiled to Tunis, where would stay from 1982 until the mid-nineties.

46 The best Begin did to abide by these resolution was to “abolish” the military government of the West Bank and “replace” it with a civil authority. This was a sham as the so called “civil administration” was still, and is still to this day, run by the Israeli Defense Forces.
To fully spell out the Lebanese political system that has led to more than one civil war in the country’s history is a project in and of itself. Suffice it to say that the conflict we are interested in began in 1975 and grew out of antagonism between Palestinian militants and Lebanese Maronite Christians. While not strictly a Muslim-Christian conflict as there were radical Christian groups allied with the PLO, the civil war certainly played on deep seated religious animosity fostered in Lebanon by the divisive political system. This political system, known as the “confessional system” accorded membership in the country’s parliament proportionally according to religious and ethnic identity. The formula, however, was based on a horribly outdated census that gave disproportionate power to the Maronite confession and did not represent the growing Muslim population, augmented by hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees. The PLO was able to operate a sort of state within a state due to its control over the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and the southern border areas. Their operations in Israel from those bases prompted heavy handed Israeli retaliation. Israel provided assistance to private Maronite militias in their battle against the PLO and Begin compared them to Jews fighting Nazi persecution during the Holocaust. Eventually, as PLO actions increased in the wake of Camp David, Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. The goal of now defense minister Ariel Sharon was elimination of the PLO’s base of operations in Lebanon, if not the complete elimination of the entire Palestinian leadership. In this he failed, as the PLO militants and leaders were able to make a negotiated withdrawal to Tunis.

47 Smith, 2nd edition, 246.
48 Ibid., 247.
49 Ibid., 247.
Other than the withdrawal, the most notable event of the Israeli invasion was the massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Sharon arranged for a Maronite militia to wipe out a supposed two thousand strong PLO force in the camps. There was no such force. Rather, the Maronite militia massacred some 800 (some say as many as 3,500) Palestinian refugees. The militia was aided by the Israelis launching flairs throughout the night to give them enough light to carry out their slaughter.\textsuperscript{50} An Israeli commission found Sharon personally responsible for negligence leading to the massacre and was recommended to be removed as defense minister. Begin refused to fire him.\textsuperscript{51} Ariel Sharon would later be elected prime minister of Israel.

The Civil War in Lebanon and the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon to Tunis put the organization on life-support. The diplomatic moves made by Arafat in the wake of this crisis show just how damaging these events were to the so-called sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Arafat faced significant opposition within the PLO and exercised less and less influence over the various factions of the organization.\textsuperscript{52} He therefore turned outside, making diplomatic overtures to the United States and Jordan. The United States stood with Israel’s position that there would never be a Palestinian state in the occupied territory and required that the PLO accept Resolution 242 before even being considered for participation in a peace conference. However, the Reagan Administration stood by parts of Resolution 242 that required Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory and envisioned a Palestinian autonomous region in the West Bank and

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 269.
\textsuperscript{51} Tessler, 598.
\textsuperscript{52} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 284.
Gaza Strip in a federation with Jordan. Arafat and the PLO rejected this arrangement, as they had for nearly two decades, and stood by their rejection of Camp David and Resolution 242 because of their neglect of Palestinian national rights. However, in a move that illuminates the struggles of the PLO in the mid-1980s, Arafat agreed to a different version of a federation plan with Jordan known as the Amman Accord. That plan called for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital “within the context of the formation of the proposed confederated Arab states of Jordan and Palestine.” The highest authority in this federation, however, would be the king of Jordan. This was hardly the image of self-determination laid out in the 1968 PLO charter.

Neither the PLO nor King Husayn was particularly happy about this agreement. King Husayn ideally wanted the West Bank without the PLO but needed their approval to get the support of the Arab world. The PLO did not want self-determination under anyone else’s control but they believed that this plan would open the United States’ mind to the inclusion of the PLO in the peace process. The U.S. refused to consider this until the PLO accepted Resolution 242 (for their part, the Israelis refused to negotiate with the PLO even if this acceptance occurred) and the PLO refused to accept the resolution without an invitation to negotiations.

---

53 Ibid., 284.
54 “The Jordanian-Palestinian Accord” (Amman, February, 1985) in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 489.
56 Ibid., 285.
57 Ibid., 284.
On the Israeli side, another tight Knesset election in 1984 led to a Labor-Likud coalition whereby Labor leader Shimon Peres would be prime minister until 1986 at which point Begin’s successor, Yitzhak Shamir (another former Revisionist paramilitary leader from the time of the Mandate), would take over the office. Peres hoped to enter into direct negotiations with Jordan. His party’s more flexible attitude towards retention of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is apparent in the 1984 Knesset policy guidelines issued while Peres held the office of prime minister. Regarding the future of the occupied territories, the guidelines stipulate that “Israel will oppose the establishment of an additional Palestinian state in Gaza District and in the area between Israel and Jordan.”

Here Peres’s government describes the West Bank as territory in between Israel and Jordan, as opposed to Begin’s framing of the West Bank as part of the land of Israel. Likud politicians Shamir and Ariel Sharon, now minister of commerce, wanted Israel to annex the West Bank and attempted to undermine Peres’ efforts by expanding settlement activity. The Labor and Likud leaders were able to agree on one thing, however: a refusal to negotiate with the PLO even if it accepted Resolution 242 and the Camp David Accords.

What evolved was a stalemate between the PLO and Jordan on one side and Israel and the United States, each party unwilling to acquiesce to the demands of the other. Surprisingly, it was Margaret Thatcher who stepped in to attempt to break up the deadlock.

---

58 Ibid., 285. Shamir’s Revisionist greatest hits include plotting the assassinations of the British Minister of Middle East Affairs and the UN negotiator Count Folke Bernadotte.
59 Government of Israel, “Basic Policy Guidelines” (September, 1984) in Lukaes, A Documentary Record, 204.
60 Ibid., 284.
by inviting members of the PLO’s national council to London.\textsuperscript{61} This was a serious break with both Israel and the United States’ refusal to speak with the PLO. But it was not just the western powers that feared Anglo-PLO dialogue. The left wing PFLP and DFLP, who were opposed to the notion of a federation under Jordanian control, feared that this meeting would lead to a Palestinian recognition of Israel. In order to undermine this, paramilitary attacks against Israeli targets were conducted by PLO members. The Israelis, who were all too happy to do their part to undermine Arafat’s participation in any peace process, carried out a bombing of the PLO’s headquarters in Tunis which was likely aimed at killing Arafat. The attack killed fifty Palestinians and hundreds of Tunisians.\textsuperscript{62} In the months that followed, PLO commandos carried out another attack, this time against a cruise ship, and Israel made another failed attempt on Arafat’s life.\textsuperscript{63} Arafat would finally tell his envoys not to sign any recognition of Israel in London and the British cancelled the meeting.\textsuperscript{64}

With this, Arafat’s attempts of the 1980s to enter into the peace process failed. He found himself with little influence over the factions, unable to prevent them from carrying out armed activities. The PLO itself was divided, exiled to Tunis, and isolated from the homeland and the Diaspora. The armed struggle, described in the 1968 national covenant as “the only way to liberate Palestine” that would not be abandoned in favor of a political settlement had been discredited by Israel and its supporters as terrorism in all occasions and was largely abandoned. It seemed as if the PLO was going to peter out as

\textsuperscript{61} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 286.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 287.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 287.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 287.
the decade wound to a close. But it was the Palestinians of the occupied territories, who felt abandoned by the PLO because of its alliance with Husayn of Jordan, that would jolt the PLO, and the Palestinian liberation movement back to life. But with that new life came a new Palestinian rival, Hamas, who would use Islamism as a means to national liberation, challenging the PLO’s secular monopoly of the Palestinian revolution.
Chapter 7: The First Intifada; 1987-1993

It is hard to imagine that anyone, whether it was Arafat and the PLO in Tunis, Shamir and Sharon discussing annexation or Peres talking to the UN about a peace with Jordan, saw the events of 1987 coming. What did come in 1987, in the twentieth year of occupation, was a full out popular uprising, what would come to be known as the First Intifada (literally shaking off), by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Such was the significance of the Intifada that it raised the PLO from its death bed (even though it occurred largely independently of Arafat and his National Council) and it finally forced the word “Palestinian” and the people it described in to the Israeli discourse. After the Intifada, no longer was it possible for Israeli leaders to realistically expect that a Jordan Option was viable (although many have stuck by it to this day). It forced the Israelis to do what was previously unthinkable, negotiate with the PLO, as this was preferable to the continuation of the uprising. And with the end of the First Intifada we begin to see the monopolization of both Palestinian and Israeli discourse of the so-called “two state solution” as the only way to finally bring peace to historical Palestine; a paradigm that has been almost unshakable for the last two and a half decades.

The uprising began in 1987 when an Israeli tank transport in Gaza crashed into a group of Palestinian cars killing four.¹ With the subsequent funerals of the victims came the expression of frustration at twenty years of occupation that spread like wildfire from Gaza to the West Bank. The strength of the Palestinian reaction to this single event reveals just how much frustration had been amassed over twenty years of occupation. By

¹ Smith, 2nd edition, 291.
1985, policy of settlement by both the Likud and Labor parties had put over 150,000 Israeli settlers in the occupied territories. This settlement, combined with twenty years of economic, civil and political integration, meant that all aspects of Palestinian life were affected by occupation. From impacts on travel, land expropriation, limits on land use, limits on agriculture to discriminatory labor policies, the occupation touched on the lives of all Palestinians regardless of socioeconomic standing, geographic location or religion.

Crucially, there was no sign of the occupation ending, and things were only getting worse. Facing the weight of occupation and feeling forsaken by the PLO, their supposed representative, the Palestinians of the territories took matters into their own hands. The Intifada was a full-scale popular uprising, in the vein of the 1936 Great Revolt, which was characterized by community organization and non-violence and was answered by the Israelis with brutal repression. And the effects and implications of this five year uprising on the course of the conflict cannot be overstated.

The Discourse of the Intifada

The First Intifada progressed largely independently of the PLO, instead being organized on the local level. The most important local organizing committee was founded in January of 1988, just a couple weeks after the outbreak of the revolt under the name “Unified National Leadership of the Uprising” (UNLU). The UNLU issued communiques aimed at guiding the path of the uprising including such strategies as

---


3 Gelvin, 215.

4 Gelvin, 218.
general strikes and boycotts which were distributed as leaflets throughout the occupied territory.⁵ It issued its first communique on January 8th of 1988. This document speaks to the relationship between this local leadership and the far off PLO.

The meat of the first communique was the call for a weeklong strike by all of Palestinian civil society whether it was laborers, businessmen, taxi drivers or pharmacists.⁶ However, the interesting part of the communique was the statement by the UNLU that they “stress our abidance by the call of the PLO, the Palestinian people’s legitimate and sole representative, and the need to pursue the bountiful offerings and the heroic uprising.”⁷ Here the UNLU puts itself nominally under the authority of the PLO, despite the fact that they were essentially the highest direct leadership of the Intifada. The reasons for this are primarily political. On one hand, the UNLU and the PLO had, to a certain extent, divergent interests. The UNLU was directing and representing the population of the occupied territories, while the PLO represented the Palestinian people as a whole, including those outside of the West Bank and Gaza. However, the UNLU wanted the support of the PLO because of its legitimacy as the representative of the Palestinian people to gain its own legitimacy as the leadership of the uprising in the face of local rivals.⁸ The PLO, as we discussed above, was at its lowest point when the uprising broke out. They needed a relationship with the local leadership so they would not be marginalized as the Intifada succeeded in ways the PLO had not over the past two

---

⁵ Ibid., 218.
⁷ Ibid., 390.
⁸ Gelvin, 219.
decades. This does not mean the UNLU and the PLO had a perfect relationship. We shall see later that the PLO came to the negotiating table at Oslo primarily out of a fear of this marginalization.

The PLO itself put out a document regarding the uprising not long after. This document came to be known as the Fourteen Points. It was initially released by non-PLO officials but eventually, with approval from the organization in Tunis, came to be the official PLO policy guiding the uprising. This is a particularly important document that reflected the fundamental shift in the Palestinian future vision. The document stated that “the uprising has come to further affirm our people’s unbreakable commitment to its national aspirations. These aspirations include our people’s firm national right to self-determination and of the establishment of an independent state on our national soil under the leadership of the PLO, our sole legitimate representative.” Should that aspiration not be met, “real peace cannot be achieved” and “the continuation of Israeli occupation will lead to further violence and bloodshed, and the further deepening of hatred.” Peace should be made under the auspices of “an international conference of all concerned parties including the PLO… as an equal partner.”

The talk of Palestinian self-determination on Palestinian soil is nothing new. Neither is the demand of an independent state. We traced the evolution and eventual acceptance of this idea by the PLO in 1974 and in the Amman Accords of 1985, where

---

9 Ibid., 219.
11 Ibid., 3.
12 Ibid., 3.
the PLO expressed the desire for an independent state in confederation with Jordan. However, in 1974, that state was not so called, rather it was termed a national authority. This national authority was not, officially, an end in itself either. It would be established as a permanent base within historical Palestine to continue the struggle for the whole of Palestine. By 1985 and the signing of the Amman Accord, Arafat and his loyalists in the PLO conceded the desire for the control of the entirety of historical Palestine, although not officially, in favor of a state in a federation with Jordan. However, as we have discussed before, this was a move out of desperation for the PLO and the Palestinian state would have been essentially under the sovereignty of King Husayn of Jordan.

This document updates those two positions and sets the foundation for positions held today. First of all, it implicitly accepts a state of Palestine in less than the entirety of historical Palestine as the goal of the Palestinian national movement. This acceptance indicates fundamental changes in the PLO vision from its original 1968 position in that it accepts a political settlement (the warnings against which were vocal and pronounced) and it implicitly recognizes the permanence of the state of Israel. The permanence of Israel was a fact accepted by the Arab states in 1967 with Resolution 242 but the PLO stayed away from this realization until at least the early eighties when Arafat tried to get the PLO into the diplomatic arena in the face of Israeli and American opposition. While the Fourteen Points did not constitute official PLO acceptance of Resolution 242 and recognition of the state of Israel (that would come later in the year), it indicated that the permanence of Israel was a truth officially accepted by the PLO. This document meant that the goal of the popular revolution in Palestine was the creation of a state,
independent from both Israel and Jordan. This was a significant and new discursive change.

The other important part of this document is the term “on equal footing” regarding peace negotiations. This term puts forward a clear temporal process through which the Palestinians saw the coming of peace. For the Palestinians, the first step was the ending of the occupation and the establishment of a state. That state would then make peace with Israel in an international conference as an equal, state to state. Until the occupation is ended and a state is created, resistance like the Intifada would continue. At this time, Israel had no intention of creating a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, when Israel finally came to accept this idea, their notions regarding the steps by which a Palestinian state would be created and peace reached were fundamentally and irreconcilably different. It is enough to note here, however, that the Palestinian goals for the coming decades had been articulated in January of 1988.

The PLO faced a serious issue, however, in its bid to reach a political settlement through negotiations: Resolution 242. The United States had made it repeatedly clear that it would not speak to the PLO if it did not accept Resolution 242 (the Israelis made it repeatedly clear that it would never talk to the PLO no matter what it accepted or denied, although that was soon to change). The PLO, however, had rejected Resolution 242 and its implications for twenty years all because of a single issue: the document only referred to the resolution of the Palestinian people in terms of refugees, not national rights. The PLO refused to recognize the Resolution, and in doing so, recognize the state of Israel
without reciprocal recognition from the Israelis. However, by the late eighties, that rejection had softened, due to the political reality of the situation and the PLO’s new stated goals. The PLO spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif articulated the PLO’s now complex relationship with Resolution 242 to the Arab League in June of 1988. He begins his speech, perhaps surprisingly, by appealing the world to see the shared vision of the PLO and the Israelis.

Peel off the layers of fear and mistrust that successive Israeli leaders have piled on the substantive issues and you will find that the Palestinians and Israelis are in general agreement on ends and means. Israel’s objectives are lasting peace and security. Lasting peace and security are also the objective of the Palestinian people. No one can understand the Jewish people’s century of suffering more than the Palestinians. We know what it means to be stateless and the object of the fear and prejudice of the nations. Thanks to the various Israeli and other governments that have had the power to determine the course of our people’s lives, we know what it feels like when human beings are considered somehow less human than others and denied the basic rights that people along the globe take for granted.\(^\_1\)\(^3\)

The appeal to Israel’s desire to lasting peace and security are a direct reference, and in many ways an acceptance, of Resolution 242. Abu Sharif, on behalf of the PLO, also accepted the Israeli’s demand for direct negotiations, stating that “the means by which the Israelis want to achieve lasting peace and security is direct talks… the Palestinians agree.”\(^\_1\)\(^4\) And he states the PLO’s willingness to negotiate with whoever the Israelis choose to put forward, whether it was Peres and Labor or Shamir and Likud. He also recognizes that the Israeli and U.S. fear regarding negotiations with the PLO, which “center on the PLO’s failure of unconditionally accepting Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 [the resolution regarding the 1973 War] and on the possibility that a

\(^{13}\) Bassem Abu Sharif, “PLO View: Prospects of a Palestinian-Israeli Settlement” (June, 1988) in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 397.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 397.
Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza would be a radical, totalitarian threat to its neighbor.”\textsuperscript{15} He counters that the PLO “does accept Resolutions 242 and 338. What prevents it from saying so unconditionally is not what is in the resolution by what is not in them: neither resolution says anything about the national right of the Palestinian people… for that reason and that reason alone we have said that we accept Resolutions 242 and 338 in the context of the other UN resolutions which do recognize the national right of the Palestinian people.”\textsuperscript{16}

Just as with the Fourteen Points, this speech represented a fundamental change to the Palestinian discourse, although it is again just the articulation of a de facto stance. Here the PLO spokesperson falls short of a full recognition of Israel and official unconditional acceptance of Resolution 242 but his speech clearly states a desire to create a Palestinian state along the lines of that very document, alongside the state of Israel. He is arguing that what is holding back the prospects of peace is not Palestinian refusal to accept Resolution 242 but rather Israeli to end the occupation. The fact that the PLO accepted Resolution 242 six months later but the occupation continues to this day perhaps proves his point.

The culmination of the PLO’s 1988 peaceful appeals was the drafting of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence and Yassir Arafat’s second speech to the United Nations. The Declaration of Independence announced the establishment of the state of

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 398.  
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 399.
Palestine “on our Palestinian territory with its capital Jerusalem.” This “Palestinian territory” was the land of historical Palestine occupied by Israel in 1967, namely the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Here we see a clearer articulation of the previous documents on the national self-determination of the Palestinians. This document put forward the currently held Palestinian vision for the future: A state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with Jerusalem as its capital neighboring the state of Israel.

In looking for legitimacy for this land beyond the simple fact of Palestinian residence and tie to the land, the drafters made a clever move. They referred to UN General Assembly Resolution 181 which called for the partition of historical Palestine into two states, which was accepted by the Jewish community of Palestine, giving it the basis for the foundation of its state. The drafters state that not only did the resolution give legitimacy to the state of Israel but also, as it was now accepted by the PLO, it gave “international legitimacy that ensure the right of the Palestinian Arab people to sovereignty.” On that basis is this declaration of statehood justified. Crucially, we see with this declaration of statehood the Palestinian belief that peace will only come once the state of Palestine could negotiate with Israel on equal terms once the occupation ended.

As for Arafat’s December 1988 speech to the UN, a US refusal to grant Arafat a visa forced the meeting to be held not in New York but in Geneva, Switzerland.

---

18 Ibid., 412.
19 Smith, 2nd edition, 300.
month before Arafat’s speech, the PLO, meeting in Algiers, formally and officially accepted Resolution 242 as the basis for a solution to the question of Palestine by calling for an international peace conference based on that resolution, only, however, with mutual recognition by Israel of Palestinian national rights. Arafat’s speech, therefore, was centered on the building of peace according to the formula put forward in that document.

Arafat very helpfully describes the evolution in the PLO’s future vision since his first speech to the UN in 1974:

The last thing I said from this platform was that war erupts from Palestine and that peace starts in Palestine. Our dream then was to set up the democratic state of Palestine, in which Muslims, Christians and Jews would live on an equal footing, in terms of rights and duties, in a single, unified society, similar to other peoples on this Earth and in our contemporary world.

However, when the Israelis saw this dream as “a scheme that aims to destroy and annihilate their entity,” Arafat stated that the PLO had a “duty… to learn a lesson from this difficult situation and … began searching for the realistic alternative formulas, which are applicable, to find a solution to the question based on the possible and not absolute justice which would guarantee our peoples’ rights to freedom, sovereignty and independence.” This is a simplified version of the events that forced this change of vision, but it is, at its core, the truth. The PLO was forced to accept that it would never be able to replace the state of Israel with its dream of a democratic state for all. That

---

21 Yassir Arafat, “Address to the UN General Assembly” (December, 1988) in Lukacs, A Documentary Record, 423.
22 Ibid., 423.
realization, combined with its dire situation in the wake of the Lebanese Civil War pushed it towards the acceptance of a political settlement to salvage whatever was left of historical Palestine for the Palestinians.

At the end of the day, the success of nationalist movements depends on the extent to which national claims are accepted by the international community. This is why it was so important, for example, for the Zionist movement to get British recognition and support. The Palestinian people, in the eyes of the international community, had no legitimate ties to the land of what was now Israel. However, its claim to the West Bank and Gaza Strip was accepted on a much wider scale. Its claim certainly outweighed the claim of Israel who was required to withdraw from that territory according to Resolution 242. Thus, even though a Palestinian state is not “absolute justice,” it was the best “possible” solution for the PLO. The change in the future vision of the PLO, then, was one from coexistence with the other in a single state to coexistence between two equal nation-states.

These new diplomatic overtures to the United States and Israel were not without opposition amongst the Palestinians. The brutal and indiscriminate repression of the Intifada by the Israeli government served as a unifying factor. However, while this repression inspired resistance across class, social and religious lines, not all Palestinians had a unified future vision. The PFLP feared the repercussions of recognizing the national rights of Israel without reciprocation. The DFLP, who had initially put forward
the Palestinian state idea, had similar reservations.\textsuperscript{23} They feared that Arafat was giving much to Israel based on promises of negotiation that may never materialize.\textsuperscript{24} Despite this opposition, the PNC endorsed the PLO’s peace path in November of 1988. But while these internal concerns failed to sway the PLO’s path or change its vision, a new national political force appeared in 1988 that operated, and to this day operates, outside of the PLO. This group, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) put forward a future vision in 1988 that called back to the original PLO charter in many ways though in a fundamentally different framework.

Hamas

Let us be perfectly clear about Hamas before we go too far into an analysis of its charter. Hamas, in terms of goals and means, is a nationalist organization just like Fatah, the PFLP and the DFLP. However, while these groups are strictly secular, Hamas presents its nationalist goals in Islamist terms. This is important to point out because it is a misconception that Hamas is waging a strictly religious war. It is not. Its goal is the liberation of Palestine, which is nationalist. This is not to say that it is not inspired by religion or that their claim to Palestine is not partially based in religion; it calls itself the Islamic Resistance Movement for a reason. But just as Fatah, the PFLP and the DFLP are cut from the same secular nationalist cloth as the Zionist labor and Likud party, Hamas is in the company of religious Zionist parties. Religion is in the rhetoric but nationalism is the motivating factor.

\textsuperscript{23} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 301.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 301.
The emergence of Hamas is another example of how the First Intifada traced the path of the Great Revolt of 1936. In that uprising populist religious leaders like al-Qassam (after whom Hamas would name their military wing) led followers in nationalist struggle. Hamas itself grew out of the many Islamic charities that had begun to spring up in the occupied territories in the seventies. These charities provided social services like education, aid to the poor and healthcare and aided in political organization of unions and professionals. The Israeli government nurtured these charities believing that if they could raise the standard of living in the territories, the people would be pacified and turn away from the nationalist PLO. However, as Israel would come to find, these charities were not the pacifying force they expected. During the first week of the Intifada, Hamas announced its foundation and in August of 1988 it released its founding document. It would come to play a significant discursive, political and military role in the ensuing two and a half decades of the conflict.

Just as the Zionist movement laid claim to the land of historical Palestine because of its Jewish character and history, Hamas made the same claim but based instead on its Islamic character and history. Hamas describes historic Palestine as an “Islamic Waqf.” A waqf is essentially the Islamic equivalent of a trust. Usually it is a building or a piece of land donated and held by a charitable trust. The proceeds or interest earned off of that asset is used by the trust to maintain a hospital, school, or mosque for example. The key feature of waqf law in this context is that waqf assets are inalienably given to the trust.

---

25 Gelvin, 223.
26 Ibid., 223.
By describing Palestine as a waqf, Hamas is stating that the land of historical Palestine is inalienably Muslim in character. It is the mission of Hamas, therefore, to return it to Islamic control. Hamas’ goals were maximalist, just like the PLO of 1968: Palestine, “or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up.”

Also, as we noted before, Hamas was not on board with the PLO’s new political push. It stated that “Initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement. Abusing any part of Palestine is abuse directed against part of religion. Nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement is part of its religion… There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors”

Again this harkens back to an earlier era of PLO discourse. This is an Islamist reframing of the PLO commitment to armed struggle, calling it Jihad, as a tactic, not a strategy to be jettisoned in favor of a political settlement. Hamas shares the nationalist goals of the PLO, going so far as to describe it as part of its religion, but rather than framing in it in a secular way, puts it forward in an Islamic context.

Regarding the PLO, the founding document, called the “Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement,” includes sections about “National Movements in the Palestine Arena” and “The Palestine Liberation Organization.” It has high praise for these movements and assures them that Hamas “is there for their support and assistance... It is

---


28 Ibid.
there to bring together and not to divide, to preserve and not to squander, to unify and not
to throw asunder.”  

It has particularly reverent words for the PLO stating that the organization is “is the closest to the heart of the Islamic Resistance Movement. It contains the father and the brother, the next of kin and the friend. The Moslem does not estrange himself from his father, brother, next of kin or friend. Our homeland is one, our situation is one, our fate is one and the enemy is a joint enemy to all of us.”  

However, it explains that it cannot join the PLO precisely because of the PLO’s strictly secular orientation:

Secularism completely contradicts religious ideology. Attitudes, conduct and decisions stem from ideologies. That is why, with all our appreciation for The Palestinian Liberation Organization - and what it can develop into - and without belittling its role in the Arab-Israeli conflict, we are unable to exchange the present or future Islamic Palestine with the secular idea.

It promises, however, that “the day The Palestinian Liberation Organization adopts Islam as its way of life, we will become its soldiers, and fuel for its fire that will burn the enemies.”

What we see with Hamas, then, is an organization which in goals in means reflects in many ways the original future vision of the PLO. However, one fundamental difference between the two organizations prevents them from operating as in a unified way in the struggle for historical Palestine; religion, or rather, lack thereof. It is interesting that the PLO’s talk of a political settlement at this time is not what holds Hamas back from unity but rather its secular disposition. However, it seems that no

---

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
division is unbridgeable should the political situation require it to be bridged. In the last couple of years, talks of incorporating Hamas into the PLO have picked up steam, but this has not yet come to fruition.

It would be irresponsible of me at this point not to touch on the treatment of the Jewish people in the Hamas covenant. We saw in the PLO charter and subsequent documents an overall inclusive message towards the Jews. Jews who lived in Palestine until 1917 were considered Palestinians. Those Israeli Jews who had since settled in Palestine would be equals in the secular democratic state the PLO sought to establish. Also, the documents produced by the PLO and its factions were always careful to distinguish between Zionism as a national movement and Jews as a religion and a people. The Hamas covenant does not make this distinction. It refers to Israelis and Zionists simply as “Jews.” It brings up the anti-Semitic hoax *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and assigns Jews responsibility for both world wars. While it does state that according to Islam, Jews and Christians are protected peoples and that in an Islamic Palestine people of all religions would live in peace and quiet, the document is far from inclusive. These occurrences of anti-Semitism are indefensible. It is important to recognize, however, that these attitudes appeared in a certain context. The people of Palestine were first expelled from their land and then occupied by a state that proudly proclaims its Jewish identity. That they would blur the line between nation and religion is understandable, although not defensible, as the line was initially blurred by the Jewish national movement itself.

________________________

33 Ibid.
Israeli Discourse during the Intifada

What was to the Palestinians a heroic struggle for national rights and liberation was to the Israelis illegal and unacceptable behavior. To defense minister, Labor Party member and future prime minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin, the demonstrators were terrorists and needed to be treated as such. In order to quell the uprising, Rabin ordered the IDF to “break the bones” of the protesters, and allowed for the use of live fire and beatings. Mass arrests were conducted and new prison camps were established to house the tens of thousands of arrested Palestinians, mirroring the anti-insurgency tactics of the British during the Great Revolt of the 1930s. Instead of dissuading Palestinians to join in, this violent and indiscriminant repression served to forge ties across class divisions. Out of desperation, the Israeli cabinet in April 1988, under Shamir, ordered the assassination of top Fatah official Khalil al-Wazir, purported to be the director of the Intifada and the voice advocating for non-violence rather than armed struggle. The assassination was not just an effort to bring the intifada to an end but also to undercut calls, supported by Labor head Shimon Peres, for an international peace conference. The Likud ministers wanted to undercut these peace efforts, as they had done on previous occasions, because of their desire to annex the occupied territories.

Both the Likud and Labor parities had reasons for quelling the uprising as quickly as possible. And as 1988 was another Knesset election year, the party platforms for that

34 Smith, 2nd edition, 297.
35 Ibid., 299
36 Ibid., 298.
37 Ibid., 298.
election reflect their attitude towards the Intifada. For Labor, the goal remained a permanent peace with Jordan that saw the ceding of heavily populated Palestinian areas to the Jordan state and Israeli retention of most of the area of the West Bank. However, the success of the uprising opened the door for a political solution that involved the PLO and the possibility of a Palestinian state. By 1988, the process leading to this eventuality was already underway. In reaction to the PLO’s Fourteen Points, King Husayn of Jordan openly renounced all claims to the West Bank and a short time later began actively supporting the PLO’s goals for a state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This U-turn was hardly out of the goodness of his heart regarding the nationalist goals of the PLO. Rather, it was out of concern for the level of support in Jordan for the Intifada by the Palestinian population of his kingdom. The last thing he needed was the 60% of his population that was of Palestinian descent to begin an Intifada aimed at shaking off his rule. With this renunciation by the king of Jordan, the so called Jordan option for solving the conflict should have gone by the wayside but Peres and his Labor Party, with US support clung to the idea in their 1988 party platform.

The Labor platform promised to “solve the Palestinian problem within a Jordanian-Palestinian political framework which would encompass the densely populated areas of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.” The rest of the land, such as the Jordan Valley, the area around Jerusalem and the northwest Dead Sea would be annexed by

38 Smith, 2nd edition, 300.
39 Ibid., 300.
Israel, with the eastern most border of the state being the Jordan River.\textsuperscript{41} The plan also promised once again that Israel under Labor would not allow the establishment of a Palestinian state between Jordan and Israel.\textsuperscript{42} And while the Labor Party did not mention the PLO by name, its offer to “hold talks with those Palestinian figures and elements that recognize by Israel’s existence, reject terrorism and accept UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338” was a clear rejection of talks that included the PLO.\textsuperscript{43} Again, this was a position that the U.S. supported as of 1988. Despite the fact that the PLO would later in the year formally accept Resolution 242, their demand of Israeli recognition for Palestinian national rights was a precondition Peres and Labor Refused to accept.

Just like Labor, Likud had a vested interest in ending the Intifada as quickly as possible. Unlike Labor, who clung to the at this point dead and buried Jordan option, Likud needed calm in order to maintain control over the territories Shamir and Sharon sought to annex. Rather than grasp at the ghost of the Jordan option, Likud grasped at the ghost of the autonomy plan elaborated in the Camp David accords to try and bring some form of peace. We have noted before that document produced by the Likud party do not mince words. Its 1988 party platform was no exception. For example: “\textit{The right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel} is eternal and everlasting… Israel has a right and a claim to sovereignty over Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District… \textit{Israel will enforce law and order in Judea, Samaria and Gaza}… The Likud will renew the settlement policy in

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 274.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 274.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 275.
all parts of the Land of Israel.” We have studied before this Likud position that the territories are an integral part of Israel and should be annexed and we see here that they persist up to at least 1988 despite the Intifada.

Regarding the future of the Palestinians, the platform reaffirms the Likud position that the Camp David Accords guaranteed that no Palestinian state will be established in between Jordan and Israel. Furthermore, the autonomy laid out in this agreement is neither a “state nor sovereignty nor self-determination.” To Likud, only Israel had the right to exercise these in the land of historic Palestine. Rather, this autonomous Palestinian system would be wholly subservient to Israeli sovereignty and law. Just like the Labor platform, the Likud platform makes no direct reference to the PLO but it does have a few choice words for the organization. It states there “shall be no negotiations with organizations of assassins who seek to destroy the State of Israel” and immediately after this sentence, in case we have forgotten, it states that “Israel shall instate law and order in the Judea, Samaria and Gaza districts.” The fact that the PLO had implicitly recognized Israel and accepted Resolution 242 on numerous occasions, and were to do so openly shortly after this document is penned, seemed of no consequence to either Labor or Likud. It seems that the parties’ strongest point of agreement was that Israel would not negotiate with the PLO and Israel would not allow the creation of a Palestinian state.

46 Ibid., 276.
The 1988 election was another tight one, and it took a new force in Israeli politics, religious nationalist parties who we will encounter in more detail later, to give Shamir and Likud ability to form a new government. Shamir remained prime minister and Rabin remained defense minister.

In the wake of the elections the new government officially responded to the Palestinian declaration of independence stating that it exhibited no shift in Palestinian policy, no explicit or implicit recognition of Israel’s “right to exist,” or “unqualified acceptance of 242 and 338.” This is at best misleading. As we have already covered, the declaration of independence and accompanying political statements acknowledged Israel’s existence and accepted these resolutions in the framework of mutual recognition. It even included an implicit recognition of this so-called “right to exist” in pointing to Resolution 181 as not only the political legitimization of the Jewish state but the Palestinian one as well. Israel, however, was not prepared to grant this same recognition to the Palestinians, especially to the PLO, as it contradicted the two points that both Likud and Labor agreed upon, no negotiations with the PLO and no national rights for the Palestinians. These two points we again reaffirmed in the “Basic Policy Guidelines” of the new government a month later. However, with the coming of 1989, the United States would determine that the PLO had accepted Resolution 242 and renounced

---

48 Ibid., 302.
50 Ibid., 218.
violence (the other precondition to negotiation) and began to pressure Shamir to take steps towards negotiations with the organization.\textsuperscript{51}

The Birth of a Paradigm

While they had no way of knowing it at that point, the PLO in 1988 articulated the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli that would eventually monopolize the discourse in the Palestinian territories, the Arab States, the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and Israel for the ensuing two and a half decades and, as of 2013, the foreseeable future: the so-called “two state solution.” While, as we will see, there has never been a consensus between the Palestinians and the Israelis over the forms these states would take, such was the strength of support for this solution in all circles that even those in Israel who sought to retain nearly all of the occupied territory found themselves being forced to pay at least lip service to the idea of a Palestinian state. Thus, in 1988, we see a birth of a paradigm. And without the Intifada, this would not have come to pass.

For the PLO, despite minor dissent that has started to strengthen in the second decade of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, the future vision has remained unchanged since its original articulation in 1988. The goal is the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital, along with a just solution to the refugee question. Until this state is created, Palestinian resistance to the occupation will continue. Throughout the peace process that would begin in the early nineties and last up to the

\textsuperscript{51} Smith, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 301.
present day, these fundamental tenets would remain, despite small fluctuations in the final borders of the imagined Palestinian state.

For the Israelis, the clear future visions of 1988 (either, according to Labor, a peace with Jordan that includes ceding the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to their control or, according to Likud, total annexation of the territories with “autonomous rule” for the Palestinians therein) would become muddled as international support and pressure made these visions finally untenable. Even with popular and professed political support for a two state solution, the Israeli vision for these states has never been made clear. We will raise and likely be unable to answer the question if over the ensuing 25 years Israel ever intended to allow the creation of a Palestinian state. But we are getting a little ahead of ourselves here. We are now entering 1989; a pivotal year for Palestinian aspirations at the height of the Intifada and the start of a diplomatic push that would finally include the PLO.

U.S. Pressure and Diplomatic Push

In December of 1988, just after denying Arafat a visa to speak at the UN in New York, the U.S. determined that the PLO satisfactorily met its demands for an opening of dialogue, namely acceptance of Resolution 242 and a renunciation of terrorism. This dialogue was opened through the American ambassador to Tunisia, still the site of the PLO’s headquarters. Despite this dialogue, the U.S. stood by Israel’s demand that the

---

52 Ibid., 301
PLO be absent from any sort of official negotiations. However, in 1989, the U.S. began to push Shamir to talk to the PLO. Shamir, clinging to Likud’s “autonomy plan” pipe dream, called for elections in the occupied territories which would allow the Palestinian people to “conduct their daily affairs of life,” to put off negotiations. Israel in this arrangement would be “responsible for security, foreign affairs” and settlement. By conducting Palestinian elections under Israeli control, Shamir’s clear goal here was to gain Palestinian participation in this expression of Israeli sovereignty. While this election process was described in the document as an “interim” arrangement, Shamir was clear that this “self-rule” would not lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state or a cession of the occupied territories to Jordan, stating “we shall not give the Arabs one inch of our land, even if we have to negotiate for ten years.” As a strategy to consolidate Israeli power in the occupied territories and get the U.S. of Shamir’s back about negotiations, the plan worked. The American administration backed the plan, buying the idea that the interim status of the elections would lead to the end of Israeli rule over the territory and therefore gave Shamir a year to stage them. Not surprisingly, Palestinian leaders in the PLO and the territories rejected the idea and stood by their demand for a state. The yearlong deadline, therefore, gave Shamir a chance to further expand settlements and

---

53 Ibid., 301.
54 Ibid., 301.
56 Ibid., 67.
57 Smith, 2nd edition, 302.
58 Ibid., 303.
59 Ibid., 302.
entrench Israel’s control over the territory. Eventually both the United States and the Labor Party grew frustrated with Shamir’s attempts to undermine any attempt at peace. In March of 1990, President George H.W. Bush stated that he opposed Israeli settlement in the occupied territories. Shamir did not back down, threatening to settle as many Soviet Jews in Jerusalem as possible and in reaction the Labor Party left the governing coalition. The Labor leader Peres was unable to form a new coalition and eventually Shamir managed to form a government without the participation of Labor. With his newly consolidated power, Shamir formally rejected his own plan for autonomy in the occupied territories and expanded settlement.

On the Palestinian side, Arafat, seeking to gain further U.S. support, accepted the idea of elections in the territories without the participation of the PLO which weakened his position amongst the Palestinians. He began, therefore, to move closer to Saddam Hussein, a step taken on the verge of the First Gulf Crisis which would harm the PLO’s standing in the Arab World and the internationally community. The United States suspended dialogue with the PLO in the summer of 1990. Within the Palestinian territories, there were rumors of the PFLP breaking PLO ranks to form an alternative front with Hamas.

The actual events of the First Gulf War are not very important for this study. What are important are its consequences. In his weak position, Arafat found himself

---

60 Ibid., 303.  
61 Smith, 8th edition, 415.  
62 Ibid., 415.  
63 Ibid., 416  
64 Ibid., 416
defending Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait, hoping that Hussein’s threat of force would lead to American concessions regarding peace negotiations. This hurt the PLO’s standing in the international community. Kuwait expelled thousands of Palestinian refugees from the country and pulled its financial backing of the PLO. However, as a result of the war, the United States decided to renew efforts to once and for all find peace in the Middle East. The Arab states called for an international conference sponsored by the USSR and US which would be held in Madrid. The Palestinians of the occupied territories were told that PLO representatives would not be allowed to attend. Arafat acquiesced on the condition that Palestinians from both inside and outside of the territories were permitted to attend. Shamir agreed to participate as well, though losing some support at home.

The Madrid Conference

As the Intifada raged on in 1991 representatives of Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan gathered in Madrid to conduct peace talks based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338. The Madrid conference marked the first time that Israel met directly with these Arab states. The goal was to revive the land for peace formula that led to the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel more than decade earlier. Because of Israeli demands, the Palestinian delegation included no PLO representatives and was part of the Jordanian team. Not everyone in the Palestinian camp was happy with Arafat’s willingness to

65 Ibid., 418.
66 Ibid., 420
67 Ibid., 420.
68 Ibid., 420.
69 Ibid., 421.
70 Ibid., 421.
71 Ibid., 421.
acquiesce to these terms. The PFLP and DFLP, who had previously opposed Arafat’s agreement to keep the PLO out of peace talks in 1988, joined with Hamas in issuing a statement critical of Arafat’s acceptance the terms of the Madrid conference.72 While I have failed to dig up this particular document, it is safe to say that the source of these groups’ opposition was a feeling that Arafat was giving up too much, especially recognition of Israel, with no assurance of a corresponding recognition of Palestinian national rights by Israel.

Little practical progress was actually made during the talks, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli front. Nor were there any adjustments to either people’s official future vision. The head of the Palestinian delegation, who had no official ties to the PLO but acknowledged the organization as the representative of the Palestinian people, professed the Palestinian commitment to the two state solution based on Resolutions 242 and 338 as the path to peace. Shamir, on the other hand, once again called for “interim self-governing” amongst the Palestinian population of the territories but not as a means to any sort of future independence or statehood.73

Because the Madrid Conference does not represent any change to the Palestinian or Israeli discourse, it is not necessary for this study to cover the events of the conference in much depth. However, it behooves us to take a quick look at the opening statements of both the head of the Palestinian delegation, Haidar Abdul Shafi, and Israeli Prime Minister Shamir. We mentioned briefly before that with the advent of the two state

72 Ibid., 421.
solution paradigm, there appeared a fundamental disconnect between the Palestinians and Israelis on the order of steps by which a Palestinian state would be established and a peace agreement would be reached. Despite the fact that at this point in 1991 both Shamir and the Labor opposition opposed the creation of a Palestinian state, Shamir’s discourse in the context of peace with Arab states betrays the understanding that the Israelis would bring to peace negotiations with the Palestinians a few years later.

Abdul Shafi, the head of the Palestinian delegation, makes it clear that the aim of the Palestinians and goal of the Intifada is the creation of a Palestinian state on the whole of the territory occupied in 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital. He argues that the main obstacle to this goal is Israel’s expansionist policies as represented in the construction of settlements.\(^\text{74}\) Instead, there needs to be a Palestinian state to negotiate with Israel on equal terms. Abdul Shafi states that “bilateral negotiations on the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the dissolution of Israeli administration, and the transfer of authority to the Palestinian people cannot proceed under coercion or threat in the current asymmetry of power.”\(^\text{75}\) That is to say, as long as Israel has complete control over the territories and therefore the power to change the status of the territories through settlement and expansion, a Palestinian state cannot be established and peace cannot be reached. While they would prefer that the Palestinian state be established “today rather than tomorrow,” Abdul Shafi states the Palestinians would accept the proposed interim


\(^{75}\) Ibid., 154.
agreements so long as this stage is not “transformed into a permanent status.”

The Palestinian idea was that with this interim autonomy and control over their own lives, they would be in a better position to negotiate than when complete subjugated by occupation. This was obviously a concession as the clear Palestinian preference was, and still is, the establishment of a Palestinian state first and negotiations of peace on equal footing afterwards. This is an adaption of the “land for peace” formula that was first laid out in Resolution 242: Israel would return the land occupied in 1967 and the Arab states, and the newly established Palestinian state, would sign peace treaties and normalize relations with the state of Israel.

As we have covered before, Shamir had no intention of returning territory occupied in the 1967 War. This is why he states in his introductory remarks at the Madrid Conference that “it will be regrettable if the talks focus primarily and exclusively on territory.” To Shamir, the issue preventing peace was not the fact that Israel was occupying and settling land that once belonged to the Arab states (even though the return of this land in exchange for peace was the principle upon which the conference was called). Instead, Shamir claims that “the root cause of the conflict is the Arab refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the state of Israel.” Shamir was looking for acceptance and recognition from the Arab states and the signing of peace treaties without an Israeli commitment to the returning of territory. What we will see with the peace negotiations with the PLO when they finally begin a couple years later is the application of this same

---

76 Ibid., 154.
78 Ibid., 149.
principle: demands of Palestinian recognition and acceptance of occupation and settlement in the form of a peace treaty with no Israeli commitment to the ceding of territory. What we see is the exact opposite vision to the Palestinians. Rather than a state and then peace, the Israelis would demand peace, that is an acceptance of Israeli territorial demands, and then whatever is left will become the Palestinians “state.” This is jumping ahead a couple years but it is important to identify the roots of this mentality in other contexts so we can recognize it later.

Post Madrid

As is probably clear, the differing mentalities between the Palestinians and Arab states on one side and Shamir’s Israel on the other meant that the Madrid conference did not really move the process towards peace. The conference is therefore better remembered as being the first occasion of multilateral discussions between Israel and the Arab states rather than for any practical progress. The United States eventually grew tired of Shamir’s settlement policy and refusal to negotiate according to the land for peace formula and withheld a promised $10 billion loan until settlement building ceased.79 Shamir expanded settlements as a response. The U.S. then acted to undermine Shamir’s reelection bid in June of 1992 to ensure the instillation of a Labor coalition, with former defense minister Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister, which included left wing parties more open to ceding territory for peace.80

79 Smith, 8th edition, 421.
80 Ibid., 421.
Rabin seemed more willing to negotiate than his predecessor. He cut some financial incentives for settlers and stopped building what he termed “political settlements.” His government also passed a law that permitted Israeli contact with the PLO. However, he was not willing to let everything go. He maintained the construction of “security settlements” around Jerusalem and in the Golan. As had been the Labor policy since the days of Yigal Allon, Rabin seemed to favor retaining large parts of the West Bank, particularly around Jerusalem, and opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state, still favoring the Jordanian option. However, a fundamental change would occur in 1993 with the secret Oslo negotiations and the start of the so called Peace Process. The Oslo Process would the entrance of the Palestinian people in to the official Israeli national political discourse and set the tone for the ensuing twenty years of the conflict.

81 Ibid., 422.
82 Ibid., 422.
If we were to split the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict into distinct phases, we would find, as of 2013, four. The first is the conflict in Mandate Palestine between Jewish settlers and the indigenous Palestinian population. With the establishment of the state of Israel, we see the start of the second phase, the Arab-Israeli conflict, where the Arab states took center stage in the struggle against Zionism. With the crushing defeat of the Arabs in 1967, the third phase begins; the return to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Here the conflict is characterized by armed struggle by the Palestinian national groups while the Arab states, for the most part, recede to the periphery of the conflict. With the signing of the Oslo Accords, we see the start the fourth and current phase of the conflict (but we will discuss later whether we have seen a new phase emerge in recent years). Just as the 1967 War was the catalyst for the shift between the second and third phases, the First Intifada was the push towards the Oslo phase. It was the First Intifada that drove the PLO to alter its future vision and it was the First Intifada that brought about mutual recognition and the so-called Peace Process.

The 1993 Oslo Accords was the result of secret negotiations hosted by the Norwegian foreign minister between an unofficial delegation of Israelis and PLO representatives. The result of the talks was an exchange of recognition between Yassir Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin (although not equal recognition) and the framework for peace upon which direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO would be conducted.  

---

1 Gelvin, 229.
Why this sudden accord between these two groups who had been in direct conflict for two and a half decades at this point? Well for Arafat and the PLO, this desire to conduct direct negotiations with Israel is no surprise. Arafat had all but recognized Israel as far back as 1985 and was doing everything in his power to get a foot in the door at international negotiations. And while the Intifada was a shot in the arm for the PLO who was at the time still smarting five years on from its expulsion from Lebanon, Arafat’s status in Palestine was once again weak as of 1992 when the Oslo negotiations began. First and foremost, his aloof position in Tunis created a disconnect between the on the ground leadership of the Intifada and the exiled PLO. Secondly, the appearance of Hamas and the rejectionist fronts of the PLO meant that Arafat’s PLO was hardly the sole organization claiming to be the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This rivalry combined with Arafat’s agreement to negotiations without PLO participation severely weakened his support and prominence amongst the Palestinians. Arafat’s support of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf Crisis had a similar negative impact on his international standing both with the United States and the Arab states. Losing support at home and abroad and with no say over the events of the Intifada, it is not surprising therefore, that Arafat looked for legitimacy outside of historical Palestine. He found that in recognition of the PLO by Israel.

Israel’s decision to recognize the PLO was slightly less predictable. Why did Israel suddenly change from the position they held just a year before, no negotiation with the PLO? It was true that Shamir and his openly expansionist policies had left office, but Yitzhak Rabin was hardly a man of peace. We first met Rabin above as defense minister
during the first years of the Intifada when he was describing the demonstrators of the First Intifada as terrorists and ordering beatings to brutally repress the uprising. A short look at his past reveals that he organized the urbanicide of the Palestinian towns of Lydda and Ramle in the 1948 war.\textsuperscript{2} And as we have already covered, the Labor party platform promised no negotiations with the PLO and no Palestinian state. It is probably safe to say that Rabin in midst of the Oslo negotiations still clung to the idea that the solution to the conflict would come in the form of the Jordanian option with Israel retaining much of the land of the West Bank.\textsuperscript{3} But still, why negotiate with the PLO? First of all, Israel needed the Intifada to end and had a particular interest in relieving itself of Gaza, the source of much of the unrest.\textsuperscript{4} In order to do this, he needed Palestinian cooperation. Secondly, Rabin and his government recognized that Arafat was in a severely weakened position and in dire need of a boost of prestige. Rabin knew, therefore, that he could force concessions out of Arafat he would not otherwise give in return for providing him with recognition.\textsuperscript{5} Rather than undermining PLO peace attempts with violence as it had throughout the conflict, Israel chose to recognize the PLO and enter into direct negotiations. For the first time, Israel could get more out of negotiations with the PLO than from conflict.

There were two important documents that came out of the Oslo process of 1993. The first was the Declaration of Principles which was conditional on the letters of “mutual recognition” between the PLO and Israel. The letter from the PLO to Israel

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 232.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} Smith, 8\textsuperscript{th} edition, 442.
  \item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 425.
  \item \textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 442.
\end{itemize}
reasserted to Israel the same conditions that the United States had previously demanded from the organization as preconditions for negotiations: recognition of the right to Israel to exist, acceptance of Resolution 242 and 338 and a renunciation of terrorism and violence. Israel also demanded that the PLO remove from its constitution the passages aimed at replacing Israel with a secular democratic state which it did in the letter.\textsuperscript{6} In return, Yitzhak Rabin stated that “the Government of Israel has decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.”\textsuperscript{7}

The question of how “mutual” this mutual recognition was has been subject to significant debate. A cursory reading of the documents shows a fundamental inequality in the recognition offered by each side. The PLO recognized, in no uncertain terms, the national rights of Israel: “The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security.”\textsuperscript{8} Rabin’s response did not offer this level of recognition of the Palestinians. It was significant that Israel recognized “the PLO as a representative of the Palestinian people,” because this represented the first official recognition by Israel that a Palestinian people existed.\textsuperscript{9} But recognition of the PLO as a representative of the Palestinian people does not constitute a recognition of the \textit{national} rights of the Palestinians, that is, the right to a state. The consequences of this asymmetry of recognition would be numerous throughout the negotiation process of the ensuing decades. First of all, recognition of Israel by the PLO meant that it conceded its national

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 280.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 280.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 280.
claim to all of historical Palestine except the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel made no reciprocal concession of claim over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This meant that negotiations over territory would go one way: West Bank and Gaza land to Israel. It also meant, crucially, that Israel was able to see the West Bank and Gaza Strip as its own land to give away, not territory to which the Palestinians have a rightful claim. It could give away whatever suited it and keep whatever it wanted. This acceptance by the PLO of Israel with no recognition of the right to statehood and the asymmetry of power it allowed opened this exchange to criticism on the Palestinian side. The fear was that this recognition gave up too much with no real promise of statehood. In one fell swoop, the PLO gave up claims to 80% of historical Palestine and left the door open for further concessions to Israel. This agreement allowed Israel to maintain its narrative that it had the right to 100% of historical Palestine. And while it might choose to give some of it up, it made no promise to give up all of the occupied territory or to give it to a Palestinian state.

With the exchange of these letters, the PLO and Israel then signed on to the Declaration of Principles. That agreement stated that “the aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations with the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian interim Self-Governing Authority… for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza strip based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.”

This self-governing authority would control “the West Bank and Gaza Strip territory,

---

except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations.”

These permanent status issues were “Jerusalem, refugees, settlement, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors.” The beginning of the jurisdiction of this authority would begin with the withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip and the “Jericho area.” That would begin a five-year transitional period, with final status negotiations beginning no later than the third year of the transitional period. However, while this authority will have a police force to control areas under its control, “Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis,” and “Israeli military forces and civilians may continue to use roads freely within the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area.

The most important thing to note with this agreement is that it left the question of what would succeed this interim authority completely unanswered. Israeli negotiators at Oslo refused to include references to a Palestinian state, because, as we have noted before, Rabin and Labor still favored the so called Jordanian option. On top of that, the agreement made no indication that Israel would allow any sort of Palestinian sovereignty or self-rule except under Israel’s ultimate control. Israel still maintained final say over security issues and, according the agreement, Israeli soldiers and civilians could move freely in the territories to be ceded to the interim authority. And while this is perhaps an understandable precaution while the interim authority was finding its footing, the fact that

---

11 Ibid., 286
12 Ibid., 286.
13 Ibid., 286.
14 Ibid., 286, 292.
15 Smith, 8th edition, 441.
Israel made no indication it would ever give up its ultimate control over security posts in to doubt how independent either this authority or whatever its unspecified successor would be. Similarly vague was the future of the land already grabbed by Israel and populated with settlements. There included no mention of their withdrawal nor even an agreement to freeze their construction, simply a statement that they would be among the issues settled at a later date. What the Declaration of Principles leaves us with is an unclear declaration that there are issues that need to be discussed but no concrete plan.

The Palestinian vision was clearly a state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. It believed that the exchange of recognition and the Declaration of Principles put the Palestinian people on the path to the realization of this goal. The Israeli vision was, as per usual with a Labor government, unclear at best. It is safe to say that a Palestinian state was still unthinkable even with the signing of the accord. Regarding the issue of Jerusalem, a supposed final status issue, Rabin said to the Knesset on returning from the signing that “united and unified Jerusalem is not negotiable and will be the capital of the Israeli people under Israel’s sovereignty and the subject of every Jew’s yearning and dreams for ever and ever.”16 So even though the status of Jerusalem was listed amongst the so called final status issues to be settled later, in the minds of Israel’s leaders, Jerusalem had been settled since its occupation in 1967.

Clearly, then, there remained significant gaps between the Israeli and Palestinian future visions even at the optimistic occasion of the Oslo signing. These gaps, combined

---

with Israel power advantage both in military might and recognition, lead to prescient criticism of the accords from various observers. One such commentator was the head of the Palestinian delegation at Madrid, Haidar Abdul Shafi. He warned in his introductory remarks at Madrid that “bilateral negotiations on the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the dissolution of Israeli administration, and the transfer of authority to the Palestinian people cannot proceed under coercion or threat in the current asymmetry of power.”\(^{17}\) He feared that since the Oslo accord did nothing to rectify this asymmetry of power and Israel had no intention of granting a Palestinian state, then Palestinian leaders were “trying to read into it what is not there.”\(^{18}\) To Shafi, the agreement was “phrased in generalities that leave room for wide interpretations.”\(^{19}\) He warned that, due to the accord’s generality, Israelis unwillingness to agree to the formation of a Palestinian state, and the general asymmetry of power inherent in the documents, “the peace plan will not be able to develop as Mr. Arafat expects it to.”\(^{20}\)

The most notable criticism of Oslo came from the great Palestinian academic Edward Said. He was unequivocal in his immediate disgust with the agreement:

Let us call the agreement by its real name: an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles. What makes it worse is that for at least the past fifteen years the PLO could have negotiated a better arrangement than this modified Allon Plan, one not requiring so many unilateral concessions to Israel.\(^{21}\)

\(^{18}\) Smith, 8\(^{th}\) edition, 443.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., 443
\(^{20}\) Ibid., 443.
Said points to the discrepancy in the level of the so-called mutual recognition, criticizes Arafat for ending the Intifada despite the fact that the occupation remained in place, and laments the fact that the vagueness of the plan leaves the question of Palestinian sovereignty and statehood on the back burner. He warns that “rather than becoming stronger during the interim period, the Palestinians may grow weaker, come more under the Israeli thumb, and therefore be less able to dispute the Israeli claim when the last set of negotiations begins. But on the matter of how, by what specific mechanism, to get from an interim status to a later one, the document is purposefully silent. Does this mean, ominously, that the interim stage may be the final one?”

It is probably safe to say, writing twenty years later and therefore well after the supposed five year lifetime of the interim stage, that this interim stage seems to have become the final one. Said also points out that the security provisions outlined in the agreement means that the “primary consideration in the document is for Israel’s security, with none for the Palestinians’ security from Israel’s incursions.” This idea of Israel’s security first, Palestinian national rights second, was adopted by the United States over the course of the Oslo process and characterizes and underpins twenty years of failure.

The last important issue that Said raises with the agreement is the way in which it dramatically constricts the constituency of the PLO. Said points out that, with the signing of this accord, the Palestinian diaspora, who “who originally brought Arafat and the PLO to power” were written out of the peace process entirely. He states that it is true that

22 Ibid
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza would welcome the partial withdrawal of Israel’s soldiers and the economic cooperation. However, this means little to the millions of Palestinian refugees living in the surrounding Arab states who are reduced in the agreement to a final status issue to be discussed later. With Oslo, then, what we see is a true gap between national political discourse produced by the PLO and the population it is supposed to be representing. Even within the territories, there was opposition. Hamas opposed the signing of Oslo and would boycott elections for years.\(^{25}\) So while this discourse was still powerful enough to guide the course of the conflict, it was hardly representative of the whole.

At this point it is perhaps appropriate to return for a third time to the provision of the 1968 PNC resolutions regarding a Palestinian state in the territories:

> The creation of such an entity would, moreover, constitute and interim stage during which Zionism could evacuate the territory of Palestine occupied during the June 5 war of its Arab inhabitants, as a preliminary step to incorporation it in the Israeli entity. In addition, this would lead to the creation of a subservient Palestinian Arab administration in the territories occupied during the June 5 war on which Israel could rely in combating the Palestinian revolution.\(^{26}\)

It is arguable, and probably true, that the DFLP members who first pushed for the founding of a Palestinian state in 1974, the negotiators at Madrid and even the negotiators at Oslo had no intention of allowing the creation of “a subservient Palestinian Arab administration in the territories.”\(^{27}\) But as the Oslo process began to unfold, and the consequences of the asymmetry of power and vagueness of the Declaration of Principles

---

\(^{25}\) Gelvin, 225.


\(^{27}\) Ibid., 298.
began to manifest themselves, this exactly what appeared. The subservient entity was called the Palestinian National Authority.

The “Interim” Stage

Inevitably, the peace process stumbled at the outset. The process was supposed to begin with the establishment of Palestinian self-rule in the Jericho area and Gaza but the parties could not agree on the size of the Jericho area until six months after the deadline had passed.\textsuperscript{28} The interim agreement that was supposed to set up wider self-rule did not come by July 1994 as stipulated but thirteen months later. The Palestinian Authority elections did not occur until January of 1996.\textsuperscript{29} These delays did exactly what the PNC warned would happen in 1968. It allowed Israel to expand settlement and control over areas it sought to strengthen Israeli claims and, consequently, weaken Palestinian claims.\textsuperscript{30} In 1993, the Israeli settler population in the occupied territories exceeded 280,000. By 1997, when final status negotiations were supposed to begin, that number was over 335,000. And by the time these final status negotiations actually started in 2000, there were nearly 400,000 Israeli settlers living in the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank.\textsuperscript{31} The mechanism that allowed for this expansion was the interim agreement signed in September of 1995, known as Oslo II. This agreement subdivided

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{28} Smith, 8\textsuperscript{th} Edition, 441.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 441.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 446.
\end{flushleft}
the territory of the West Bank into areas of Palestinian and Israeli control that exist in 2013; a decade and a half after the interim period was scheduled to end.

Oslo II is a massive and baffling document. Whereas the 1993 declaration of principles was a handful of pages, Oslo II’s main articles amounted to 27 pages with 284 pages of annexes tacked on to the end. It is not by any means a fun read and luckily an intensive analysis of the document is not within the scope of our study. The main takeaway for our purposes is the extent to which the document reflected, just as Edward Said warned, an updated Allon Plan.

One would expect such a long document to replace the vagueness that made the Declaration of Principles so problematic with some level of specificity. And it is true that Oslo II is full of specific details. Oslo II spelled out, in excruciating detail, the format for identification cards, the number of Palestinian policemen in each self-ruling district, the number of vehicles of that precinct and the number of weapons therein. For example, the Ramallah village of Birzeit would have “70 policemen, 3 vehicles, 14 rifles and 23 pistols.” However, the document is frustratingly vague on the future of the territory the PLO believed would make up its Palestinian state.

The most visible consequence of Oslo II is the division of the West Bank into three separate zones of varied control, called Area A, Area B and Area C. Area A was made up of large Palestinian population centers, major cities like Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, etc. Area A would be under complete Palestinian civil and security control.

---

Area B was made up of rural areas of Palestinian population, smaller towns and villages. The newly established Palestinian Authority (PA) would control civil aspects of life and internal security but Israel would have final say over security. These areas of Palestinian control were not made contiguous, but separated by an ocean of complete Israeli control: Area C, the largest area with the smallest Palestinian population, was the home to the Israeli settlements, military bases and access roads. It was put under complete Israeli civil and military control (fig. 8).\(^{33}\)

This huge gap in interpretation of Oslo II speaks to the vagueness over the future status of 70% of the West Bank, Area C. It was also why Arafat could claim that Israel promised to withdraw from 80% of the West Bank (that is, all of Areas A and B and the parts of Area C without physical Israeli infrastructure) and at the same time Rabin could brag that he was able to confine 90% of the Palestinian population of the West Bank to 30% of the land (Areas A and B).\(^{34}\) For Rabin and his government, this was crucial. And the fact that they were able to write the agreement with no future promises about Area C came as a surprise even to the Israeli negotiators. The Palestinian delegation sought concrete clauses to guarantee Israeli withdrawal from Area C but the Israeli delegation went over the negotiators heads and straight to Arafat who agreed to accept the vague promise of future transfer with no real guarantee in writing.\(^{35}\) So while the transfer of Areas A and B to Palestinian control happened rather quickly, eighteen years later, we are

\(^{33}\) Smith, 8\(^{th}\) edition, 450.  
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 452.  
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 451.
still waiting for Israel’s unilateral decision to withdraw from Area C. At the time of writing, Israeli annexation of Area C seems far more likely than any withdrawal.

Fig 8: The Oslo II Demarcations (Source: PASSIA)

---

36 Ibid., 457.
With this hindsight and a quick look at the map of Oslo II it seems the process played out exactly as Said warned it would. The map of Area A and B share an uncanny resemblance with the general areas that were meant to go to Jordan in the Allon Plan and because of the lack of any concrete plans for the future of the territory, the “interim stage,” which was supposed to last until 1999, is nearing the completion of its second decade of life. Israel was able to get most of the land of the West Bank with a minimal amount of Palestinians leaving plenty of room for the expansion of settlements. In presenting the agreement to the Knesset, Rabin is clearer about his interpretation of this agreement:

We view the permanent solution in the framework of State of Israel which will include most of the area of the Land of Israel as it was under the rule of the British Mandate, and alongside it a Palestinian entity which will be a home to most of the Palestinian residents living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. *We would like this to be an entity which is less than a state,* and which will independently run the lives of the Palestinians under its authority. *The borders of the State of Israel, during the permanent solution, will be beyond the lines which existed before the Six Day War. We will not return to the 4 June 1967 lines.*

Furthermore, the security border of Israel would be in the Jordan Valley and unified Jerusalem would include large East Jerusalem settlements. He admits that Israel agreed to withdraw from some of the 70% of the West Bank completely under its control, but proudly states that “we have not committed ourselves, and I repeat, we have not committed ourselves to the scope of the redeployment at each stage.”

---

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
tellingly, Rabin, on the occasion of the agreement’s ratification in Knesset, called for “the establishment of blocs of settlement in Judea and Samaria.”\textsuperscript{40}

So it seems that at the end of the day, all we see from Israel in this great period of optimism over the prospects for peace is a rehashing of a Labor policy from 1968. That policy, the Allon Plan, called for Israeli settlement and annexation of most of the West Bank, with a large unified Jerusalem and a corridor to the Jordan Valley which would become Israel’s eastern border. The only thing that has changed, then, was that instead of returning that Palestinian populated areas to Jordan, Rabin and his government, forced by the Intifada, to allow the PLO control over these areas. There would be no Palestinian state. And with U.S. backing over Israel’s interpretation of the Oslo II document and the asymmetry of diplomatic and military power, Israel has been able to prolong this status quo without giving up on these demands for almost twenty years.

Oslo Post Rabin

Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated on November 4\textsuperscript{th}, 1995 by a right-wing Israeli angry that Rabin was going to “give our country to the Arabs.”\textsuperscript{41} Rabin was succeeded by Shimon Peres who on schedule withdrew from Areas A and B. However, six months later, Likud won the election and Oslo opponent Benjamin Netanyahu became prime minister.\textsuperscript{42} In the summer before Rabin’s assassination, Netanyahu, the current prime minister of Israel, participated in anti-Rabin rallies characterized by pictures of Rabin in a

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Gelvin., 238.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 238.
Nazi SS uniform in the target of a gun sight and declared that “no Jew hitherto ever longed to give up slices of the homeland.”\(^{43}\)

Benjamin Netanyahu’s policy towards negotiation with the Palestinians was Israeli sense of security first, peace process second. We have noted above that Rabin put a huge emphasis the ability of the Palestinian Authority to control security threats to Israel and that the state of Israel in all agreements has final security say in the territories. But Netanyahu set forward a firm position that the first concern in any agreement is Israel’s sense of security. Any Israeli concession would be dependent on the Palestinians appeasing Israeli security concerns. In presenting his new government to the Knesset, Netanyahu stated that “peace is based first of all on the security of Israel and its citizens. The test of peace agreements is security, and on this we shall not compromise.”\(^{44}\) He blames the closures and movement restrictions Israel imposes on West Bank and Gaza Palestinians on Palestinian resistance: “it is the lack of security which causes closures, paralysis and economic stagnation. With security, we will be able to create freedom of movement, and open economy and prosperity for all.”\(^{45}\) In the same speech that Netanyahu demanded a cessation of hostilities and resistance by Palestinians before the conducting negotiations, he also, ironically, demanded that the Palestinians enter negotiations “without preconditions.”\(^{46}\)

\(^{43}\) Smith, 8\(^{th}\) edition, 454.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., 174.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., 175.
Netanyahu, it seems, made no connection between threats to Israel’s security and its expansionist settlement policy. While calling for Palestinians to end attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians and negotiations without preconditions, he stated that his government “will encourage pioneering settlement in the Land of Israel: in the Negev, the Galilee, Judea and Samaria, and the Golan. The settlers are the real pioneers of our day, and they deserve support and appreciation.” There was no gap between discourse and reality for Netanyahu regarding this issue. He reversed the ban on the construction of new settlements that had been in effect for the previous four years. The bypass roads that divided the areas of Palestinian control and connected these settlements to each other and to Israel were also expanded by the Netanyahu government.

Despite the fact that the Netanyahu government did make agreements with the PLO (the Hebron Accord in 1997 to divide the city into Palestinian and Israeli zones of control and the Wye Memorandum a year later), post Rabin Oslo was a period of decline for the peace process. Netanyahu refused to implement the withdrawals stipulated in the first of these two agreements and delayed the enactment of the second because of opposition from his own party. This opposition forced him to look for support from Labor politicians and eventually led to the collapse of his anti-Oslo cabinet. The 1999 prime ministerial elections would bring into office Labor leader Ehud Barak who moved

---

47 Ibid., 175.
49 Gelvin, 240.
50 Ibid., 239.
away from Netanyahu’s security before negotiation and stated he was willing to “start with peace [in order to] achieve security.”

The main take-away from these three years of Likud power is the extent to which the party was committed to complete retention of the territories; a policy they justified in the name of security. Even Netanyahu who tried his hardest to put forward a framework aimed at completely undermining the Oslo process lost his party’s support for negotiating with the PLO. In fact, the major right wing voices of the Likud Party, such as Yitzhak Shamir, left to create a revival of the old Herut Party that advocated for expulsion of Palestinians from the territories. When Netanyahu would eventually become prime minister again about a decade later, his policy of Israeli security above all would once again provide the Israeli approach to negotiation. These three years of settlement expansion and Israeli unilateralism and rejectionism hardly laid a productive environment for the final status discussions that were supposed to begin in 1999. Despite this, Barak and the PLO tried to revive what was left of Oslo in Camp David.

Camp David and the End of Oslo

Ehud Barak came to office seemingly more willing to take risks and give territorial concessions in order to achieve peace. As we noted above, Barak said he was willing to “start with peace [in order to] achieve security;” an about face from Netanyahu’s policy of the previous three years. He also sought to change the

52 Ibid., 468.
53 Ibid., 467.
54 Ibid., 468.
piecemeal, step by step process that was originally spelled out in the Oslo Accords. He had no interests in signing more interim agreements. Rather Barak sought a single agreement that would cover all of the issues in one go.\(^{55}\) However, Barak had significant opposition at home to any territorial concession. He also accelerated settlement building upon taking office to a rate that exceeded the pace under Netanyahu but would eventually freeze the issuing of building permits in December of 1999.\(^{56}\)

Fearing complete stagnation of the peace process, US President Bill Clinton called Barak and Arafat to Camp David in an effort to reach an agreement on the final status issues in July of 2000.\(^ {57}\) By all accounts, the summit was haphazardly thrown together. The Palestinians were not prepared but came on promises by Clinton that they would not take the blame should the talks fall apart (promises that he would break when the talks did fall apart).\(^ {58}\) The Israelis and US officials were less than ready for talks as well but Barak’s precarious political position in Israel and United States presidential elections on the horizon forced Clinton to call for the summit sooner rather than later.\(^ {59}\)

To call what occurred at Camp David “negotiation” would be quite a stretch. Barak made Arafat a nonnegotiable, take it or leave it offer. Barak refused to speak to Arafat throughout the summit and refused to put into writing the terms of the proposed agreement so as not to give his opponents at home ammunition against him.\(^ {60}\) Arafat

\(^{55}\) Gelvin, 241.  
\(^{56}\) Smith, 8\(^{th}\) edition, 487.  
\(^{57}\) Ibid., 488.  
\(^{58}\) Ibid., 489.  
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 489.  
\(^{60}\) Ibid., 489.
refused the offer. The PLO had been burned before by vague Israeli promises that were never kept, redeployments that were planned and never occurred, and settlement freezes that were not upheld. And while the Oslo process had not always worked out in the Palestinians’ favor, they did not want to throw away what they had already achieved in writing for vague Israeli assurances on vital issues. For his decision to walk away, Arafat was painted in the American press as a rejectionist, while Barak was seen as a brave leader who had made generous concessions to the Palestinians. This view was compounded by Clinton’s blame of Arafat for the failure to reach an agreement.

So what was the generous offer that Barak made Arafat and the PLO? It is fair to say that the offer, should we believe that Barak either meant to stick to it despite the fact that it was unwritten or that the Israeli public and his political rivals would allow it to be enacted, was unprecedented. Barak did away with the piece by piece process laid out in the original Declaration of Principles and gave unofficial (and unwritten) positions regarding the whole of the West Bank and the final status issues. The initial Israeli position was to hand 66% of the West Bank over to the Palestinians with Israel maintaining control over the major settlement blocks and series of access roads that cut the territories into three non-contiguous sections. Israel would retain control of the territory stretching east from Jerusalem to the Jordan River and a further 14% of the land would be retained for a period of twelve to twenty years. Israel would keep permanent control over the west bank of the Jordan River and the settlements within Hebron. After

---

61 Gelvin., 241.
62 Smith, 8th edition, 490.
the twenty year period, the Palestinians would potentially have control over 80% of the
West Bank and Gaza Strip.\textsuperscript{63} With the West Bank divided into these three sections,
Palestinians would move from canton to canton via a series of tunnels, bridges and Israeli
controlled checkpoints.\textsuperscript{64} It’s hard to see this potential territory, with its physical
divisions and permanent foreign military and civil presence, as a sovereign state in even
the loosest of terms. Barak would eventually move away from these initial positions to
offer 89.5% or 91.5% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip but these still did not address the
fundamental Palestinian opposition to the initial proposal. As we have emphasized
before, the Palestinian future vision was the establishment of a state on the whole of the
West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. Even as late as 2000, this
was still a controversial decision by the PLO. To give up claims over the whole of
historical Palestine was to cede to Israel 78% of the territory and the original homes of
the majority of the Palestinian nation who were, and still are, refugees. Giving up yet
more territory of the 22% that was left was a step too far for the PLO, as was the
permanent Israeli civilian and military presence in what was supposed to be the
independent state of Palestine.\textsuperscript{65}

Camp David brought to the fore two other crucial issues that had been on the back
burner throughout the negotiations before: Jerusalem and refugees. Initially grouped with
the final status issues, they had not been addressed in depth before Camp David. It
became apparent at the summit how far apart the two sides were over these issues.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 490.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 490.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid, 492
Speaking as an observer who has studied the Israeli-PLO conversations of the last twenty-five years, it has become clear to me that there are two issues about which the PLO will never compromise because to do so would basically mean the death of the organization: the right of return for refugees and control over East Jerusalem.

Unfortunately for everyone involved, there are two issues about which the Israelis would never compromise: no right of return for Palestinian refugees (because this would threaten the Jewish demographic nature of the state) and no cession of control on any of greater Jerusalem. With these two issues finally on the table at Camp David, this gaps between the Israelis and the PLO became vividly clear.

In an effort to appease the Palestinians regarding Jerusalem without actually giving up any territory, Barak and his negotiators put forward a plan to create two separate capitals, “Jerusalem” and “al-Quds.” “Al-Quds,” the Arabic name for the city, under this Israeli imagination, would be a small Palestinian East Jerusalem village by the name of Abu Dis that was completely disconnected from the Old City and the holy sites of Jerusalem.66 “Jerusalem,” in the Israeli vision, would mean the whole of the territory annexed in 1980 plus the large East Jerusalem settlements, which would extend the city nearly halfway to the Jordan River and would put “al-Quds” under Israeli control and separated from the rest of the Palestinian “state.”67 This was obviously not acceptable for

66 Ibid., 490.
67 Ibid., 490.
the PLO who demanded sovereignty over the whole of the eastern part of the city as well
as control its Old City holy sites.\textsuperscript{68}

Regarding the right of return, Arafat would not budge. Barak proposed that the
Palestinian refugees be permitted to the Palestinian “state” and a limited number would
be allowed to return to their actual homes in what was now Israel, but this was not good
enough to bridge the gap.\textsuperscript{69} Again, this position by Arafat is understandable. The
majority of Palestinians, who his organization was designed to represent, were from areas
that would not be included in the Palestinian “state” proposed by Barak. If the PLO
could not succeed in the creation of a single state in the whole of historical Palestinian,
the least it could do was ensure that its people could return to their homes. To accept
anything less would be a death sentence for the organization and perhaps even for Arafat
himself.

Before the conclusion of the talks, Barak made his final offer:

“seven out of the nine outer neighborhoods [of Jerusalem] would come under Palestinian
sovereignty; in the inner neighborhoods, they would be in charge of planning and zoning;
and in the Old City, the Muslim and Christian neighborhoods would come under
Palestinian sovereignty. [As for] the Temple Mount/Haram [al-Sharif], the UN Security
Council would pass a resolution to hand custodianship over it jointly to Palestine and
Morocco [chair of the higher Islamic Commission based in Jerusalem]… there would be
a “satisfactory solution’ to the refugee problem.”\textsuperscript{70}

Barak gave this proposal (again unofficial and unwritten) to Clinton to hand on to
Arafat. Arafat was not permitted to ask questions of the language or get clarification
about terms like “custodianship”, “sovereignty” or “satisfactory solution,” because

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 492.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 492.
\textsuperscript{70} Quoted in Smith, 8th edition, 492.
Clinton refused to pass these questions on to Barak. Arafat knew he could not return to his people with these vague assurances of such huge issues so he left the offer on the table. He also refused to accept a Palestinian “state” within which the movement of the Palestinian people would be controlled by Israeli border police, soldiers and checkpoints. To the Palestinians, that was not sovereignty. His decision to leave the offer was not an outright rejection as was so often reported in the aftermath but the only decision he could take as he was unable to actually negotiate the terms of the agreement. The proposal was unacceptable to the Palestinians and with no ability to change it, they had to walk away.

With the serious decline of the Oslo Process that had occurred under Netanyahu and the serious opposition Barak faced regarding territorial concessions, the failure of Camp David should have come as no surprise. The two sides were too far apart for a short summit with little actual negotiation to bridge any gaps. Barak’s positions at Camp David do in a sense offer a new Israeli future vision considering the fact that it openly discussed the establishment of a Palestinian state, which had not been a feature of previous Israeli discourse, this change seemed to be supported by the majority of Israelis who supported a two state solution at the time. But that state was still far from the one envisioned by the Palestinians as it would still be home to hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers, the territory would be divided and movement would be controlled by Israeli security forces. But even though a majority of Israelis said they supported the creation of a Palestinian state as a means to finally achieve peace, clearly what Barak was

---

71 Ibid., 493.
72 Ibid., 468.
offering, especially regarding Jerusalem, was giving up too much in the eyes of the Israeli electorate.

In the subsequent elections, Likud politician Ariel Sharon, the architect of Israel’s settlement project under Menachem Begin and the man found indirectly responsible for the massacres at Sabra and Shatila in 1982, would sweep to victory. With his arrival in office, he would begin his war on the Palestinian Authority, which, combined with the Second Intifada that he almost single-handedly sparked with a show of force on the Haram al-Sharif, would lead to some of the bloodiest years in the entire history of the conflict. By the end of this second uprising in about a decade, Oslo would become a memory of an optimistic time more than a plan to reach a peace agreement in the future.
Chapter 9: The Second Intifada and the Destruction of Oslo; 2000-2012

The acclaimed Palestinian film *Paradise Now*, released in 2005, tells the story of two childhood friends, born and raised in a refugee camp in Nablus, who were recruited for a suicide bombing operation in Tel Aviv. The film shows the human side of the Palestinians who make this desperate choice to take their own lives. It is not aimed at condoning their actions but explaining the environment created by occupation that would lead young Palestinian men and women to turn to suicide bombing. It is never explicitly stated the year in which the events of the film take place, but it seems to occur towards the end of the nineties, as Palestinian faith in the Oslo Process had worn thin. The feeling of disillusion with the peace process is adeptly summed up by one of the friends while recording the video explaining his actions:

> Israel views partnership with and equality for the Palestinians under the same democratic system as suicide for the Jewish state. Nor will they accept a two-state compromise even though that is not fair to the Palestinians. We are to either accept the occupation forever or disappear. We've tried with all possible means to end the occupation with political and peaceful means. Despite it all, Israel continues to build settlements, confiscate land, Judaize Jerusalem and carry out ethnic cleansing. They use their war machine and their political and economic might to force us to accept their solution: that either we accept inferiority, or we will be killed.¹

Here we see the Palestinian feeling, as represented in film, at the current state of things. Despite all the Palestinians had given up, particularly 78% of their claimed homeland, they were no closer to founding a state that would coexist on equal terms with Israel. In fact, following the period of optimism that accompanied the signing of the Declaration of Principles, Palestinian life in many ways got worse than before. First of all, from the beginning of the Oslo Process in 1993 to 2000, the number of settlers in the

occupied territories doubled, thirty new settlements were built, and 500 kilometers of access roads between the settlements and Israel divided the islands of Palestinian control. In addition, Israel began preventing Palestinians from working inside of Israel, where they had found employment for the first two and a half decades of occupation.

The most notable and frustrating phenomenon that appeared over the course of the peace process were the series of Israeli controlled barriers and checkpoints that separated Palestinians from each other and limited their movement from one island of Palestinian control to another. These checkpoints would be closed at unpredictable times for seemingly no reason, effectively confining the Palestinian population of the West Bank to Areas A and B. The Israeli soldiers stationed at these checkpoints would engage in random beatings of Palestinians. Added to the humiliation of occupation that had only increased under Oslo was the corruption and ineffectiveness of Arafat’s Palestinian Authority. All of this created a tense situation that would eventually be set off with a provocative Israeli spark.

That spark came while Ehud Barak was still prime minister, but he would not be the one to provide it. Rather, it was opposition leader Ariel Sharon who caused the pot to boil over. Sharon sought to capitalize in the domestic political scene on Ehud Barak’s seeming willingness to give Palestinian some level of control over parts of Jerusalem at Camp David. To demonstrate Likud’s commitment to an indivisible Jerusalem and assert

---

2 Gelvin, 240.
3 Ibid., 240.
4 Smith, 8th edition, 488.
5 Gelvin, 240.
Israel’s control over the city, Sharon, accompanied by Likud politicians, press and 1,000 armed police, ascended the Temple Mount/ Haram al-Sharif on September 28th, 2000.6

Palestinian demonstrations in protests of Sharon’s visit broke out immediately. Initially these protests reflected the largely non-violent demonstrations of the First Intifada. Israeli soldiers met these demonstrating West Bank Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel with live fire, aiming to kill.7 As widespread demonstrations were met with massive firepower, the Palestinian factions turned armed resistance. Armed resistance in this first period was not universally used by the Palestinians. According to Israeli military reports, only about one quarter of Palestinian demonstrations between September and the end of the year included Palestinian use of firearms. However, demonstrations were universally met by the Israelis with lethal force.8 By the end of 2000, 365 people were killed: 325 Palestinians, 36 Israelis and 4 others.9 The most visible tactics of armed resistance by Palestinians were the suicide bombings within Israel. Nearly all of the Palestinian factions, not just Hamas and Islamic Jihad, planned and sponsored their own bombing operations, each desperate not to be upstaged by the others in terms of prominence and legitimacy.10 The visibility of these bombings and the outrage and condemnation they caused, however, clouded the reality about the violence of the Second Intifada. Hardly a contest between equals, the Second Intifada between

---

6 Ibid., 243.
7 Smith, 8th edition, 498.
8 Ibid., 499.
9 Ibid., 498.
10 Gelvin, 244.
2000 and 2005 saw three Palestinian deaths for every one Israeli death. Most crucially for our purposes, the Second Intifada gave Sharon the legitimacy he needed to kill Oslo once and for all.

Operation Defensive Shield

In 2003, Israeli scholar Baruch Kimmerling published a book about Ariel Sharon’s military and political career entitled Politicide: Ariel Sharon’s War Against the Palestinians. Kimmerling defines “Politicide” as “a process that has, as its ultimate goal, the dissolution of the Palestinian people’s existence as a legitimate social, political and economic entity.” He titles his section on Sharon’s first term as prime minister, encompassing the early years of the Second Intifada we have been discussing, “The Third Attempt at Politicide.” Sharon’s first attempt at politicide was in the early years of the state of Israel, including the massacre by his unit of 67 Palestinians in the town of Qibya. The second was during his term as defense minister which included the invasion of Lebanon and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila. Now prime minister, and in the wake of the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (events which led American President George W. Bush to give Sharon free reign to suppress the Intifada as he saw fit), Sharon launched his third attempt at the destruction of the Palestinian people and it came in the form of Operation Defensive shield.

---

11 Ibid., 245.
13 Ibid., 49
14 Ibid., 94.
15 Gelvin, 246.
Planned much earlier than spring 2002 when it was launched, Operation Defensive Shield was a full scale Israeli invasion of the occupied territories aimed at retaking Palestinian controlled areas for the stated goal of wiping out “the Palestinian terror network.” The operation was conducted throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip with no concern over Oslo II’s Area A, B or C designation. Hebron and Jericho were the only major Palestinian cities left untouched. The assault, carried out with helicopter gunships, tanks and bulldozers, was characterized by home demolition, mass arrests and the leveling of city blocks. The most notable incident of the operation was the Israeli siege of the Jenin refugee camp, the only place the Israelis encountered real armed resistance to the operation. In response, the IDF reduced nearly the entire camp to rubble, leaving 5,000 Palestinians homeless.

The operation, as described by Kimmerling, “not only destroyed political organizations and their facilities but civilian institutions like universities, schools, clinics, churches and mosques under the pretext that terrorists were hidden inside.” Sharon’s determination to crush the Palestinian resistance by destroying its institutions had tacit approval from the neoconservative Bush administration. Sharon found it easy enough to apply the old stance “we don’t negotiate with terrorists” to the Palestinian Authority, who he held responsible for the violence and pressed on, military and unilaterally asserting

---

16 Kimmerling, Politicide, 154
17 Gelvin, 246.
18 Ibid, 246.
19 Kimmerling, Politicide, 157.
20 Ibid., 155.
Israel’s control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Kimmerling puts forward a grim vision of Sharon’s plan for the future of the territories:

All of these conditions are, according to Sharon, designed to lower Palestinian expectations, crush their resistance, isolate them, make them submit to any arrangement suggested by the Israelis, and eventually cause their “voluntary” mass emigration from the land. Sharon is pragmatic and aware that international opinion will not accept either large-scale ethnic cleansing or the transformation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan into a Palestinian state.

The Separation Barrier

The most visible lasting legacy of this unilateral violent Israeli assertion is the separation barrier that began construction under Sharon. Israel announced in April or 2002 that it would build a series of walls, barbed wire and electric fences and trenches in an attempt to completely isolate the Palestinians of the West Bank from Israel. Rather than build the wall along the so-called 1967 borders, the line that separates Israel proper from the occupied territories, the planned route of the wall cut deeply into the West Bank in certain areas to incorporate large settlement blocks, water aquifers, and Palestinian land along a 450 mile route. This winding route of the wall leaves 8.5% of the West Bank on the west side of the barrier, essentially annexing that land to Israel. Along with that land comes about 250,000 Palestinians, including those of East Jerusalem now separated from the rest of the West Bank.

---

21 Gelvin, 246.
22 Kimmerling, Politicide, 211.
23 Gelvin, 247.
24 Ibid., 247.
The stated goal of the separation barrier, as is the case in so many instances, was Israel’s security. It was presented as a plan to prevent suicide bombings by stopping potential bombers from entering Israeli territory. And the facts about suicide bombings, at face value, seem to indicate that it has been successful in this account. The Israelis estimate that the number of Israelis killed by terrorist attacks in Israel has been reduced 60% since the construction of the barrier and suicide bombings have been reduced by 90%. However, a second look reveals another story. The separation barrier was not built overnight. Writing in 2013, it is still not complete. As such, there were, and still are, gaps in the barrier that are easy enough to get around especially when Israel was touting these statistics in the second half of the last decade. As Kimmerling notes in a discussion about checkpoints, “in reality, the checkpoints provide no real security because Palestinians intending to cause harm have 101 alternative ways to enter Israel.” Additionally, as we noted above, a quarter of a million Palestinians, including Jerusalem residents, live on the “Israeli” side of the barrier and as such, the barrier hardly separates Palestinians from Israelis or Palestinians from Israel proper. With an unfinished wall and a large population not divided from Israel, it would seem that separation barrier cannot fully explain the drop in suicide bombings within Israel that occurred as it was being built. Far more likely, was the truce called by Hamas with Israel in 2005 and the agreement by the Palestinian factions, with the exception of Islamic Jihad, to a state of

---

26 Gelvin, 249.
calm. It was not that the Palestinians could not enter Israel to conduct suicide operations; rather, they chose not to.

So what was the purpose of the wall if it did not ensure the security of the Israeli people? Kimmerling points to arguments that the barrier and checkpoints exist to calm the Israeli population by giving them a sense that their government is protecting them. This is likely an element of the decision but it is probably not the whole story. Rather, it was more likely a unilateral act by Sharon’s government to establish new facts on the ground, just as settlements had done the same for the previous three and a half decades of occupation. The act of encircling major settlement blocks and East Jerusalem in concrete sends both a symbolic and practical message to the Palestinians and the world: these are ours, permanently. This attempt at permanently tying the settlements to the state of Israel was another way, like Operation Defensive Shield, of undermining Palestinian political society and the Oslo process. It was, and still is, aimed at challenging the viability of a Palestinian state and separating Palestinians from the land of the West Bank to make it easier for future permanent Israeli absorption. Despite the kicking Sharon gave to Oslo in the first few years of the 21st century, attempts were made to push some sort of process along but these, understandably, amounted to little. We will take a quick look at them and then move on.

---

29 Kimmerling, Politicide, 182.
30 Gelvin, 248.
The Roadmap and Aqaba Summit

The Road Map to Peace, or to give it its official title, “A Performance-Based Road Map to a Permanent Two State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” was a plan written and agreed upon by the “Quartet” (Russia, the EU, the UN and the United States) in summer 2002.\(^\text{31}\) As described by Charles D. Smith:

> The Road Map set out three development phases. To undertake Phase 1, the Palestinian leadership would “issue [an] unequivocal statement reiterating Israel’s right to exist.” Israel, for its part, would issue a similar statement “affirming its commitment to the two-state vision of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state as expressed by President Bush.”\(^\text{32}\)

> The term “performance-based” meant that the Israelis and Palestinians would undertake steps simultaneously. This rubbed Sharon the wrong way. He stated that “Israel can no longer be expected to make political concessions until there is proven calm and Palestinian governmental reforms.”\(^\text{33}\) This was the stance that Netanyahu took: Palestinian cessation of resistance first, peace process second. Sharon also did not like that the plan demanded that Israel “dismantles settlement outposts erected since March 2001,” and completely freeze on all settlement building, including natural growth.\(^\text{34}\) Finally, Sharon objected to the language describing the Palestinian state as “independent, viable [and] sovereign.”\(^\text{35}\)

\(^\text{31}\) Smith, 8\(^{\text{th}}\) edition, 507.
\(^\text{32}\) Ibid., 507.
\(^\text{34}\) Ibid., 86.
\(^\text{35}\) Smith, 8\(^{\text{th}}\) edition, 508.
Because of these objections, Israel “accepted” the Road Map, providing the United States cave to a list of fourteen demands. Most crucial of these were points five, which emphasized that the Palestinian “state” would have “certain aspects of sovereignty, be fully demilitarized… and Israeli control over the entry and exit of all persons and cargo, as well of its air space and electromagnetic spectrum” (hardly an independent, sovereign state) and point six which demanded a waiver of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the state of Israel.\footnote{Government of Israel “Response (“Reservations”) to the Road Map for Middle East Peace” (May, 2003) in Abdul Hadi, \textit{Documents on Palestine}, vol. 5, 90.} Despite the fact that the Quartet stated the Road Map was not to be altered, Bush caved into Israeli lobbying.\footnote{Smith, 8th edition, 507} In his Aqaba Summit address on the Road Map, Bush made a distinction between authorized and illegal Israeli outposts built since 2001 and in his subsequence speech in the Rose Garden, he described the future Palestinian state as “stable, peaceful, viable, [and] democratic,” but not independent or sovereign.\footnote{Ibid., 508.} This was less the articulation of an Israeli future vision regarding a Palestinian state and more an attempt to prevent such a state from ever appearing. The fourteen points demanded that a Palestinian state could only be established through direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israel.\footnote{Government of Israel “Response (“Reservations”) to the Road Map for Middle East Peace” (May, 2003) in Abdul Hadi, \textit{Documents on Palestine}, vol. 5, 90.} With Oslo completely sidelined, if not destroyed, and Sharon’s refusal to speak to Arafat, no negotiations meant that there would be no Palestinian state.
The Gaza Disengagement Plan

Sharon’s last significant act aimed at erasing Oslo and the prospect of a Palestinian state was his unilateral evacuation of all Israeli settlers and soldiers from the Gaza Strip and from four settlements in the north of the West Bank. While this might seem like a productive step for the eventual founding of a state that would include the Gaza Strip, a deeper look shows it was a way to trade a piece of territory filled with a population that gave Israel nothing but trouble for permanent control over the West Bank. First of all, the disengagement was hardly a complete disengagement, as Israel would still control the borders, imports, exports, airspace, trade and electricity of Gaza. The plan itself was written first in November of 2003 and announced to the Israeli public in April, 2004. Sharon took the plan to President Bush before he announced it to the Israeli public as he wanted Israel to be free from the 2005 Road Map deadlines for final status negotiations, allowing Israel to postpone these talks indefinitely, and he wanted U.S. permission to annex the larger settlement blocks in the West Bank in exchange for ceding those in Gaza. He received almost exactly what he wanted from President Bush. While the U.S. president stopped short of using the word “annex,” he did issue a statement welcoming the plan and stating that “it is unreasonable to expect that the outcome of the final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the 1949 armistice lines… It is realistic to expect that any final status agreements will only be achieved on the basis of

---

40 Gelvin, 250.
41 Smith, 8th edition, 512.
42 Ibid., 511-512
mutually agreed changes that reflected these realities.” What we see with this statement is an acknowledgement by the United States that nearly forty years of “facts on the ground” settlement policy had worked. Israel had tied itself too closely to the West Bank, in the eyes of the United States, to be separated from it. With the Gaza disengagement plan, then, Israel received U.S approval for unilateral action determining the future status of the territories without consultation with the Palestinians. Essentially, it was U.S approval to disregard Oslo. One of Sharon’s aid’s Dov Wiesglass describes the consequences of the disengagement plan thusly:

The significant of our disengagement plan is the freezing of the peace-process… it supplies the formaldehyde necessary so there is no political process with the Palestinians… when you freeze the process, you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, and you prevent a discussion on the refugees, the borders, and Jerusalem. All with [an American] presidential blessing and the ratifications of both houses of Congress.

This plan would be one of Sharon’s last acts as leader of Israel. The plan, despite the seemingly favorable implications for Israel’s future control over the territory of the West Bank, was not popular at home, particularly among the right wing pro-settler corners of the Likud party. Netanyahu capitalized on this to retake leadership of the party, at which point Sharon formed a new party, Kadima, which included old Likud and Labor members. Kadima would eventually win the 2006 elections but before they were called, Sharon had a stroke and fell into a coma and remains in that state until today. Sharon was succeeded by Ehud Olmert, the former mayor of Jerusalem who

---

43 Ibid., 512.
44 Quoted in Gelvin, 250.
45 Smith, 8th edition, 513
46 Ibid., 414.
accompanied Sharon on his trip to the temple mount in 2001.\textsuperscript{47} Olmert would continue Israel’s policy of unilateral action, announcing that the separation barrier would no longer be a temporary measure but a permanent boundary.\textsuperscript{48} The Israeli parliamentary elections were not the only ones that took place in the land of historical Palestine in 2006. The PA held elections as well, and their results would have profound effects on the course of the conflict.

2006 Palestinian Authority Elections

We have not discussed Hamas much throughout the course of the Oslo process primarily because they were, mostly by their own choice, not involved. Hamas, unlike the PLO, did not accept the two state solution as the best way to solve the conflict. It refused to recognize the state of Israel or renounce armed struggle because it maintained its original future vision from its 1989 charter; a Palestinian state on the whole of historical Palestine. It was not, and still is not, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization and did not participate in the 1996 legislative elections. This was not out of opposition to the concept of democracy as Hamas fielded candidates in local municipal elections since its creation but rather because of opposition to the terms of Oslo Accords.\textsuperscript{49} Hamas decided to field candidates in the 2006 elections. The Bush administration, who had spent the last four years championing democracy in the Middle

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 498.
\textsuperscript{48} Gelvin, 251.
East, most notably by invading and occupying Iraq, accepted Hamas’ candidacy.\textsuperscript{50}

However, when Hamas, running on a list entitled “Change and Reform,” won a majority in the parliament, the United States immediately sanctioned the Palestinian Authority by withdrawing funding and encouraging the European Union to do the same.\textsuperscript{51} Israel cracked down as well by withholding tax revenue collected by Israel on behalf of the PA which amounted to about $50 million a month.\textsuperscript{52} Israel’s cabinet also designated the now Hamas dominated Palestinian Legislative Council a “terrorist authority” and refused to negotiate with it unless it recognized the state of Israel, adjusted its charter accordingly, renounced terrorism and recognized the agreements of the previous decade between the Israelis and the Palestinians.\textsuperscript{53}

While the election was not as much of a landslide in favor of Hamas as the make-up of the parliament would suggest (Fatah made serious mistakes including running two or more Fatah candidates for the same seat), the level of support came as a huge surprise to everyone. The Palestinian support for Hamas, however, did not indicate a massive shift from secularism to Islamism in the territories. Rather, as the name of Hamas’ candidacy indicated, Palestinians were tired of the Fatah lead PA’s ineffectuality and corruption. They also felt that Mahmoud Abbas (who took over from Arafat as the leader of the PA at the US and Israel’s urging) was acting according to Israel’s demands and not

\textsuperscript{50} Smith, 8\textsuperscript{th} edition, 514.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 514.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 514.
the needs of the Palestinian people.\textsuperscript{54} Hamas, however, had gained respect from the Palestinian population for its active resistance to the occupation and the free health and social services it provided.\textsuperscript{55}

The new Hamas government suffered heavily from the sanctions imposed by Israel and the United States which led to skyrocketing unemployment and poverty rates.\textsuperscript{56} Israel also closed off Gaza from exporting and importing goods as well as people. It stated that this was to stop suicide bombers (even though the number of suicide bombers that came from Gaza in the previous three years was next to zero) but more likely it was aimed at shaking Hamas from power by making them seem responsible for the growing hardship caused by Israeli and US sanctions.\textsuperscript{57} Blockaded and isolated, the factions in Gaza began instead launching rockets into Israeli territories, which, though largely ineffectual, inspired brutal Israeli responses.\textsuperscript{58} The most notable of these brutal attacks came in December of 2008 when Israel broke a truce and engaged in a ground invasion of the Gaza Strip to prove Kadima’s mettle to the Israeli electorate. After the three weeks of Israeli muscle-flexing to impress its constituents, 1,400 Palestinians were dead, compared to 13 Israelis (although four were of these were killed by Israeli friendly fire).\textsuperscript{59} The attack failed to shake Palestinian support for Hamas in Gaza and Kadima failed to win a decisive majority or to form a coalition.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{54} Smith, 8\textsuperscript{th} edition, 514.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 514.
\textsuperscript{56} Gelvin, 253.
\textsuperscript{57} Smith, 8\textsuperscript{th} edition, 515.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 515.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 517.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 518.
We need to take a quick step back, however, to 2007 where Hamas and Fatah were operating, despite tensions, under the umbrella of a unity government brokered by the Saudis.\(^{61}\) The Bush administration desired to completely overthrow Hamas with help from Israel and Fatah and there were reports that Fatah brigades were being trained in the United States for an attack on Hamas in Gaza.\(^{62}\) Hamas, however, preempted this attack and forced the remaining Fatah personnel out of the strip. This left us with the situation we see today where Hamas rules in Gaza and Mahmoud Abbas and Fatah control the West Bank.\(^{63}\)

Before we move on to the re-election of Netanyahu in 2009, we should look briefly at the program Hamas articulated before the schism in the Palestinian Authority. While it was true that Hamas did refuse to recognize Israel and give up claims to the whole of historical Palestine, Prime Minister-elect Ismail Hanieh’s speech announcing the Hamas platform for the united government indicated that Hamas was open to accepting the PLO’s future vision for peace:

> The government will work with the Arab brothers and with the international community for the sake of ending the occupation and regaining the legitimate rights of Palestinian people, mainly the establishment of the independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty on the territories that were occupied in 1967 with al-Quds as its capital, so that we can build a solid basis for peace, security and prosperity in the region for the sake of coming generations.\(^{64}\)

While this makes no reference to Israel, the idea of building a Palestinian state as a basis for peace is a changed tune from the original Hamas charter. In fact, over the last

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 516
\(^{62}\) Ibid., 516.
\(^{63}\) Ibid, 516-7.
\(^{64}\) Ismail Haniyah, “Program of Palestinian Unity Government” (March, 2007) in Abdul Hadi, *Documents on Palestine*, vol. 8, 271.
several years of Hamas’ rule in Gaza, Hamas has made serious indications that they would accept a negotiated two state solution, although they have not said it in so many words. While they have not formally recognized the Oslo Accords or joined the PLO, Hamas has offered Israel a long-term ceasefire, which is not the same as a negotiated solution but it is an idea that high level Israeli officials have seriously considered as a solution. Additionally, the head of the Hamas political bureau Khaled Meshal has said on numerous occasions that Hamas would respect a negotiated two state solution if that is the accepted by the majority of Palestinians. It seems, then, that Hamas was forced to go through similar changes regarding future visions that the PLO went through a couple decades earlier. While these changes by the PLO were made in search international recognition, for Hamas these came with the reality of holding political office and the desire to maintain it in the face of its rivals.

The Second Netanyahu Era

Despite the fact that Kadima won one more seat than Netanyahu’s Likud in the 2009 elections, party leader Tzipi Livni’s failure to form a coalition opened the door for Netanyahu take the office of prime minister. Netanyahu was able to form a coalition by including parties even further right than Likud, most notably Shas, an ultra-orthodox party, and Yisrael Beiteinu, which represents primarily soviet immigrants. The election signaled a change in the Israeli relationship to the peace process. We analyzed in detail

65 Gelvin, 227.
67 Smith, 8th edition, 518.
Sharon’s attempt to completely derail the Road Map to peace yet his successor, Ehud Olmert, actually signaled a willingness to cede territory according to the Road Map formula for peace with the Palestinians. And while the land he proposed to cede never came close meeting the Palestinian vision of a state and issues like Jerusalem and right of return for refugees were non-starters, this seeming willingness to give up some control in exchange for peace had disappeared during Sharon’s time in office. However, with Netanyahu’s return to the office of prime minister came a return to his policy of Israel’s security first, peace process second. He had no interest in withdrawing from any West Bank settlements, particularly not those surrounding East Jerusalem, and demanded from the new Obama administration a renewal of Bush’s 2004 statement that it would be unrealistic to expect a return to the 1967 borders.68 This demand immediately put Netanyahu in conflict with newly elected U.S. President Barak Obama who had stated that peace should be based on the 1967 borders and required a viable Palestinian state.69 Initial American efforts to get an Israeli settlement freeze came to nothing. Though Netanyahu agreed to a ten month freeze, it was only partial as it did not extend to East Jerusalem and did not apply to thousands of new units already approved for construction.70 The ten months came and went and no talks took place and no progress was made.

The issue of settlements was not the only thing holding back negotiations between Netanyahu and the PA. A speech Netanyahu delivered in 2009 at Bar-Ilan University

---

68 Ibid., 521
69 Ibid., 520.
70 Ibid., 519.
about his vision of peace highlights the other issues preventing agreements between the Israelis and Palestinians not only on the final status issues but also on the correct path to reach them. We noted above that Netanyahu demanded from the Palestinians a complete session of resistance to the occupation on the part of the Palestinians and a complete surrender to the security concerns of the state of Israel before any negotiations could take place. This is the first major disconnect that we will see over Netanyahu’s time in office between him and the Palestinians. For the Palestinians, as we have discussed before, statehood was a necessary step to reach peace, as an occupied people could not negotiate on equal terms with the occupying country. In this speech, Netanyahu added two more conditions that effectively derailed the peace process as long as he was in office.

Netanyahu states in the course of his speech that in his “vision of peace, in this small land of ours, two peoples live freely, side-by-side, in amity and mutual respect. Each will have its own flag, its own national anthem, its own government.”

More than anything else this statement shows the extent to which the two state solution paradigm had been engrained in the discourse of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that someone with Netanyahu’s views would have to pay lip service to it. As we will see shortly, Netanyahu had no intention of allowing the creation of a Palestinian state except in the loosest of terms (certainly not one that would be independent and sovereign) and would make every attempt to ensure that negotiations would never reach the point of Israel needing to actually cede territory. Despite this, however, he needed, perhaps due to

---

U.S. pressure or to appease parts of the Israeli electorate, to mention his support for the creation of a Palestinian state.

Regarding negotiations, he says to the Palestinians, “I turn to you, our Palestinian neighbors, led by the Palestinian Authority, and I say: Let's begin negotiations immediately without preconditions.”\(^{72}\) By this, he means that Israel is demanding negotiations begin without stipulations such as a settlement freeze or the 1967 borders as the basis of a solution. With that said, he then sets about listing three preconditions of the Palestinians without a trace of irony. The first of these is the most peculiar and one we have hardly encountered before in six decades of Israeli national political discourse. He states that “a fundamental prerequisite for ending the conflict is a public, binding and unequivocal Palestinian recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people.”\(^{73}\) We have seen time after time demands from the Israelis that its enemies, whether it was the PLO, Egypt or Jordan, recognize the right of the state of Israel to exist. However, the demand that the PLO recognize Israel as a *Jewish* state is new and rather nefarious. First of all, it is a rather silly demand. It is difficult to think of any other state that would demand another state to recognize how it self-identifies. Secondly, and more importantly, it is a demand to which no Palestinian leader will ever acquiesce because the consequences would be devastating. The PLO paints itself as the representative of the Palestinian people. That means it has to take into account the will of not only West Bank and Gaza Palestinians but also Palestinians in the refugee Diaspora *and* within the state of

\(^{72}\) Ibid.
\(^{73}\) Ibid.
Israel. There are more than a million and a half Palestinians living as citizens of the state of Israel and while there were Jews of Palestinians origin, those people who identify as Palestinian nationals are almost entirely non-Jewish. Therefore recognizing Israel as a Jewish state would mean recognizing that these 1.6 million non-Jewish Palestinians do not belong in the land they call home. That is to say, it would be a statement by the PLO that the Palestinians have no tie to the parts of historical Palestine that became the state of Israel. While it is true that the PLO officially gave up claims to that territory as part of a Palestinian state in 1989, they have not, and likely never will, give up the demand that Palestinian refugees have the right to return to their homes in historical Palestine. To recognize Israel as a Jewish state would be negation of this right because it would be an acknowledgement that Israel is not home to the refugees forced from the state. No Palestinian leader would give up this demand for the fulfillment of the right of return for the Palestinian refugees. A cynic would speculate that Netanyahu knows this and that this prerequisite is designed to prevent negotiations from taking place, therefore preventing the possibility of Israel ceding control of any territory.

This cynical view is fed by the second precondition that Netanyahu puts forward in his speech: “Tiny Israel successfully absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who left their homes and belongings in Arab countries. Therefore, justice and logic demand that the Palestinian refugee problem be solved outside Israel's borders.” In other words, Palestinian refugees will not be permitted to return to their home inside

---

75 Netanyahu, Bar-Ilan Speech
Israel. As noted above, this is a condition to which no Palestinian leader will ever agree. It is probably the most widespread demand amongst the Palestinian population, above even control over East Jerusalem. With the refugee issue a non-starter, no agreement will be reached on the Palestinian state and therefore no state will be founded.

Netanyahu’s final precondition seems less controversial and less aimed at preventing a peace process. He states that “the territory under Palestinian control must be demilitarized with ironclad security provisions for Israel.” The notion of a demilitarized state has been accepted by Palestinian negotiators before. However, “ironclad security provisions for Israel,” although unspecified, would likely make the Palestinian “state” neither sovereign nor independent. Amongst the probable demands made under these auspices would be a permanent IDF presence in the Jordan valley, control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip’s airspace, control over the entries and exists to the “state” and a permanent military presence to protect the Israeli settlements that will have not been evacuated. While we are mostly speculating on Netanyahu’s exact intentions, these are all conditions we have encountered in 45 years of Israeli documents on the future of the territories.

Netanyahu finishes up his speech with a helpful summation of the preconditions for the negotiations that would occur without preconditions: “If we receive this guarantee regarding demilitarization and Israel’s security needs, and if the Palestinians recognize Israel as the State of the Jewish people, then we will be ready in a future peace agreement to reach a solution where a demilitarized Palestinian state exists alongside the Jewish
The unavoidable suspicion is that Netanyahu’s intention is to prevent negotiations in order to avoid even the possibility of Israel ceding control of any territory in the West Bank. When the Palestinian and Israeli negotiators finally met in the beginning of 2012, the Israelis stated that “their guiding principle for drawing the borders of a future two-state solution would be for existing settlement blocks to become part of Israel.” Unsurprisingly, the Palestinians rejected this. Refusing to negotiate while settlements were still being constructed and tired of Netanyahu’s demands, the Palestinian Authority in 2011 would take a page from the Israeli handbook and make a unilateral act aimed at altering the situation on the ground.

The Statehood Bid

The most common unilateral action on the part of Israel we have seen up to this point has been land expropriation for the purpose of settlement, the goal of which was to create facts on the ground that would make it impossible to separate the West Bank from Israel’s control. By any measure, that activity has been extremely successful. By the end of 2012, more than 650,000 Israeli settlers lived in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which, in the minds of many (including former President Bush as he wrote to Sharon in the context of the Gaza disengagement), makes the complete retreat of the settlement enterprise impossible. In 2011, The Palestinian Authority, faced with this constant settlement expansion the expression of Israeli control it represented, decided to make a

---

76 Ibid.
77 Smith, 8th edition, 522.
unilateral action of its own. As it lacked the military might and sovereignty that allowed Israel to prove ties through the building of homes, it turned outside to the United Nations in an effort to gain international legitimacy for the right of the Palestinians to statehood in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. In September of that year, PA President Mahmoud Abbas submitted Palestine’s application to the UN Security Council for full membership of the UN as a state “on the basis of the 4 June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.”

An U.S. diplomatic push against the application stalled the statehood bid indefinitely. The members of the Security Council stated that they could not “make a unanimous recommendation,” regarding the prospect of full membership for Palestine. More than anything else, the episode was an embarrassment for Obama and his administration who found themselves openly blocking the bid despite stating previously that they supported the creation of a Palestinian state on the basis of the 1967 borders. In fact, Obama gave a speech to the UN the day that Abbas submitting Palestine’s application undermining that initiative and stating that only direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians could bring about a solution to the conflict. Unlike in previous speeches, including one earlier that year, he made no mention of the 1967 borders in this speech. This was likely due to pressure from Netanyahu who, just a few

---

79 Smith, 8th edition, 523.
80 Mahmoud Abbas, “Speech to the UN General Assembly” (UN General Assembly, New York, NY, September, 23, 2011).
81 Smith, 8th edition, 521.
months previous, had told the U.S. congress, to multitudes of applause, that Israel could not and would not return to the borders that had existed before the 1967 War.82

Both Abbas and Netanyahu gave speeches to the General Assembly on the occasion of Palestine’s statehood application to the Security Council. Looking at these speeches side by side is what first inspired this study. These two speeches highlighted the fact that not only are the two sides miles apart on the so-called final status issues, but they are at-odds about the process that would bring them to the table. To Abbas, the settlement enterprise is “is the primary cause for the failure of the peace process, the collapse of dozens of opportunities, and the burial of the great hopes that arose from the signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993 between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel.”83 He fears that “The occupation is racing against time to redraw the borders on our land according to what it wants and to impose a fait accompli on the ground that changes the realities and that is undermining the realistic potential for the existence of the State of Palestine.”84

Abbas also makes reference to Netanyahu’s new precondition for negotiation, recognition of Israel as a Jewish state:

In addition, we now face the imposition new conditions not previously raised, conditions that will transform the raging conflict in our inflamed region into a religious conflict and a threat to the future of a million and a half Christian and Muslim Palestinians, citizens of Israel, a matter which we reject and which is impossible for us to accept being dragged into.85

82 Ibid., 521.
83 Abbas, “UN General Assembly”
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
The fear by Abbas is that the continuation of the occupation and therefore the continuation of Israel’s ability to expand and settle unchecked will lead to the death of the two state solution. He believes that as long as Israel has this absolute power, the Palestinians will not be able to negotiate a just solution based on the 1967 borders and that the PLO’s future vision for an independent state would disappear. This is why, then, that he takes the case of Palestinian statehood to the UN and ends his speech by saying to the member states that “your support for the establishment of the State of Palestine and for its admission to the United Nations as a full member is the greatest contribution to peacemaking in the Holy Land.”

He has come to find that the PLO’s 1968 warnings about a Palestinian authority and Palestinian Madrid negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi’s concerns have come to be realized. There can be no just peace negotiated with such an imbalance of power. By taking this step, Abbas, on behalf of the PLO sought to rectify this power imbalance, if not on the ground then at least in the international community, to reassert Palestinian claims to the parts of the West Bank lost to settlement. Once this equal footing is achieved and settlements cease, the Palestinians will be in a position to negotiate with Israel, state to state.

Netanyahu’s speech reiterates the policy of reciprocity that has characterized both of his terms in office: Israel’s security first, peace process second. Early on in the speech Netanyahu says of the Palestinian statehood bid that “the Palestinians want a state without peace.”

Later on, Netanyahu describes the apparent security concerns that

---

86 Ibid.
Israel faces, especially the issue of defensible borders and the need for a permanent military presence in the West Bank, and states that “all these potential cracks in Israel's security have to be sealed in a peace agreement before a Palestinian state is declared, not afterwards, because if you leave it afterwards, they won't be sealed. And these problems will explode in our face and explode the peace.”

And the statement that most clearly betrays his mindset comes soon after: “The Palestinians should first make peace with Israel and then get their state.”

Netanyahu here reiterates his policy of Israel’s security first, Palestinian rights to self-determination second. He makes it clear that in order for Palestinians to “get” their state, they must “make peace,” that is, end resistance to the occupation. Additionally, by arguing that settlements are not the issue preventing the resolution of the conflict but “a result of the conflict,” Netanyahu is articulating his belief that the building of settlements is a part of Israel’s security. Therefore, in order to fulfill Israel’s security concerns and “get their state,” the Palestinians must allow Israeli annexation of settlement blocks and thus its definition of defensible borders. In effect, Netanyahu is demanding that the Palestinians cede not only the 78% of their homeland that became the state of Israel but significant parts of the 22% that they have left. Once they do this, abandon the Palestinian citizens of Israel, and end resistance to the occupation, it is paramount to Netanyahu to seal this surrender in a peace agreement, thus rendering illegal any attempt to reclaim territory in the West Bank or East Jerusalem that would now be as much a part

---

88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
of Israel as Tel Aviv. Only then would Netanyahu give them whatever is left for their “state.” That is as long as they accept complete Israeli control of their airspace and a permanent Israeli military presence in the West Bank. This is not a peace, but a pacification of the Palestinians.

Netanyahu’s use of the word “get” in this context is particularly telling. He believes that the West Bank is something that belongs to Israel and therefore something they would be giving away. A Palestinian state would not be on Palestinian land but gifted Israeli land. The persistence of this mentally speaks to the imbalance of power inherent in the initial Oslo documents. While the Palestinians were forced to cede claims to what is now the state of Israel, Israel was able to keep its claims (and settlement enterprise) in the West Bank. A report commissioned by Netanyahu’s government clarified this mentality. Called the Levy Report after the panel’s head Edmund Levy, the document concludes that not only do Israelis “have the legal right to settle in Judea and Samaria” and that “the establishment of settlements cannot, in and of itself, be considered to be illegal,” but also that Israel’s control over the West Bank is not an occupation under international law.91 And while Barak Obama’s administration rejected these findings, his diplomatic blitz to prevent the acceptance of Mahmoud Abbas’s application for statehood and his decision to back down from his demand that peace be based on the 1967 borders seem to indicate that the framework put forward by Netanyahu has tacit U.S. approval.92

Unfortunately for the prospects of peace, this is a framework to which no Palestinian

---

leader will ever acquiesce. The Palestinian people are not willing to lose any more of their land or cede control of East Jerusalem permanently to Israel.

A year after the original statehood bid at the United Nations, President Mahmoud Abbas returned to the UN was a different application for statehood. This time he went to the UN General Assembly looking to upgrade the PLO’s observer status to Palestine as a non-member observer state, a status they would share with the Vatican. Going to the General Assembly rather than the Security Council meant that there would be no opportunity for a veto from the United States like there was with the Security Council. This did not mean the U.S. would let this go uncontested. It undertook an all-out diplomatic push in an attempt to stop both the Palestinian Authority from going forward with the initiative and the members of the UN from voting in favor of it. This did not work as 138 members voted in favor with 41 abstentions to nine against (Czech Republic, the United States, Israel, Canada, Panama, Nauru, Palau, Marshall Islands and Micronesia). The real story here was not necessarily who voted in favor, but those who abstained rather than voting against. Countries like Germany, the United Kingdom and Australia who have traditionally strongly supported Israel choose to sit out the vote rather than vote against the statehood bid. Despite this overwhelming support, however, the actual effects of this status upgrade remain to be seen on the ground. There is a chance

that the newly recognized Palestinian “state” attempts to join the International Criminal Court in order to prosecute Israel over aspects of the occupation but as of writing this has yet to occur. The real question, however, is whether the time for a two state solution has passed despite this global support for a Palestinian state. Is it possible to remove 650,000 settlers from the West Bank? Can the future vision of Palestinians and Israelis ever truly be reconciled so a solution can be reached in the Oslo framework? Twenty years on from the signing of the original Declaration of Principles, optimism on this issue is hard to muster.

96 Charbonneau and Nichols, “Palestinians Win.”
In September of 2012 I attended a conference at the office of the General Delegation of the PLO to the United States in Washington DC. This wordy title is due to the fact that the United States has not recognized a Palestinian state and therefore there can be no Palestinian embassy in the capital. At the conference, the head of the delegation (referred to as Ambassador by the staff but, for the reason described above, not graced with that title by the U.S. government) outlined the Palestine Liberation Organization’s positions on the status of the peace process nineteen years on from Oslo. And while the PLO and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas still participate in the process that began in 1993 with the signing of the Declaration of Principles, it was clear that their faith in the ability of that document to bring about a Palestinian state was waning. The office no longer refers to negotiations between the two parties as the “Peace Process” but instead as the “Political Process.” The clear implication of this discursive change is that the PLO sees negotiations not as a productive route that will eventually lead to a peaceful solution but rather a fruitless political exercise that will lead to nothing. Twelve years on from the supposed end of the interim process that the Palestinians believed would bring them a state, it is hard to argue with this assertion. Perhaps what we see with the Palestinian Authority today is exactly what the 1968 PNA resolutions warned against. It is an entity that owes “its existence to the legitimization and perpetuation of the state of Israel.”\footnote{The Palestine National Assembly, “Political Resolution, 17 July, 1968,” in Lukacs A Documentary Record, 298.} Its creation has led to “an interim stage during which
Zionism could evacuate the territory of Palestine occupied during the June 5 war of its Arab inhabitants, as a preliminary step to incorporation it in the Israeli entity.”\(^2\) And its obligation to security cooperation with Israel has certainly on numerous occasions meant that it is an authority “on which Israel could rely in combating the Palestinian revolution.”\(^3\)

This is obviously not what Arafat and the PLO intended to create when they signed the Declaration of Principles in 1993 but the power imbalance and the lack of accountability from which Israel benefited has led to the situation we see today. As we will cover shortly, the Israeli settlement enterprise in this interim period has been accompanied, especially in the last couple months, with a groundswell of support for the complete integration of some, if not all, of the West Bank into the state of Israel. This perhaps best explains the mindset behind the PA going to the UN for statehood. The PA wants to remove its legitimacy for existence from the Oslo Process; a process which has led to a consolidation of Israeli power in the territory they claim rather than the creation of the state they believe they were promised. It wants to stand on its own and negotiate from a position of equal footing in an attempt to save the 22% of historical Palestine they claim for a state.

However, the Palestinian Authority does, for better or worse, owe its legitimacy to the state of Israel and the negotiation process which is why it put out a short booklet describing the Palestinian position on issues regarding the conflict. Just as with all

\(^2\) Ibid., 298.
\(^3\) Ibid., 298.
Palestinian documents we have discussed since 1988, the vision remains more or less unchanged. The booklet reaffirms the PLO’s desire to establish a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital and states that Hamas shares this vision. It insists that the Palestinian state be independent, sovereign and territorially contiguous. It demands a just solution to the refugee problem. It states that the Palestinians will not accept a permanent Israeli military presence in the Jordan Valley and reiterates that they have the right to resist occupation in a peaceful manner until it is eliminated. It states that a one-state solution (a single state on the whole of historical Palestine) is not the choice of the PLO but “Israeli policies are making this solution inescapable.” The question is, then, how much longer this interim stage can continue until a de-facto single state reality arises. It can be argued, although the PLO does not say this in official political discourse, that the occupation has already resulted in the creation of a de-facto single state. As we have seen above, it has been the policy of numerous Israeli governments to consolidate this sovereignty making the territories inexorably linked to the state of Israel. More and more people are starting to believe that they have succeeded.

In the spring of 2013, Israel held elections for a new Knesset. A significant and vocal number of the incoming members have made the news praising what the Palestinian Authority is mourning; the end of the viability of the two state solution. Two major storylines came out of the recent Israeli elections. The first was the surprising

---

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
success off Yair Lapid and his new party Yesh Atid (There is a Future). Lapid is a media personality turned politician whose party earned 19 seats in the new Knesset putting him in the position of kingmaker for the formation of the upcoming government coalition.\(^7\) Netanyahu, on the other hand, suffered heavily. His Likud party was expected to win over 40 seats but ended up with just 31.\(^8\) This fact, combined with the perception in the U.S. media that Lapid is a centrist, led to a narrative by this same media that the election signaled a shift away from Netanyahu’s right wing expansionism and thus the possible return to a real peace process with the Palestinians.\(^9\) A closer look reveals that this could not be further from the truth. Lapid had been purposefully vague about his position on the occupation of the Palestinian territories instead focusing on social and economic issues. He sought to appeal to the popular cries for mandated military service amongst the religious communities and over cost of living and affordable housing issues for young middle class Israelis.\(^10\) His success campaigning on these issues shows the extent to which peace with the Palestinians has fallen from mainstream Israeli political conversation. He did not articulate positions on the future of the Palestinian territories because he did not need to.

There is little reason to believe, however, that had he articulated positions on this issue that they would be much different from Netanyahu’s. He announced his foreign


\(^8\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Ibid.

policy platform in the huge northern West Bank settlement of Ariel, stating that “there is no map on which Ariel isn’t a part of the state of Israel.”

In addition to tacitly calling for the annexation of settlements, Lapid professed his support for an undivided Jerusalem under Israeli control and had argued a few years earlier that an end to the occupation would mean death for himself and his countrymen. The most obvious sign that he lacked real differences with Netanyahu over the future of the Palestinian territories was the fact that he joined Netanyahu’s coalition as finance minister. Any difference between the leaders of the two most successful parties in the last election rests in domestic rather than external politics.

The real story of this past election was the rightward shift which was masked by Lapid’s alleged leftward push. A number of new vocal rightwing politicians calling for annexation of either most or all of the West Bank scored victories in the election. These politicians, however, do not come from the Revisionist Zionist tradition that provided the intellectual foundation of Likud and its annexationist leaders like Begin and Shamir. Rather, these politicians come from a religious Zionist tradition which had initially been a quiet faction within Israel. Over the course of the history of the state, however, this group found its voice and political clout and has found itself in a position of great political influence in both the settler movement and state political institutions. The most notable of these fresh faced right-wing politicians is a man by the name of Naftali

---

11 Blumenthal, “Israeli Elections.”
12 Ibid.
14 Remnick, “The Party Faithful.”
Bennett. Bennett founded the Jewish Home party which took eleven seats in the election. Bennett is vocal and clear about his plan for the future of the territories in a way that calls back to the Likud platforms of the seventies and eighties. He starts at the position that the whole of the territory of historical Palestine belongs to Israel and states that he will do everything in his power “to make sure [the Palestinians] never get a state.” He attacks Netanyahu’s Bar-Ilan University speech for its stated support for the two state solution (although as we described above, Netanyahu put forward conditions that would essentially put negotiations off indefinitely). He argues that the past failures of the Oslo accords and the Gaza disengagement plan to find peace prove that there will never be a negotiated peace with the Palestinians. Painting himself therefore as a realist, he proposes that Israel annex Area C of the West Bank. The Palestinians in this area would be under Israeli control but only have the right to Jordanian citizenship. The major cities, currently Area A and B, would exercise some sort of unspecified self-rule under Israel security control. Gaza would be turned over to Egyptian control. Israel would retain “the security umbrella on 100 percent of the area.” This should sound familiar; the autonomy plan negotiated alongside the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement of 1979 carried many of the same principles. This purported realistic approach, combined with Bennett’s hip appearance due to his knowledge of pop culture and iphone use, has had a broad appeal to young Israelis who grew up in the midst of the post-Rabin failures of Oslo.

15 Blumenthal, “Israeli Elections.”
16 Remnick, “The Party Faithful.”
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
While Bennett is the best known of the new right wing, he is not alone in calling for this sort of annexation. David Remnick, in his excellent New Yorker article on Bennett and other right wing parties and politicians involved in the January election, states that this sort of annexation plan “has become a commonplace on the right.”\textsuperscript{19} Even Netanyahu’s Likud took a right wing dive in the recent elections. Netanyahu made a deal before the elections with Avigdor Lieberman, his former minister of foreign affairs, whose party is right of Likud on the political spectrum.\textsuperscript{20} Within the party, twelve of the top twenty names on the part list support some form of annexation.\textsuperscript{21} One of the young stars of the Likud party is a woman by the name of Tzipi Hotovely who became Deputy Minister of Transportation in the new government. She describes her political views as nearly identical to those put forward by Bennett but chose to run with the larger and more established Likud party to ensure maximum influence in the current government.\textsuperscript{22} This rise of right wing politicians has been coupled with a rise in the power of the Israeli settler movement. Representing seven percent of the voting population, settlers took 20 seats in the elections, 17\% of the total number available.\textsuperscript{23} A settler sits as the chief justice of the Supreme Court and settlers and their allies direct Shin Bet, the internal security agency of Israel, and religious nationalists have make up nearly half of the officer core of the IDF.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Munnayer, “Israel’s Election Outcome.”
\textsuperscript{21} Remnick, “The Party Faithful.”
\textsuperscript{22} Blumenthal, “Israeli Elections.”
\textsuperscript{24} Blumenthal, “Israeli Elections.”
Overall, the policies of these new right wing politicians and parties are nothing we have not seen before in this study. Since the end of the 1967 War, numerous annexation plans have appeared and settlement of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been the norm. However, the elections in January of this year do signal two significant changes. The first is the rise to political power of the settlers. While settlement of the occupied territory has been a constant supported by many in the Israeli political mainstream, the rise to power of the settlers themselves is new. One left wing journalist describes it as “the takeover by a colonial province of its mother country.”25 The second is the breaking of the two state solution paradigm by these right wingers. Netanyahu, as we have covered before, had no intention of granting the Palestinians anything that resembles a sovereign, independent state but he still had to pay lip service to the process, as did Olmert and Sharon before him. Bennett and his intellectual allies are heralding the end of the Oslo process and see themselves as freed from the two state solution paradigm. They feel no need to pay it lip services as cover for expansionist actions. This is not necessarily new as successive Israeli governments before 1993 advocated expansion and annexation without a allowing the creation of a Palestinian state. It is, however, new in the post Oslo era. This is the first time we see mainstream political discourse on either side of the conflict openly advocated for a solution other than the one outlined by Oslo for nearly two decades. This is not to say that 100 percent of Israelis and Palestinians advocated for two states throughout the Oslo process (obviously there were always dissenters who desired the whole territory for their own national movement). However,

to see this being openly advocated for by politicians with rousing success is new for the current era. Or perhaps it is the start of a new era.

This new Oslo-free framework is throwing up some interesting positions. For example, a recent article on a left-wing Israeli blog describes three noted right wing politicians who call for the demolition of the separation barrier.26 To these politicians, the wall no longer represents a vital security apparatus but a potential future political border that would limit Israel’s territory. One of these politicians, the former defense minister for three Likud prime ministers (Begin, Shamir and Netanyahu), states that the wall is doing Israel harm in the international arena and causing “hardship for the Palestinians in their day-to-day lives.”27 What is most notable is the way that all three attack the wall for its inability to prevent terrorism and its role as a source of Palestinian unrest. One of these politicians, a candidate on Naftali Bennett’s party list, goes so far as to say that the “wall… is not what prevented the terrorist attacks. Terrorism prevention was possible and is still made possible today through the presence and activity of the IDF in the Arab cities of Judea and Samaria.”28 The clear implication of that statement is that future prevention of terrorist attacks requires future activity of the IDF in the Palestinian parts of the West Bank. It is not surprising that this member of Bennett’s annexationist Jewish Home seems to be calling for a permanent IDF presence not only in special areas of the West Bank, but throughout its major cities and towns and a removal of the wall that potentially limits Israel’s size. It goes in line with the plan for a total annexation of

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
the West Bank. On the other hand, however, leftists are clinging to the wall as the last
ting possibility of a two state solution despite the humanitarian nightmare it
creates for the Palestinians. They see the two state solution, and therefore they see the
wall, as the only way to prevent the coming of a bi-national state, the demographics of
which would lead to either the end of Israel’s Jewishness or Israel’s democracy.

The Palestinian population viewed the recent elections with not an insignificant
amount of despair. A Palestinian academic interviewed by Remnick just prior to the
actual elections had this to say:

This is all very bad news for the Palestinians. If Netanyahu and this new crowd come to
t power, there will be two casualties—the Palestinian Authority and the two-state solution.
The simple practical changes on the ground—the settlement projects, the daily incidents
of settler violence against our people—just do not allow for a two-state solution. Also,
the radicalization of public opinion in Israel and the radicalization of the leadership
reinforce each other. And that, of course, has an influence on public opinion in Palestine.
The percentage of people here who support armed struggle is going up for the first time
after ten years of decline. The Palestinian majority is still in favor of a two-state solution,
but hopes are fading all the time.

Just as the Israeli mainstream political discourse is starting to come full circle and
return to demands for annexation and no Palestinian state, here the vice-president of
Birzeit University warns that the same thing is happening on the other side of the Green
Line. There is starting to be more and more Palestinians seeking a single bi-national state
which, as we covered above, was the original future vision of the PLO. And there is
growing support for the return to the use of armed struggle as the means to achieve it.

---

29 Ibid.
30 Remnick, “The Party Faithful.”
Where does this all leave us then? With the Israelis starting to turn the corner on coming full circle and the Palestinians catching up all the time, it seems we could be headed for another phase of the conflict. Even the new U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry acknowledges that the possibility of a two state solution could be dead within two years.\(^{31}\) It is impossible to tell at this point if the return to the future visions of the sixties and seventies will mean a return to the kind of conflict that existed in that same period. For now, there is still a Palestinian Authority and the current leaders of Israel and the PA say they believe in the peace process. But it is hard to say for how much longer even the fig leaf of these statements will be true.

Conclusion

The story of the Palestinian and Israeli national political discourse since the start of the occupation in 1967 is one of irreconcilable future visions. Regardless of which national-political group articulated a future vision, whether it was Fatah, the PFLP, the DFLP or Hamas on the Palestinian side or the Labor or Likud party on the Israeli side, the claims of the two national movements remained fundamentally opposed.

This is not to say that the future visions of the Palestinians and Israelis were either universal or unchanging. We saw that in 1967, the vision of the Palestine Liberation Organization was the establishment a secular, democratic Palestinian state. We read time and time again that the PLO would not accept a state on anything less than the whole of historical Palestine. We traced how this evolved in 1974, in the wake of Black December, when the DFLP proposed, and the PLO eventually adopted, a plan to establish a Palestinian national authority in any part of the land liberated from Israel. We saw how, after a second expulsion, this time from Beirut, Arafat and the PLO began moving towards the renunciation of claims to the territory that became Israel and instead aim for a state in a federation with Jordan. We recounted the events of the First Intifada that led to the official adoption by the PLO of its currently held future vision: the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital and return for the refugees. During this time period we encountered Hamas who stuck by the PLO claims of the sixties and seventies; that of a single Palestinian state in historical
Palestine. And finally we followed the signing of the Oslo Accords and their subsequent failure resulting in the Second Intifada and the status quo of 2013.

On the Israeli side, we analyzed the discourse of the Labor party stewards of Israel in the wake of the war. We encountered repeatedly the demand for a Jerusalem forever united under Israeli control. We saw that the Labor party intended to annex sizable portions of the West Bank to create so-called defensible borders and we saw the beginnings of settlement to permanently tie the territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the state of Israel. We recounted the election triumph of Menachem Begin in 1977, the first non-Labor party leader of Israel, who ran on a platform of complete annexation of the occupied territories. From there, the debate was between the expansionist Labor party, who advocated for partial annexation and settlement of the West Bank and returning portions of the territory to Jordan, and the maximalist Likud, who demand permanent Israeli annexation of the occupied territories. With the First Intifada and the eventual signing of the Oslo Accords, we saw Israeli willingness to negotiate with the PLO but no intention of granting an independent state. With Rabin’s death and Netanyahu’s rise to the office of prime minister, we saw the purposeful derailing of the peace process, followed by Barak’s ultimatum and Sharon’s attempts to complete destroy the Palestinian political institutions. We described the pull-out from Gaza and the building of the separation barrier, more failed peace talks and finally the re-election of Netanyahu. Throughout this period, whether Labor or Likud was in power, we saw the intention to annex some of the West Bank, the expansion of strategically placed settlements that reduced the Palestinian controlled territory to a series of small, separate
entities, and the reiteration of the demand for a unified Jerusalem under Israeli control and a refusal of the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

It is easy to understand why the future visions of the Palestinians and Israelis were irreconcilable for the first twenty-five years of the occupation. Throughout that time period, each side was actively attempting to eliminate the national tie to the land of the other. Both national movements were claiming exclusive control over the exact same piece of territory. So long as the PLO desired to establish a state in the territory occupied by Israel and so long as Israel aimed to maintain its status as a nation-state, there would be no middle ground. But an opportunity came with the First Intifada to make these irreconcilable claims into merely contradictory claims that could be negotiated. This opportunity was not seized, however, and despite the advent of the Peace Process, the future visions of the Palestinians and Israelis remained fundamentally and inescapably irreconcilable.

In 1989, the PLO paved the way for a possible end to the fundamental intractability of this conflict when it renounced all claims to the 78% of historical Palestine that became the state of Israel (although Israel has never, to this day, defined its borders) and instead aimed for the creation of a Palestinian state on the 22% that remained. Israel, however, refused at the same juncture to relinquish its claims to that 22% percent and opted instead to continue settlement of the West Bank. In Israel, the vision of the permanent future of the territories differed between those who sought complete annexation and those who preferred substantial annexation, but the framework
was universal: this land belonged to the state of Israel, if a Palestinian entity were to be established, it would not be on Palestinian land but Israeli land gifted by the state. This vision would not have in itself been problematic had it not been enshrined in the framework of the peace process and subsequently adopted by the United States government. The unequal recognition in the original Declaration of Principles allowed Israel to maintain its view that the West Bank and Gaza Strip was Israeli land to give away. Therefore, all negotiations conducted on the basis of the Declaration of Principles would be over land Israel chose to cede (if any). We have seen this mentality throughout the peace process, from Rabin advocating for a Palestinian entity that was less than a state under Israeli security controls to Netanyahu announcing at the UN that once the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state, they will “get” their state.

The US adoption of this “gift” framework has always been clear. Bill Clinton attacked Arafat because he turned down Barak’s “generous offer.” During the Bush Administration, as related in a series documents released by Al Jazeera dubbed the Palestine Papers, Condoleezza Rice in a round of negotiations tells a Palestinian official that no “Israeli leader is going to cede Ma’ale Adumim (one of the large settlements on the outskirts of Jerusalem).” When the Palestinian negotiator, a man by the name of Ahmed Qurei, replied that neither would any Palestinian leader, Rice told him “then you won’t have a state!”\(^1\) The fact that this came in the same round of negotiations during which the Palestinian negotiators proposed that Israel annex all of the East Jerusalem

settlements except one further illustrates the point. Under the Oslo framework, Israel gets to decide what to keep and what to give away. The Palestinian claim to the land that became Ma’ale Adumim was secondary to the Israeli claim despite the fact that it is in the West Bank. And what has become clear over two decades of negotiation is that the land subsequent Israelis governments aim to take from the West Bank and Jerusalem exceeds any amount that would be compatible with the Palestinian future vision. Unsurprisingly, then, there has been no negotiated peace that has resulted in the establishment of a Palestinian state. As long as Israel is able to negotiate from a position where it holds final claim over any territory, there likely never will be. This does not even take into account the two most fundamental issues of the conflict which have remained non-starters throughout negotiations: the fate of the refugees and Jerusalem. These are two issues from which no Palestinian or Israeli leader will back down for the sake of their careers or even their lives. As long as Israel maintains its control over the whole of historical Palestine, however, it has the ability to dictate the future of these issues. Despite the opportunity, the claims remain irreconcilable.

The failures of Oslo and the recent Israeli elections have brought this irreconcilability of the Palestinian and Israeli future visions into stark relief. The once dominant two-state solution is beginning to break down within Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories and in its place is a reemergence of the future visions that existed at the start of the occupation in 1967. More and more Israeli politicians are calling for outright annexation of parts of all of the West Bank. And while this had existed even during the Oslo process, it was under the guise of a two state solution. The need to pay
lip service to a Palestinian state is disappearing rapidly, as is a belief that it even feasible. Amongst the Palestinians, support is growing for a single state, the demographic realities of which would provide a perhaps insurmountable challenge to the Jewish nature of the state of Israel. Talk of armed struggle as a means to bring this about is on the rise as well. However, a fundamental difference exists between these future visions in their 1967 and 2013 contexts. In 1967, no Israelis lived in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In 2013, 650,000 Israelis settlers live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The territory is inextricably linked to the state of Israel. In 1973, Ariel Sharon stated that Israel will “make a pastrami sandwich of [the Palestinian territories]. We’ll insert a strip of Jewish settlement in between the Palestinians and another strip of Jewish settlement right across the West Bank so that in 25 years’ time neither the U.N. nor the U.S., nobody will be able to tear it apart.”² It seems that this strategy, combined with the gift framework of the Oslo Peace Process, has made Sharon’s dream a reality. Throughout all the conflict, revolutions, negotiations and changes we have seen over the last 45 years of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, one thing has remained constant: the irreconcilability of the Palestinian and Israeli future visions. It is impossible to tell what the next stage of the conflict may hold.


http://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier/statistics


Fatah, “The Fatah Constitution,”


Foundation for Middle East Peace, “Israeli Settler Population 1972-2006.”


http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp


