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Chair of Islam, Culture and Politics

COLONIZATION LEGACIES IN PALESTINE:
HOW IMPERIALIST POWERS HAVE SHAPED THE MIDDLE EASTERN LANDSCAPE

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INTRODUCTION

The object of my thesis reflects one of the latest and most crucial issue which dominates the contemporary world. In fact, according to Amer al-Sabaileh, after the end of the Cold War, the most pressing issue seems to be the establishment of a new type of bipolarism: on one side, the Western world and its liberal values while, on the other side, the Arab world and, in particular, the integralist currents inside the Islamic societies, which reject Western values and try to undermine the very foundations of Western civilization. A turning point in such sense was the 9/11 and the consequent declaration of “war on terror” which led to the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003.

This dichotomy West/East has been the object of theories such as Occidentalism and Orientalism. Orientalism is a theory developed in the Western world during the colonization period, and it seeks to understand the East in a caricaturized way in order to better dominate it, while Occidentalism is a theory developed in the East in order to study the West from a non-Western point of view, in this way advancing a model of development which is not based on the transfer of knowledge from the West, but rather on their own cultural creativity (Hanafi, 2011: 199).

In particular, Occidentalist thinkers blame Westernization tendencies in the Third World because they have brought about marginalization, human rights abuses and corruption, which eventually paved the way toward religious conservatism and fundamentalism. Therefore, it seems like Western cultural scholarship does not fit to the Eastern cultural heritage or, better, Western countries have forced a modernization process which was aimed at exploiting the institutions of democracy and secularism in a way as to foster their dominion over the Middle Eastern world.

Still, if we look at the past history of Middle Eastern countries, we can easily find several examples of tolerance and progress, which date back well before than the spread of the so-called Western “modernity”: from the Medina Charter (622), which granted protection and religious freedom to the followers of monotheistic faiths, to the Tanzimat (1774-1861), a set of Ottoman reforms which granted equality as well as universal suffrage, and that created the concept of citizenship and promoted secular laws (Corrao, 2016: 80). What happened to this magnificent culture of pluralism, acceptance and cooperation?

In order to explain the violent outbursts in the Middle East, it has become fashionable to blame mainly two factors: the economic system and the “fanatic” tendencies. Although these causes are very important within the final analysis, they are only by-products of another and more large-scale phenomenon for which we are guilty: colonization.

In order to demonstrate this statement, chapter I contains a general analysis of the history of the Middle East from the Ottoman Empire to the Arab Spring, with a particular focus on those colonialist and imperialist policies Western Powers adopted in the Middle East and on how the social, political, and economic system of
these countries was affected by the legacies of these policies. Despite the aim of the Mandate System was the “sacred civilizing mission”, namely to promote independence, to respect people’s right to self-determination and to develop a democratic system within the colonies, we will see how Western Powers have shaped Middle Eastern state-building process in a way to prevent the development of democracy and to prevent people from enjoying their right to self-determination. Moreover, the mechanism of dependence that the former Mandatary states have realized throughout their formal/informal dominion, has basically led to the exploitation of Middle Eastern resources for exclusively Western benefits.

Despite a general trend in considering colonization legacies in the MENA region, Palestine has to be considered separately since it has been colonized through different modalities and not by a state. Furthermore, since the exploitation of its territory and its people still endure today, Palestine is the very latest and last colonial issue in the Middle Eastern landscape. The analysis of the history of Palestine will recall the important historical moments which have led to the creation of Israel, from the arising of Zionism to British colonial land policies and how they shaped Palestine’s geography and ethnmos. Then, the discussion will recap the four Israeli-Palestinian wars as well as the two wars against Lebanon and the more recent war in Gaza.

Within chapter III our attention will focus precisely on Israeli colonial policies toward Palestinians which, for the sake of clarity, have been divided according to four “phases”: the Dalet Plan and the Military Rule (1948-1967), the “Enlightened Occupation” or “Partial Integration” policies (1967-1987), the Internal Closure (1987-2000) and the “Demographic Wall” (2000-present). In conclusion, there is a description of the Israeli regime, which has been called “Ethnocracy” or “Herrenvolk Republic” because of the presence of a stratified social system according to which rights and privileges are allocated to Israeli citizens, as well as because of the discriminative policies carried out toward Arab in general and Palestinians in particular.
CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL HISTORY OF COLONIZATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

1.1 The Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottomans, a Turkoman clan led by Osman (1258-1326), ruled over the Middle East and North Africa before colonialism took place. They were a semi-nomadic society based on pastoralism, as other Turkish clans originated in Central Asia and migrated toward West during the XI century (Gelvin, 2009: 61). The Ottomans imposed their dominion over the other Turkish clans by establishing sultanates in the region. Despite the territorial extension of Turkoman dominions, such state-like Turkish entities never lasted, mostly because of the internal divisions within each clan that caused continuous changes within the various clans’ borders, until the Ottomans were able to develop a better structured state and succeeded in creating a vast Empire that lasted for six centuries. The clan of Osman defeated the Seljuk clan and settled in Anatolia, where they established a kingdom in 1299. Successively, Osman descendants conquered all Arab territories and much of Eastern Europe, to the extent that in 1566, under the Sultanate of Suleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the Ottoman Empire’s territory spanned three continents - in particular it covered Eastern Europe and all Arab lands, including North Africa (Hawa, 2017: 125). As the Ottomans conquered further territories, they were able to re-shape their culture, institutions and laws according to the Islamic model however, Ottomans always safeguarded their identity. Particularly due to its ideological flexibility, the Empire was able to rule over different ethnic cultures and traditions by developing the institution of the dhimma into the millet system, which granted to the non-Muslim minorities a certain degree of freedom in managing their religious affairs. Furthermore, during their Empire, the Ottomans elaborated an authentic synthesis of the previous civilizations, such as Persian, Arab and Byzantine, in order to create a unique system that could both suit to the mutable context within their Empire as well as endure for centuries (Goffman, 2004: 12). The various Sultans that ruled over the Empire brought about improvements and modernization within the state system, for instance by re-organizing the legislative system and by unifying the administrative one. In the Ottoman medieval state, the political stability was granted through a hierarchic polity and a strictly limited class mobility, as society was basically divided into two classes: the Khassa (élite) and the ‘Amma (common people). The formers were the military (askari), the legal (Shari’a experts, Fuqaha, and judges, Qadi) and the administrative (Diwanli) class which was exempted from paying taxes, while the latter were the.

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1 Even the legitimacy of the Sultan was based on its compliance with the Islamic laws, the Shari’i.
2 This concept was not new to the Arab civilization: even during the period of the Prophet, with the Constitution of Medina (622), freedom of faith and protection were granted to the followers of the monotheistic religions through the institution of the dhimma (lit. Non-Muslim religious minorities) although it was subjected to the payment of a tax, the jizya. In general, the caliphs before and the sultans after always showed tolerance and protected non-Muslim minorities. Anyway, minorities were not treated the same as Muslims, who were and are the only and last depositary of the divine message (Papa, 2018: 48).
tax-payer population (*reaya*), including merchants, artisans, Turkish peasants and all other subjects whose entrance in the military system was denied (Hawa, 2017: 126). Part of the soldiers was enrolled in the Ottoman army through a system called *devshirme*³: young Christian boys from the Balkans were kidnapped, converted to Islam, educated and trained as soldiers.

Between the XVI-XVII centuries, this system declined because the Ottoman Empire had lost its central position within the international economy, due to geographical discoveries (America) and the establishment of new commercial routes (Diaz and South African Cape passage). Domestically, due to the economic crisis it was experiencing, the Empire had to face many revolts. Among these, we recall the revolts of the Janissary army⁴, which succeeded in becoming owner of the public land thus, strengthening their family position, that led to financial losses.

This turn of events convinced the Sultan Mehmed IV (1642-1693) to formally abandon the *devshirme*-based recruiting system in 1648 and to allow *reaya* members to join the military corps (Hawa, 2017: 134). Nonetheless, as the Janissary grew, the finances of the Empire were further diminished. In addition, the new army was inexperienced and ineffective, as Ottomans faced one defeat after another (Hawa, 2017: 134).

For instance, with the Treaties of Carlowitz (1699) and Passorowitz (1718), signed between Ottomans and the Holy League (Russia, Papal states, Holy Roman Empire -controlled by the Austrian Habsburgs, a commonwealth formed by Poland and Lithuania, and the Venetian Republic) under the command of Pope Innocent XI, the Sultan made territorial concessions where new trading bases were developed. The social and economic effects of these treaties, known as capitulations, allowed to foreign citizens freedom of trade and the right to be protected by their country’s jurisdiction – extraterritoriality - (Corrao, 2016: 68). Then, with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) signed between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, the Church had the right to protect the Christian pilgrimage, and Christians trades West/East benefited from tax free protection (Corrao, 2018: 22). Therefore, Muslim merchants started losing their economic primate in favour of the foreigners and Christians.

Such treaties had also the effect of restoring churches and monasteries thanks to the creation of new Christian schools, where children could learn European languages and read French or Russian literatures. The new elite founded journals to spread foreign modern ideas and, thanks to the protection granted by the capitulation, they could enjoy some freedom in publishing Western ideas (Corrao, 2018: 22).

Elsewhere, the modernity came and shacked the status quo. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) led the French army toward the conquest of Egypt. Even though the occupation lasted only until 1801, this was the moment in which, for the very first time, these two civilizations had a real cultural exchange (Daly, 1998: 113).

In fact, the encounter with Western civilization made Islamic institutions and doctrines realizing that the comparison between the traditional Islamic society and the technological and economic advanced Western

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³ Literally, it means “collecting”.

⁴ The army created through the system of *devshirme*.
one could not be procrastinated anymore (Campanini, 2015: 349). In addition, the Egyptian campaign was the starting point of a wider movement of renewal (Nahda) developed by Egyptian rulers and intellectuals - even after the French army left Egypt - that successively spread among the whole Muslim world (Branca, 2007: 107-108).

In fact, since the encounter with the Western civilization brought about a deep identity crisis at the social, educational, economic, philosophical and political level, Arabs responded positively to such crisis by advancing a modernization process within the Muslim society through the adoption of Western standards. Nevertheless, the consequent process of secularization within the Islamic ideology has been opposed by the traditional segments of the society, to the extent that this conflict still endures today (Campanini, 2015: 353).

From the French point of view, the occupation of Egypt needs to be considered within the larger context of the French revolutionary war against Britain and it is justified by the French anxiety in developing what Daly calls a “conceptual preparedness”, in which Egypt was central. In fact, firstly, the importance of Egypt was due to a material reason because, according to Daly, France had nearly monopolized trade with and across Egypt (Daly, 1998: 117). Secondly, through the occupation of Egypt, Napoleon would have blocked British routes to India via Middle East (Smith & Clancy-Smith, 2014: 19).

In Egypt, the French strategy of control consisted in what is known as “Islamic policy” which was followed only rhetorically: initially, through Napoleon’s official proclamations, which asserted that French people were true friends of Islam, and then by a first effort to integrate Muslim leaders into the new regime (Daly, 1998: 125). In fact, Napoleon formed the first Egyptian Parliament through the association of non-elective provincial caucuses and then he issued the election for the Council (diwan5 of ulama), which included members of the clerics, Copts, Syrians, Muslim merchants and Ottoman-Egyptian officers (Cole, 2017: 197).

In addition, a new tax schedule was announced which forced Muslims to pay a property tax, while the practice was basically the opposite - usually non-Muslims had to pay revenues to the Islamic state. This was the fatal reason that turned the urban population from passive acquiescence to active armed resistance in October. The resistance was created among common people and led by lower-ranking ulama6, but the French army suppressed the rebellion (Daly, 1998: 125).

Napoleon started even a campaign in Palestine to secure its borders against the Ottomans, who meanwhile had made an alliance with UK in order to restore their power over Egypt. However, the Palestinian campaign was a failure and the Ottoman armies reached the frontier post at al-‘Arish on December 1799. In 1800, the Convention of al-‘Arish was signed. According to this Treaty, all French forces had to evacuate Egypt in forty days through safe conducts (Daly, 1998: 127).

This fragile situation worsened when the British naval commander announced that UK was not satisfied with the terms of the convention and that he would instead treat the French troops as prisoners of war. Therefore,

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5 Panel of ministers in charge of public good’s administration.
6 In Sunni Islam, the “ulama” comprehends the religious teachers, basically theologians and experts of the Islamic law, the Qur’an
France struggled to reconquest Cairo and Lower Egypt, but, eventually, the French army succeeded in its aim thanks to the alliance with Mamelukes. Meanwhile, the external context was changing, and UK was about to invade Egypt another time, with Ottoman support. The French forces in Cairo were surrounded by the British-Ottoman army on June 1800. A new peace treaty was signed between French and Ottomans and it renewed the institution of the capitulations (Daly, 1998: 132).

After French left, British expeditionary forces remained in Egypt for another two years, with the aim of restoring Ottoman sovereignty on the territory, aim that was pursued by reinstating some forms of Mamelukes’ cooperation. But there was still a complex situation in Egypt, a chaos determined by armed contentions that seemed a vicious circle: since regular troops were not paid on time, they often used violence to force payments and, in order to pay the troops, commanders raised money by imposing heavy extraordinary taxes on the population, thus accentuating popular opposition (Daly, 1998: 134). This interconnection of events came to a head with the popular revolt led by the Ottoman officer Muhammad ‘Ali (1769-1849), who freed the country in 1805 (Corrao, 2016: 77).

Despite the French occupation effectively damaged the Egyptian economy and caused Muslims’ resentments toward non-Muslims’ privileges, the contact with European modernity that took place in this very brief period would pose the basis for the modernization of Egypt carried out by Mohammad ‘Ali in the next years. He sent a delegation of students led by Al-Tahtawi (1801-1873) to France, in order to learn about European modernity and translate it into Arab terms. The shaykh of the Al-Azar Mosque organized the first translation school in order to spread Western culture, he theorized the need to separate politics from religion and he called for more room for free thinking. In addition, through a new interest in reformism and in the *igtihad*, he would try to conciliate Islam and modernity (Corrao, 2016: 77).

This modernist current was educated thanks to those cultural exchanges which created connections between the Arab and the Western world. On the other side, the contact with the European civilization created an epistemological closure, as Zayd analysed. In fact, alongside the modernist movement, there was a conservative trend which defended the traditional Islamic conception, as it was crystallized since the time of the Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111). This latter trend was based on the principle of tradition-imitation so, it advocated the compliance with the aesthetic standards and with the pre-Islamic rigidity (al-Sabaileh, 2018: 35-39).

The Sultan understood that the unity of the Empire was at stake and he responded to this crisis with a process known as “defensive modernization”, that basically consisted in stopping the process of fragmentation of the Empire by centralizing the power and by making more effective both the government and the control of the territory (Gelvin, 2009: 191). The “defensive modernization” can be divided into two periods: the liberal one,

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7 Litterally, it means “interpretative effort” in order to fully understand the divine message and laws in accordance with the modern reasoning.
with the Tanzimat (1839-1876) under Abdülmecid I, and the autarchic one, under the Sultan Abdülmecid II (1878-1909) (Gelvin, 2009: 210).

First of all, there was a reform in the military. Since the Ottomans understood that they could preserve their independence only by protecting themselves from external aggression, they reformed the army according to the European model and by using European equipment. However, in order to finance this radical change within the military branch, the Ottoman governor needed to reform the economic system. Therefore, the Sultan strongly prompted an export-driven production that, in turn, required a re-organization of the administrative apparatus.

The reforms known as the Tanzimat was promulgated by the Sultan Abdülmecid I with the edit of Gülhane (1839). With the Tanzimat, Ottomans acquired some administrative elements of the British system in order to promote the required innovations which needed to be implemented for developing liberalism within the country, namely the adoption of a banking system, a modern financial administration, some elements of the market economy and some individual rights. In fact, reforms included universal conscription, equality among citizens and so, the introduction of the concept of citizenship, and a strategy to undertake against corruption and homophobia (Corrao, 2016: 77).

For the very first time, the idea of citizenship is stressed, meaning that all Ottomans were equal before the law and they had equal opportunity to join the military and the bureaucracy (Hawa, 2017: 135). This was a clear attempt to create a community of citizens beyond the religious differences. Nonetheless, this policy of “equality between citizens” was not welcomed by the entire population.

In fact, since the Edict granted to Christians certain economic and political privileges, Muslim people were afraid to lose their superior status; while on the other side, Christians were unwilling to join the Ottoman army. Protests helped Christians avoiding the conscription through the payment of a special revenue, but this same possibility was denied to Muslims (Gelvin, 2009: 219).

Nonetheless, thanks to the universal conscription, young people could receive a formal education and they would be able to create a new middle class. In fact, even thanks to new translations made from French or English into Arabic, the army received a Western education. This improvement required a reform within the education system, as well as the creation of national printing presses. Furthermore, as more and more people travelled to Europe for educational purposes, they became aware of their scarce political participation within the Ottoman Empire (Smith & Clancy-Smith, 2014: 63). In addition, the Tanzimat promoted a secular law to offset the Shari’a and new courts for public laws were created in order to support the religious ones.

With a new follow up in 1865, Muslims and Christians were considered equal, new schools started promoting Ottomanism (Osmanlılık) as a national identity and the power was centralized. The attempt to create an Ottoman Islamic Identity was successfully achieved only in Turkey, while elsewhere this identity was completely foreign to Arabs, who had lost control of the cultural, social, religious narrative of their society (Hawa, 2017: 136).
On the economic side, the Sultan invested imperial funds trying to reach the European level of production. A massive outlay was used not only for defensive meanings, but even for the modernization of the country (Corrao, 2016: 80). In fact, in order to attract foreign investments, the Ottoman Empire made concessions to Western countries so that they could create telegraphic lines and railways, as well as a consistent number of manufacturing facilities, with all the machineries imported from Europe. Moreover, thanks to the presence of raw materials within the Empire, foreign geologists and engineers started excavating iron and coal ores. However, all these efforts not only favoured European economic penetration within the Ottoman territory, but they were even basically nullified by the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Convention, which made the Empire abandon most of its monopolies and import-export controls (Clark, 1947: 67-71). This convention was forcibly accepted later even by Muhammad ‘Ali, who had invested a huge amount of funds in the Egyptian industrial capacity in order to reach self-sufficiency.

Despite the loans from Europe, this new industrial program was abandoned after the Crimean war (1853-1856). In fact, given a world financial crisis in 1872, the Empire went bankruptcy and started its slow path toward its decline, even due to an earthquake (1894) and to the decay of the industrial apparatus (Clark, 1947: 74).

Following the reforms carried out by the Tanzimat, the Sultan Abdulhamid II (1842-1918) inaugurated the first parliament in 1876 and, with the promulgation of the Majelle in the same year, a compromise between secular and religious law was found, for instance by promoting primary education outside the religious environment and by extending to girls the right of access to primary education. But then Abdulhamid had to suspend the constitutional guarantees due to the international scenario, primarily because of the Ottoman defeat against Russia in 1874 and the loss of much of the Balkans’ territory (Corrao, 2016: 80). The whole situation erupted in a social struggle directed against Western imperialism and Ottoman policies that eventually divided the Arab land and population religiously and socially.

The second period of “defensive modernization” is characterized by a centralization of the state’s power, most of all within the administrative and institutional apparatuses, in order to strictly control a vast empire with a very heterogeneous population. Nonetheless, this centralization only created further problems because it undermined the local administrative systems as, for instance, the ulama were put out from the bureaucracy and their legal and judicial power was limited (Gelvin, 2009: 217). Moreover, the resistance among local population impeded to these policies to reach their scope.

Instead, for what concerns the cultural production, this period was a flourishing one. In fact, in order to develop modern technology and science, the Sultan promoted a pan-Islamic identity that was compatible with Western modernity.

One of the most important theorists of this pan-Islamic movement was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), who stated the compatibility between the revealed law of Islam with rationality and politics. Another one, the Syrian author Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1855-1902), called upon Arabs to seek knowledge and enlightenment as their European counterparts. His work was particularly focused in overcoming cultural
stagnation through a new and modern interpretation of the Qur’an, that would result in a universalist conception of the Islamic religion able unite believers regardless of their languages and cultures. Therefore, Pan-Islamic theorists aspired to create a federal Ottoman state that would have allowed to people to retain regional control and to use Arabic in schools (Hawa, 2017: 138).

On the other hand, the Arab population did not identify themselves in neither of these newly created identities, but rather they were in search for an autonomous status and this claim became stronger with the arrival of Turkish speakers from the Balkans. The Arab call for unity was translated into regionalism and patriotism combined against both the enforced Ottomanism and the European imperialism. This level of mistrust would create an excellent terrain for the intervention of European forces and the dismemberment of the Empire (Hawa, 2017: 139).

1.2 Colonization in the MENA Region: The Mandate System, theory and practices

Has we have noticed in the paragraph 1.1, at the beginning of the XX century, even though the Ottoman Empire had partially succeeded in modernizing the military, industrial and administrative apparatus, people and sultans had to deal with an increasing European cultural and economic presence in the Empire (Owen, 2004: 5).

In fact, European Powers had penetrated into the Empire thanks to a strategic use of diplomacy thanks to which they obtained the capitulations as well as the possibility to interfere with the Empire finances through investments and loans. In other words, this strategy was a new type of European imperialism, which had the effect of integrating the Middle Eastern states into the modern international economy. In order to reach this aim, the Allied Powers developed in these states a new social and political structure, as well as new forms of social integration (Gelvin, 2009: 237).

In fact, as we have seen in the paragraph 1.1, the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy had largely favoured its Christian minority, which acted as an intermediary in the trades between Europe and Middle East. In addition, protection was granted to religious minorities thanks to a special right, according to which they were exempted from paying customs duties and other taxes, like the jizya8 (Gelvin, 2009: 265). Thanks to these privileges, the foreign market inside the Empire increased dramatically as the number of

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8 Tax non-Muslim minorities had to pay to the Empire in order to obtain protection and freedom of cult as well as the right to follow their own religious leader and their laws.
people to which this type of protection was granted, since the protection allowed to foreigners could be extended to other minorities by the foreigners themselves.

The situation changed with the Edit of Gülhane (1839) that, as we have seen, advanced the idea of equality between citizens. Immediately after, people started to call for those political rights granted in the Edit in a new way. Basically, since they knew that European Powers searched their affiliation on a religious identity basis, Arabs proclaimed to protest in protection of their religious community’s interests. In this way, they created a fusion between politics and religion that gave rise to violence.

For instance, in 1858, in the Mount Lebanon district, Maronite farmers rebelled against the Druse landowners and among various Eastern Mediterranean cities, Muslims attacked Christians. In fact, in Damascus only, from 5,000 to 10,000 Christians were massacred and other carnages were perpetrated in Aleppo, Syria, and in Nablus, Palestine (Gelvin, 2009: 269).

Moreover, since the European Powers blamed Muslim fanatics for the perpetration of violence, they solved the problem by further protecting Christians and Jews in the entire Middle East, thus deepening the division between religious community (Gelvin, 2009: 268-272). For instance, in Algeria, France granted the French citizenship to Jews resident with the Crémieux decree, while Muslims did not enjoy the same privilege (Gelvin, 2009: 271) Therefore, the phenomenon of imperialism only strengthened the concept by which religious and ethnic differences were not only natural, ancient and immutable, but even crucially important.

In addition, European imperialism manifested itself even by settler colonization, well before the dissolution of the Ottoman empire: in 1882 Britain had occupied Egypt, France had already taken over Algeria in 1830 and it went on with Tunisia in 1881, Italy invaded Libya in 1911 and the Jewish started their first aliya 9 in Palestine in 1882.

Thanks to Middle East’s proximity to Europe, its favourable climate and the economic possibilities it could offer, a lot of European colonial settlers considered North Africa as their home already by 1900 (Smith & Clancy-Smith, 2014: 21). In fact, in the XIX century, as Southern European population increased way more than the disposal of primary goods, peasants, artisans and workers were forced to migrate to South in order to find job (Gelvin, 2009: 241).

In fact, since European Powers were investing their capital in the construction of infrastructures, the demand for skilled labour there was high. In order to understand the amount of this phenomenon, we shall mention the case of Algeria. In this territory, the colonization manifested itself in a very singular way: the European population settled in and developed an agricultural economy. Before World War I, the number of European settlers exceeded 700,000 people and they controlled the government much more in size compared to the Muslim majority (Gelvin, 2009: 242).

In addition, we have to read these events in a broader social context, in which the gap between the Ottoman elite and the common people was flatten out thanks to the reforms carried out by Abdulhamed II, aimed at

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9 Hebrew term that literally means "ascent". It refers to the Jews’ return trip to their promised land.
creating an Ottoman identity. Despite the elite started to learn Arabic and mixed marriages were favoured, the Arab population started to feel discriminated against both Christians and the Ottomans.

Besides occupation and settler colonization, another important aspect of European imperialism lies in the interference of Western powers into the states’ economies. In fact, in the late Ottoman period, we assist to a complete U-turn within the economy of the Empire from self-sufficiency to an export-driven production. Since they were strongly in need of primary products during the war-time and even after, the Ottoman production’s major receivers were European powers. Furthermore, Western companies exploited low-waged and under-skilled local labour, thus driving people into poverty and increasing their profits (Gelvin, 2009: 261). European powers could even take the control of a state finances to secure the payment of their loans, as happened in Egypt when it went bankruptcy: with the creation of the Caisse de la Dette, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Austria and Russia exercised their control over 50% of Egyptian finances (Gelvin, 2009: 245).

In addition, between 1859 and 1869, thanks to British and French founds, the Suez Canal was built, with the meaning of cutting off miles the sea journey from Europe to Asia.

In the period of British occupation, the access to schools and universities was limited only to those Egyptian that could be integrated into the economy, thus preventing common people from receiving a formal education. But, despite the intents of the occupiers, at the beginning of the XX century, the educated Egyptian elite would create political parties and journals, spreading the idea of Egyptian nationalism (Corrao, 2018: 22).

Before WWI, the ideology that later would be called as “Orientalism” and so the concept of “Mission civilisatrice” was developed in the Western world in order to justify imperialist expansion and conquest. Orientalism is a theory developed during the colonization period and it seeks to understand the East in a caricaturized way in order to better dominate it. Therefore, it set the power relations between the Self and the Others, the West and the non-West. This field of research is the basis on which the West declared its superiority, and from that it derived its civilizing duty toward non-European people, in this case, Arabs (Hanafi, 2011: 353).

But it was only after the World War I and the Ottoman defeat, that Britain and France that European imperialism showed its real self. During the war, the Ottoman Empire decided to ally with the Central Empires (Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany and Italy) –Triple Alliance- mainly because of their rivalry against a common long-time enemy, Russia. On the other side, the Entente Forces (France, UK and Russia) started to mentally divide the Ottoman Empire according to their “historical” and personal interests and, starting from 1915, they signed secret pacts to agree on this partition, such as the London Treaty, the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Saint-Jean de Maurienne Treaty (Gelvin, 2009: 481).

In addition, in order to obtain the war-time support from the local population against the Ottoman Empire, Britain and France promised that they would create autonomous Arab states on their future dominions. Therefore, thousands of Arab soldiers died during WWI serving France or United Kingdom, receiving smaller food rationing compared to white soldiers (Smith & Clancy-Smith, 2004: 98). On the other side, with the
Balfour Declaration of 1917, Britain even declared to support the creation of a national home for all Jews in Palestine.

Nonetheless, due to various misinterpretations among the Parties, this succession of secret pacts was not respected in the Paris Conference. However, the winning Powers agreed to create the League of the Nations, aimed at maintaining peace among States. In the article 22 of the Pact of the League of the Nation, the French and British project for the Middle East was officialised:

“To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League. The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances. Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory”\textsuperscript{10}.

Then, as a result of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), the territory of the Ottoman empire was cut into several successors states, each of them controlled by one victorious power: Syria and Lebanon were under French control while Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Palestine were under British influence. This influence came under the name of “Mandate” and it was formally aimed to protect the interests of “backward people” (Anghie, 2006: 451). There were three types of mandates, according to the level of development European powers believed the population had reached: the people living in the former Ottoman Empire received the “A” class mandate, by which their existence as independent nations could be provisionally recognized.

The main difference between the Mandate System and the old-fashion colony was that the Mandate required the Powers to establish a constitutional government in order to pave the way for an eventual independence (Owen, 2004: 6). In fact, as we can understand from the above-cited art.22 of the Pact of the League of the Nations, the purpose of the Mandatory System was the “sacred civilizing mission”, meaning to ensure the material progress and the moral and political development of the people which inhabited these territories, as they could become capable of developing some forms of self-government (Anghie, 2006: 452-453). In addition, the Mandate System theoretically protected the people’s right to self-determination, meaning that

“by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”11 through independence, association or integration into a pre-existing independent state, as far as the political status to be achieved is decided democratically among people.

Obviously, the idea that the European model was the right one and, thus, it had to be universalised, greatly inspired the mission. The universal claim was based on the wrong assumption by which Western states developed autonomously and therefore, they were obliged by their history to develop inferior non-Western people (Dossa, 2007: 889). In fact, since European powers perceived Western modernity to be the latest civilizational achievement, they tried to replicate the model of self-government they knew, as they were sure that it would universally fit. On the contrary, far from being both universal and transcendental, Western definitions of liberty and nationhood are the specific product of European history and culture, particularly of the French Revolution of 1789.

By confirming the standardised and stereotyped vision about non-European, the Mandate System not only reflected the idea developed with Orientalism, but it even furthered this misconception by assessing a broader relationship between the civilized (European) and the non-civilized (non-European) peoples. In fact, non-Western people were considered “not yet able to stand by themselves” simply because they did not respect the European levels of ethos and the objectives of the Enlightenment (Hawa, 2017: 147). On the contrary, the Muslim civilization is historically a great one and Muslims consider themselves as bearers of God’s true religion (Hinnebusch, 2003: 15).

Consequently, the Mandate System seemed only a thinly disguised type of Imperialism. European Powers could basically do whatever they wanted in order to rule over the mandated territories’ domestic, economic and political affair and they used this power to secure their economic interests in the region (Gelvin, 2009: 497). In fact, in the XX century, France and Britain were the masters of the Middle East: they decided who ruled and how to govern, and they even gained exclusive access to the natural resources of the territory, in particular oil (Owen, 2004: 7). The so-called “colonial state” intervened in several ways.

First of all, the colonial Powers basically gave to Middle Eastern states new names, new flags, new capitals, new dead-straight boundaries, so straight that they seem to be made up on the map with a ruler. There is even a funny story about that: by looking at the map, we can see that Trans-Jordan’s territory has an arrow shape that is not justified by any river or mountain chain. Winston Churchill said later that he created Jordan through a pen stroke during a Sunday afternoon. Since the British Minister of the colonies was a trencherman and he used to finish each meal with a glass of whiskey, the legend says that, while he was drawing Trans-Jordan’s boundaries on the map, due to an hiccup, he deviated from the linear trait, thus creating the arrow-shaped line that we see today on the map (Gelvin, 2009: 500).

So, France and Britain created artificially new-born states completely lacking any type of religious or ethnic homogeneity. National identities did not match national boundaries so authoritarian regimes would advance

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in a top-down state-building process that limited both mass mobilization as well as democratic inclusion, which otherwise could have generated a sense of citizenship.

After having delineated the new borders of the Middle East landscape, Imperialist Powers proceeded with a sort of proper state-building with the first census, the creation of a new bureaucratic apparatus and a new emphasis on the centralization of the state. Most European resources were used to finance the state’s police and security in general, as a mean to perpetrate the colonial rule and to protect the state from external threats. Only a small amount of that resources was dedicated to the construction of the new state infrastructure and, moreover, very few investments were destined to the education system, welfare and public health (Owen, 2004: 9-10). Furthermore, while the new rules claimed to be applied equally to all citizens, another time in Arab history, white settlers had entrenched privileges.

For what concerns colonial policies, Imperialist Powers tried to win the support of local population by creating an alliance with large landowners or chiefs of the rural tribes. In fact, those people represented the conservative social force which could have not only managed the votes for the general elections, but they could even be the winner of such elections. In exchange for their support, European Powers gave to the Arab conservative elite special privileges, like tax exemptions or the possibility to register their properties (Owen, 2004: 12).

In this way, British and French assured a less invasive and less costly indirect control. At the same time, by the creation of new loyalties, any type of nationalist development was blocked by the elitist competition for influence and power. This is the reason why the new ruling class was perceived as client of imperialism and thus it failed to obtain popular support.

The second step toward complete domination of the Mandate landscape was to control people through the strategy of *dividi et impera*, so by stressing ethnic divisions through administrative separation as well as by the creation of different legal systems (Owen, 2004: 13). Therefore, Imperial Powers created a double separation: the first one along economic line, between the rich national oligarchy and the common under-paid people, the second one along ethnic line, between settlers and local population.

Last but not least, colonial Powers incorporated the colonies into the world economic system as they pleased. This meant that they managed to transform their colonies in the so-called “periphery” of the world system. In fact, given the abundance of resources, the role of these new-born states in the global division of labour was the one of major exporters of primary goods and major importers of manufactured goods, produced in the “core” of the system (Europe and U.S.), thus impeding the development of the local industries until WWII (Gelvin, 2009: 501).

In order to implement such policy, first of all the currencies of these states were tied to the one of their respective colonial power and then, colonies were forced to adopt an open economy, that made them suffer from international competition. The new-born Middle Eastern states followed a path developed by the so-called “modernization theory”, which claimed that a liberal economic development was the only way for underdeveloped states to improve their position while avoiding falling into a socialist revolution (Gelvin, 2009: 617).
Therefore, after WWI Arab states were mainly characterized by a strong concentration of power in the hands of the few, the presence of an educated middle class as well as immobilised masses and the Imperialist system only enforced this system by aligning with the conservative oligarchies. Moreover, despite the Western alliance with big landowners made the latter able to stimulate the nationalist rhetoric, the masses did not trust them as they would have to cooperate with Imperialist Powers in order to obtain only a formal independence in the 1950s (Hinnebusch, 2003: 77).

As we have seen, there was a huge distance between Western lessons of pluralism and democracy and their dictatorial practices they enacted during the Mandate System. There was no self-government, as the European Powers promised within the League of Nations, on the contrary, all the Mandated Landscape appeared dictatorial. In fact, Britain and France had completely no intention to create a democracy because it would have been difficult to control this vast heterogeneity of people with a real guarantee of freedom of expression. Moreover, despite the Fourteen Point Declaration made by Wilson made self-determination a fundamental right of all the peoples, the Mandate system basically violated such right.

In order not to be marginalized or destroyed, Arab people started to re-organize their forms of associations in accordance to the new reality. Once the states have experienced a rapid social and economic change, people started to detach from old loyalties toward new, mainly urban, forms of social participation. In fact, thanks to the construction of modern capitals, the urban elite could provide a leadership to an increasing number of educated citizens, such as professionals, workers and students. A great number of new political parties had been formed, dissolved and then re-created in the aftermaths of the establishment of the Mandate system in the Middle East.

But, at the same time, the gap between the Occidentalised elites and the un-educated rural masses was increasing, thus fostering the practices of clientelism, that would shape the political future of Middle Eastern states. In fact, the oligarchy would take the power in the name of social equality, nationalism and independence and then create strong authoritarian and centralized states, the sole form of government the Arabs had experienced for four centuries since this moment.

In conclusion, WWI and its aftermaths can be seen as a turning point in Middle East politics. We have seen how European Powers have shaped the geopolitics of their colonies, how they have exploited their territories and people and the resentment they have created among the population. Still today, the anti-imperialist struggle is alive among the Arab population, since colonialism never died there but only manifested itself in different shapes. This scenario would pose the basis not only for the spreading of nationalism but even of fundamentalism.
1.3 Colonization legacies

We have seen in the previous paragraph how Imperialism has been carried out in the MENA region with its political, social and economic implications. We have now understood how Imperialism has implemented client elites against local population and how it kept the territory divided as well as strictly dependent upon external forces. Now our analysis will focus on the aftermaths of colonialism and on how the population reacted to such form of intrusion into their internal affairs.

First of all, the term “Imperialism” defines a relationship between states and people in which the colonizer is effectively able to control, dominate, constrain and, most of all, exploit others in a way that affects their important interests. This can occur in a direct or indirect way, formally or informally (Dorsett & Hunter, 2010: 31). After WWI, Imperialism’s mean and scope were to develop colonies while theoretically respecting people’s right to self-determination, so in a way that would have supported their path toward independence. Actually, the pledge of self-government was shaped by imperatives of economic development, as Britain and France were only interested in Middle Eastern lands and resources. In addition, far for promoting Arab’s cultural identity, Great Powers imposed the Western development strategy in such territories and, in addition, since it could have threatened the new economic system, they considered as “undesirable” any type of preservation of communities (Dossa, 2007: 888). Therefore, the imperial rule transformed Arab society in a way such as to let it fit to European standard of development.

On the other side, Arabs rejected this “civilizing mission” since, during their history, they succeeded in merging into one civilization united by a common religion and a common language so Western civilization could not easily remove those loyalties and social structures which had been strengthened by years of history (Hourani, 1953: 31). In fact, through the imposition of a foreign law system and an alien ruling class, Arab people disrespect for pre-constituted authorities increased, as the latter did not match social necessities. People started to feel unrepresented and useless as they externalised this resentment with violence, which was fostered by group’s membership. It resulted in a deep distance between the government and the governed.

At the same time, foreign authorities tried to counterbalance popular resentments through the adoption of a massive plan for the construction of infrastructures, a new administrative system and a general improvement within cultivation methods (Hourani, 1953: 33-34). All these measures meant to assimilate colonies into the world economy and exploit the resources of a more efficient state, that could now provide a huge income to Powers at the core of the global system.

As unwanted by-product of adopting Western ways of life, during the 1920s-30s, a new middle class emerged among merchants, proletariats and educated professionals – teachers, lawyers, army officers. Their desire to form an independent political community was strengthened by both the spread of education and the condition of subjection they experienced. In fact, as Western control became stricter, old Arab loyalties – based on
common language, ethnicity and culture – started promoting a nationalist ideology, demanding freedom for foreign occupation and calling for self-determination. Their demands entailed not only political independence, but even an economic one, in the framework of the “development ethos”. Basically, according to this new ideology of “economic nationalism”, Arabs claimed that economic developments and social equality were the State’s primary functions (Gelvin, 2009: 634). Therefore, by adopting the liberal formula offered by Western strategy of development, they wanted to develop a secular and democratic state and a capitalist economy, which were seen as the keys for strengthening the state in a way that could have transcended individual particularity and create a universal state through economic planning (Anghie, 2006: 456).

On the other side, we assist to a general Islamic resurgence, inspired by Muslim Brotherhood’s ideologist, Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Founded by Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) in 1928, this movement’s project was to re-educate Muslims toward the pure understanding of Islam, starting from the most impoverished ones. Basically, in order to solve Muslims’ value crisis, the Muslim Brothers called for the return to those principles which were in force during the Period of the Prophet and for the re-adaptation of the Islamic laws to the time’s needs (Corrao, 2016: 88).

Initially, Arab anti-Imperialist struggle was not taken too seriously but, when pressions became insistent, Imperial Powers had to explain the roots of Arab outbursts: they blamed Middle Eastern ingratitude, their irrational feelings and their propension to fundamentalism -but these where only consequences, not causes. Actually, the opposition existed precisely because of foreign domination. In fact, the initially peaceful nationalist movements erupted into violence only when all their peaceful requests were refused by governments. Basically, Foreign Powers forced Arabs to break the laws if they wanted to stop being subjected. In addition, the existence of nationalist protests would constitute a strong argument in order to justify Western use of force against Arab population (Hourani, 1953: 39).

After WWII, nationalist tendencies could not being controlled anymore so, European Powers started a new path: they conceded independence to the states (by early 1950s, the majority of Arab states were formally independent) and they gave governmental power to notables and professionals, as well as landowners, in exchange for the acceptance of foreign occupational forces’ presence and for the recognition of special privileges to the concerned Power. In addition, the former colonizing Powers could still militarily intervene in those states’ territories in order to protect their interests (Hinnebusch, 2003: 22). Another time, Arabs did not have a choice: they had to accept those Treaties and the foreign presence.

The escalation in granting independence to former colonies has to be historically contextualized into the Cold War scenario, thus within the power relations that characterized the Bipolar System. Both U.S. and USSR were opposed to colonialism and their rivalry during the Cold War would help eroding the colonial dominion, since Middle Eastern states were recognized as part of the world system not only through formal independence, but even through their membership into the newly born UN. Nevertheless, Middle East would remain the arena
where world’s Superpowers played out their ambitions and interests, mainly because of petroleum (Khalidi, 2009: 72).

In fact, the region was particularly important to both Superpowers. First of all, it borders with USSR on the north and so it was a strategical position for U.S. to place its basis for offensive strategic weapons’ use, in particular in Turkey and in Greece. Secondly, since Middle Eastern territory has a vital role for the East-West transits, winning the control of this area meant to essentially block to the other Superpower any possibility to expand its reach (Khalidi, 2009: 111).

As we will see, bipolarity would even provide a positive framework for Arab nationalism: in fact, Middle Eastern states would receive from the Superpowers those resources needed to entrench themselves politically. This situation would result in a pattern of US/USSR alliances replicated in the Middle East through basically two kind of regimes: pro-Western states (Turkey, Israel, and Iran until 1978) that would develop a secular but conservative state, while Arab nationalist states would naturally converge under the Soviet influence (Hinnebusch, 2003: 28).

In fact, USSR championed the nationalist cause by materially supporting Arabs’ struggle for breaking free from Western influence. However, under no circumstances this influence was used to foster democratic development in Middle East countries. On the contrary, Superpowers very often favoured the establishment of autocratic regimes, as repression could be exploited to better control the population.

As independence was achieved only formally during the 1950s, since Middle Eastern governments lacked both legitimacy and independence of action, the state was never able to englobe the entire society or to develop an autonomous foreign policy. Democracy lacked its basis, such as a real guarantee of civil and political rights, and democratic institutions – elections, competing parties, media pluralism – were subjected to non-elected actors and foreign regimes (Morlino, 2012: 52). In fact, while Imperial Powers proclaimed to be democratic and secular, they demonstrated just the opposite: they intervened within the state borders, preferring a political faction to another, exploiting former colonies’ economic resources and limiting political participation as well as any form of dissent. Therefore, the creation of Arab identity in this period developed mainly in opposition to the Western one (Hashemi, 2009: 143).

Consequently, democracy was not only biased, but people even viewed the adoption of liberal democracy as a veiled form of colonial domination, so that even the Western-imported secularism was delegitimized by Western domination itself. So, as the discontent among the population increased, the nationalist movement had more room for free thinking and new opinions emerged (Hourani, 1953: 41). Intellectuals played a decisive role in this sense: they reconstructed Arab and Islamic history in order to show how each social class had made its contribution for the creation of the national identity (Corrao, 2016: 96). In addition, Arabism would pose the appropriate basis for the foundation of the Arab League in 1945.

12 Then, these missiles were removed in the aftermaths of the Cuban missiles’ crisis, as a part of a secret deal between Kennedy and Khrushchev.
Thanks to a new reform in the army, a new radicalised and educated middle-class took the leadership of the nationalist movement and called for Arab unity as well as for populist and social reforms (Hinnebusch, 2003: 21). What we can call a turning point in this sense was the rise of the General Gamal Abdul Nasser\(^{13}\) who challenged Western Powers and advanced a Pan-Arab ideology which called for the alliance of all Arabs regardless of religious faith by promoting new forms of solidarity and by enhancing the creation of a supra-national identity. For instance, Nasser used radio Cairo to spread the dream of Arab socialism and he even signed an agreement with Czechoslovakia in order to obtain weapons and economic support (Corrao, 2016: 98).

Indeed, Pan-Arabism and national sovereignty became two distinct but overlapping institutions. The underlying contradiction between these two ideologies can be found in the fact that, while pan-Arabism sanctioned the political integration of all Arabs and to override all the artificially Western-imposed borders, the institution of sovereignty forced Arabs to recognize such borders and the authority which ruled over the population within the state territory. Moreover, Middle Eastern political leadership used Arabism in their foreign and regional relationship as a mean to obtain legitimacy of action, in this way stopping the creation of a national identity (Barnett, 1993: 284).

However, Pan-Arabism rapidly achieved ideological hegemony among the masses, which started to mobilize against the old oligarchies ruling the Parliaments. In fact, since oppositions could not possibly win seats within the Parliament through elections, that were manipulated by ruling class, they asked to the military for help, resulting in several military coups, which led to the installation of autocratic regimes (Owen, 2004: 19). In fact, in the second half of the XX century, officers represented the sole people sufficiently educated and organized to substitute the old and corrupted leadership and once they took power, they abrogated all the political parties and paved the way for an authoritarian involution. So, the new educated middle-class within the army took the power by means of force, in this way marking the beginning of a period of political turmoil characterized by coups and counter-coups.

The endurance of these autocratic regimes is due to several factors. First of all, they were legitimized, as they proclaimed to govern in the interest of the Islamic community and as they established state-supported religion institutions as well as elites with some degree of autonomy. In addition, the hegemonic reach of these regimes was able to both repress any dissent by the use of a strong police apparatus as well as to absorb the masses by widening the political power (Brumberg, 2002: 58).

Officials controlled the masses by promoting new forms of socialization within the state, such as state-controlled trade unions. For instance, the regime advanced a sort of “State Feminism” by virtually recognizing equal opportunities to all citizens, right to vote to women as well as special privileges linked to maternity (Gelvin, 2009: 666). These measures were used mainly to legitimize the new leadership and to emarginate feminist movements, which emerged in the region during the 1920s. In fact, states accepted a limited women’s

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\(^{13}\) He took power in Egypt through a military coup in 1952.
participation into the public sphere as long as they contributed to develop the nation-state (Pepicelli, 2018: 82).

The autocratic regimes developed during the 1950s-60s can be defined as hybrid regimes, meaning that they can be seen as a sort of corruption of the previous regime, since they acquired some characteristics of another regime – in this case democracy – but they lack one or more essential features that would make them fully authoritarian or fully democratic. In fact, this type of hybrid regime can arise from decolonization, in the case in which it was not followed by either authoritarian or democratic stabilization (Morlino, 2012: 55). Other scholars, like Daniel Brumberg, have used the word “liberalised autocracy” in order to better specify the set of governmental institutions of Middle Eastern countries in such period, characterized by guided pluralism, driven-elections and selective repression.

This regime’s features made the rulers reluctant to give up their power conversely, by extending political participation, they even enforced the survival of the regime. In fact, through the use of controlled pluralism, small oligarchies have succeeded in winning the acquiescence of both the secular and the Islamist wings, which were able to have voice within the Parliament. In this way, the regime was stabilized by incorporating all potential opposition (Brumberg, 2002: 56). However, according to Diamond, liberalization was only adaptive: in fact, as pressures increased externally or domestically, the state allowed for a larger political arena or civic activity, but then it returned to the heavy methods of repression, rigging election and expanding its meanings (Diamond, 2010: 99).

However, those social class which had being historically excluded from political participation were now the beneficiaries of the services offered by the social state, such as health, education and subsidies. In fact, in order to give even to the lower social stratus a stake in the status quo, the military regimes engaged in a massive state-planned economy by nationalizing the industrial apparatus as well as oil companies and by concentrating all these incomes in the hand of a restricted oligarchy.

Moreover, nationalizations basically allowed to reduce foreign influences in internal affairs, as happened in Egypt with the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956, which coincided with the first Arab “victory” against Western forces. In fact, thanks to nationalizations, the State became finally able to allocate resources and to control strategic industries, thus providing jobs to unemployed people and engaging in massive plan for the reconstruction of the state. Through the adoption of a state-controlled economy, officers were able to build new infrastructures and improve the access to education. This system would enhance the economic status of such states in order to meet the standards required by the World Bank for obtaining important financial support (Corrao, 2011: 13).

Unfortunately, the adoption of a state-planned economy did not result in the creation of an efficient state, and the financial aids coming from the World Bank did not save Arab countries from the effects of the world crisis. The 1967 Arab defeat14 led to a first regional economic crisis and states had to cut back on welfare. It was the end of the socialist dream. The one-party system turned from nationalization through privatization which

14 I will analyze this event within the Arab-Israeli conflict
ultimately advantaged only a small elite. Therefore, capitalism produced an economic boom that was not coupled with an equal redistribution of resources. Quite on the contrary, the exploitation of the economy that fostered capital accumulation as well as the poor industrialization that lacked a technological development and an inefficient public sector, revealed the weaknesses of the state, which was therefore forced to move toward an open economy and cut the welfare state.

Moreover, despite a new emphasis was put on the production of intermediate and capital goods to export, industry was still highly dependent upon foreign Powers for machines, finite products and technicians (Issawi, 1982: 165). In fact, Middle Eastern states made no efforts in order to modernize their labour-intensive industries, which could have provided work for much more people. Moreover, since many industries were overstaffed, the marginal product of labour was low and so was the wage.

In general, we can affirm that the state’s industrial apparatus was way too protected and, therefore, it has enjoyed a monopoly position in the internal market that removed any incentive for efficiency. The reasons why the industrial development was not achieved are different: a labour force suffering from inadequate housing and the lack of training, a not fully developed or diversified industrial apparatus and the general backwardness of the input-sectors, that raised the cost and lowered the quality of primary-products (Issawi, 1982: 169).

The new-born state bourgeoisie exploited this situation in order to invest their accumulated wealth and acquire public sector assets or secure capital flows by acceding to foreign markets (Hinnebusch, 2003: 85). Particularly in states that heavily relied on oil revenues, the incomes enforced state bureaucracy which in turn did not need taxes anymore and, consequently, it had less and less reason to grant political representation to contributors (Diamond, 2010: 98).

In such a way, the regime that had once found its legitimacy on a more equal redistribution of resource, now turned toward a sort of capitalism which left the majority of people economically marginalised and thus, outside the political arena. In addition, as we have seen, core states had installed a mechanism of dependency that strictly connected former colonies’ independence and autonomy to the benevolence of world powers, which could easily intervene within the domestic affairs in order to protect their economic and geo-strategic interests.

The adoption of economic policies favourable to Western Powers has in turn fostered people to follow sub-state identities that delegitimized the government. In fact, only where the level of mobilization was high and the state was weakly consolidated, elites were more vulnerable to accept Pan-Arabism or Pan-Islamic oppositions (Hinnebusch, 2003: 93). Riots aroused only when the introduction of structural economic adjustments failed to meet people’s need, partly because the privatization led to the creation of monopolies controlled by the dominant oligarchies, so it favoured corruption, and partly because intellectuals started to call for more room for political and civil rights during public speeches (Corrao, 2016: 110).

The industrial working class realized that they were producing goods they could never buy. At the same time, unable to be absorb the new mass of graduates and to grant them a fair wage, the authoritarian regimes had to
face students’ protests demanding for more political freedom and to end corruption, as well as people migrating toward Europe or toward the oil-rich Arab countries, where the demand for employees was anyway reduced due to the international economic crisis of 1970s (Corrao, 2011: 12).

The oil-producers countries responded unitarily to the crisis generated from the devaluation of the dollar in 1971: they decided to reduce the supply of oil, thus increasing its price per barrel. Nevertheless, the Petroleum Revolution only fostered the Middle Eastern dependence upon the West, which was the ultimate buyer of this resource. In fact, if Western States decided to cut back investments, Arab states could not do anything to save themselves, unless reducing the extent of the measures enacted by the welfare state (Gelvin, 2009: 696).

During the “Arab Cold War” in the 1970s, the level of external insecurity strongly affected the regime domestically. In fact, order to respond to such external threats, the ruling parties developed a strong apparatus that was able to penetrate within the society and to obtain a cross-class support while, where parties did not existed, the ruling class acted as a single-party system through the use of patronage dynamics (Hinnebusch, 2003: 82). Furthermore, while these elites acquired greater access to power, the middle-class was subjected to strict control and excluded from the decision-making process, and civil society was kept weak and co-opted. Therefore, marginalised masses would find their identity in those sub-supra-state identities and would fill the anti-system mobilisation, joining radical Islamist ideology which still constitute a strong unifying factor (Hinnebusch, 2003: 88).

In fact, when Pan-Arabism was discredited by the 1967 failure, the ideology vacuum was filled by political Islam. The Islamization strategy has been used by the existing military-autocratic regimes in order to both limit secularism and to force Islamists to play according to the rule of government. Furthermore, the lack of a proper rule of law strengthened the authority of the state and, in turn, it has undermined the political liberties of citizens, to which freedom of speech and assembly has been granted only as long as they did not infringe national and Islamic values. Such system has been called by Brumberg “state of laws” since the various laws passed by the Parliament were meant only to legitimate the regime and its survival (Brumberg, 2002: 64).

The “mis-democratization” undertook by the powerful oligarchies has delegitimized the very core values of real democracy, since they have been exploited by the few for personal interests. A real democratization has been prevented from happening through the use of patronage mechanisms, centralization, limited political participation, all at the expenses of the masses that turned toward radical Islam. In addition to domestic factors, democratization was discredited even by the influence of foreign powers which continued to intervene within the internal affairs even after decolonization took place (Hinnebusch, 2003: 92).

During 1970s-80s, despite they have been violently repressed, many protests took place in the Eastern Mediterranean region. These sentiments of revolt were fuelled by several factors. For instance, media were strictly controlled by the government which had created a sort of virtual reality that did not match people’s

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15 Yet, we are not talking about liberal and plural Islam, that could have paved the way for a democratic evolution of the regime and that could have spread the acquisition of political conscience among the masses, which is exactly the things that the military regimes wanted to prevent (Brumberg, 2002: 64).
everyday life. Moreover, citizens did not enjoy political and civil rights, since even when European states called for granting elections, the Middle Eastern leadership conceded only a limited political freedom and people were however prevented from participating into the political life through a policy of persecution (Corrao, 2011: 13). Although, from the outside, Middle Eastern regimes appeared to be liberal, as these states hosted important cultural activities, such as film festivals or book fairs, in which intellectuals implicitly protested against government’s repression by the use metaphors, actually the regimes were not democratic (Corrao, 2016: 110).

Unfortunately, the distance between the intellectual elites and the masses increased, as well as the differences between the claims of various cultural and religious community within the society. The new generation of young unemployed continued to protest because of elite corruption and the unequal distribution of wealth, but people’s resentment was underestimated by both political and intellectual circles so, they had to find an ally in the Islamic movement, renewed after the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the decline of Arabism following the 1967 defeat (Smith & Clancy-Smith, 2004: 241).

By providing social assistance to their respective religious communities, Islamic movements - such as Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah - were able to fill the political void created by years of occupation and by the disillusionment toward nationalism. Not all of these movements were political, some of them were more interested in a “re-islamisation” of the society through missionary work, while others preferred to isolate themselves from the blasphemous world. Nevertheless, all of them were based upon a conception of Islam as eternal and universal message, and a shared aim, which was to extend the application of the Islamic laws and to reach social equity within national territories (Gelvin, 2009: 824-842).

In fact, these Islamic groups were organized on national basis and initially they were mainly concerned about national problems. Their angry was addressed toward Imperialist states, that monopolized nation-building process by unilaterally imposing artificial boundaries. Such “Political Islam” was able to respond to the need of the masses, which have been marginalized from state patronage networks and which have carried out the costs of the structural adjustments after the oil-boom.

For what concern their external strategy, Islamic movements prioritized unity over individual states and they tried to reach economic autonomy from the Western-dominated international system. For this reason, Islam became the chosen ideology for all trans-state terrorist networks and for state élites, which exploited the Islamic ideology in order to fill their legitimacy deficit, anyway without carrying out an Islamisation neither within nor beyond national boundaries (Hinnebusch, 2003: 70-71).

In the XXI century, thanks to new technological developments and the spread of social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, people’s demand for political rights reached its peak when a street vendor burn himself to death in front of the police in Tunisia in 2011 and its video spread in the web, leading to protests in the main square of cities all around the Middle East (Smith & Clancy-Smith, 2004: 243-244).

This is how the “Arab Spring” started, a period of protests carried out mainly by young people in order to both overthrow the old oligarchies, which owned most of the private industries, and to call for justice and freedom.
Nevertheless, a real multiparty system never took off, the Middle Eastern governments still suffer from the logic of corruption and family co-optation, thus they lack legitimacy, and this leaves space for the establishment of other socialization networks outside the control of the state (Corrao, 2011: 15). In this context, radicalization and fundamentalism became attractive in the eyes of people with completely no touchstone beside their religion, and the clash between civilization becomes understandable as religion was distorted and exploited for power meanings.

1.4 Post-colonialism: democracy and society in Middle East

Despite the existence of different approaches to post-colonialism, it is a field of intellectual inquiry that tries to analyse the effects of the imposition of European modernity on the colonial landscape (Göçek, 2012: 550). As European social science analyses history according to European parameters, when colonies achieved independence during the 1950s, the term postcolonialism first appeared as associated with the difficult conditions in which these newly independent states found themselves in the aftermaths of WWII (Kandiyoti, 2004: 280).

My aim in this paragraph is first of all, to recap the several theories which have been developed during the Imperialist times and to understand how they shaped Arab path toward development, from a social, political and economic point of view. Then, we will focus on delineating the various stage of Middle Eastern state-building process, in order to better explain what I consider to be the most important outcomes of “Westernization”: the absence of Arab democracies and the rise of terrorism.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, immediately after the proclamation of the Mandate in the early 1920s, the former colonies experienced a period of strong centralization of power with the meaning of developing the economy through the adoption of liberal policies. Since the aim of the League was to create sovereignty and foster self-government, Western states found the solution to the problem in the promotion of their model of development, thus they forced their former colonies to follow a capitalist path and to take the Western society as a model to reach (Anghie, 2006: 747).

Nevertheless, as economic-planning efforts only aggravated the situation, in the 1940s-50s modernization theory appeared as a way to address this failure. It was based on an underlined underestimation of the effects of colonization as well as on the belief that Western society was the most advanced one – the concept of the universality of “Westernization”. In fact, according to modernization theories, any society could become
modern by emulating Western society, which had already escaped from their condition of backwardness and had entered into the modern post-war system (Shah, 2011: 4).

Modernization was the keystone of the Cold War era and, in particular, it was the main strategy used by US to avoid the spread of communism in the former European colonies. In fact, Western powers offered them a so-called “superior path”, which had to be followed through the adoption of Western patterns of governance, industrial organization, free-market economic system and lifestyles, which were considered as primary means to transform primitive states into modern countries (Shah, 2011: 2-3). This infusion of Western values into the non-Western world entailed a process of secularization, by which those “traditional” Middle Eastern societies should have replaced their customs and beliefs thus, breaking their circular path to development in order to acquire a progressive and linear one (Hashemi, 2009: 28-29).

Nevertheless, sovereignty was created and developed by the Mandatary States in such a way that it could preserve Western interests. In fact, during the 1950s, when parliamentary democracy made its first appearance in the Middle East, the governance’s responsibility was given to the conservative forces of the societies – landowners, notables, elites – which could better control the masses and the elections as well as promoting policies that furthered the status quo. Therefore, instead of promoting democracies, Western powers aligned with autocratic forces and reinforced the executive branches at the expense of citizens’ rights, most of all the freedom of expression (Khalidi, 2009: 163).

As such, state-building was coupled with class conflicts: the dominant classes appropriated the means of wealth production at people expanses, thus fuelling a political mobilization of the masses which could not be controlled by a such fragile state structure (Hinnebusch, 2003: 73-75). In addition, since post-colonial elites and capitalist system were strictly interconnected through a patronage ratio, state-building meant to import instruments of rule that entailed what is known as “primitive power accumulation”, meaning the participation of some social forces and the exclusion of others from the state system (Hinnebusch, 2003: 73). It resulted in a double dependency – economic and social – by which local alliances and foreign classes/multinational corporations strengthened the underdevelopment mechanisms.

According to the dependency theory, which explained underdevelopment as a result of the exploitation of Third world economic surplus by countries at the core of the international economic system, the solution to this problem lied in the adoption of socialism (Kapoor, 2008: 4-6). Instead, as we have already discussed, during 1960s, despite some Arab countries adopted socialism as a founding ideology for their nationalist struggles, nothing changed. In fact, as the power relations were not modified neither domestically nor internationally, nationalizations eventually contributed to concentrate the income in the hand of the army. Moreover, once it took power, the military paved the way for an authoritarian involution and the living condition of the masses aggravated (Corrao, 2016: 98). Only after the dissolution of the USSR and the final break in the superpower rivalry, post-colonialism became an important field of research as old paradigms of development meant to be surpassed (Kandiyoti, 2004: 281).
The main difference between dependency and postcolonialism lies in the way in which they understand Imperial dominance: dependency theory focuses on the economic exploitation, while post-colonialism identifies the ideology of Orientalism as the primary reason why Imperialism took place.

The first and most important work of the post-colonial theory is Edward Said’s “Orientalism” in which he theorized that Western understanding about the non-Western culture (Orientalism) led to a production of knowledge that established Western superiority and fostered Western domination. In fact, as Orientalism had to converge a vast number of information about the whole non-Western world, it formulated uncomplicated ideas and “summational” statements, which they thought to be right for understanding the whole Oriental ethos (Said, 1978: 232). This produced biased visions of both the Other, depicted as primitive and irrational, and the Self, described as liberal and civilized, which were accepted as natural.

Instead, postcolonialism arises from the need to preserve East’s heterogeneity and so to override Western standard of development by shifting the focus on the “periphery”, rather than on the “Western” point of view (Kapoor, 2008: 9). This is a complete turning point in the whole historiographical narrative that has always been told through Western parameters, as that we can talk about post-Orientalist scholarship.

By analysing the effects of the imposition of Western modernity over Middle Eastern countries, post-colonial theorists highlight how the introduction of a concept far removed from Arab society and the use of the liberal-democratic theory have been both useless for understanding Muslims’ struggle for democracy (Hashemi, 2009: 24). On the contrary, by using the grid of “Orientalism”, Western powers’ modes of development only exacerbated the social and economic conditions of this people, finally leading to the establishment of authoritarian forms of government and Muslims’ resentment toward European civilization. Therefore, it is important to analyse the history of the Middle East in this new light in order to better understand the patterns of domination.

As we have seen, since WWI the Middle Eastern regimes have been shaped by dominant and prominent forces, both domestic – the military and the economic oligarchies- and external – Imperial forces before, and US and USSR after. Since such forces have been from influential to decisive in maintaining the regime in its state of ambiguity, they have been called by Morlino as “veto players” (Morlino, 2012: 60).

In order to preserve the oligarchic institutional apparatus, the former Middle Eastern colonies have developed a weak form of inclusive hegemony, in which only the educated and professionalized part of the opposition has been included into the decision-making process, while the majority of population was controlled through the welfare state/patronage.

Moreover, to the extent that political competition was allowed, the opposition was disadvantaged by governmental rules and thus, prevented from governing. However, once opponents had been engulfed into parliamentary politics, they could not rely on the support deriving from mass mobilization, as they resulted being co-opted in the eyes of the masses. As a consequence, the opposition was caught in a dilemma and became fragmented (Diamond, 2010: 100). In addition, the gap between the privileged elites and the rest of society widened due to massive poverty and unemployment which followed the economic crisis (1973).
Despite the methods of repression and control, mass mobilization reached its peak in the first decade of the XXI century thanks to a new awareness people - mostly youth - acquired through the diffusion of new mass medias like internet. In addition to the role of media, another factor that contributed in shaping the Arab Revolution was the end of education as a monopoly, as the number of foreign universities in Middle East increased in such period (Corrao, 2016: 137).

Due to these new developments, Arab culture changed visibly according to the radicalization of the information carried out by national television which fuelled hatred toward Western world. This new awareness fostered people to connect among themselves and to escape from marginalization. Moreover, the events beyond the Arab Spring show how the public can both carve out space for freedom as well as create a common identity within the nation in a democratic framework. In fact, protesters rejected any identity except the one of citizens and peacefully fought shoulder to shoulder for political inclusiveness and democracy (El-Affendi, 2011: 1256).

Revolution started in 2011 in Tunisia and then spread to the other countries in the MENA region. People occupied squares for days, demanding to overthrow the old oligarchic system and to grant political participation. Behind these claims, there was people’s desire for social and economic justice, which had been destroyed by three decades of neoliberal policies (Bogaert, 2013: 214). Nevertheless, this revolution did not lead to the democratization of such regimes but quite the opposite happened, as fundamentalism gained political relevance for several reasons.

First of all, as we have explained, people were profoundly disillusioned that secular nationalism could have brought about higher standards of living, the creation of an inclusive state or even a real independence, since elites had always use secularist ideology only as a mean to concentrate more and more power in their hands at people expanses. Therefore, in people’s eyes, Westernization and secularism became associated with widespread social and psychological alienation since it brought about corruption, economic mismanagement, poverty, despotism and human rights abuses (Hashemi, 2009: 140).

As secularism was delegitimized, its by-product, meaning the marginalized and uneducated masses, started relying on radical Islamist groups which were able to respond to people’s need for education, identity and unity. In fact, radical Islam as identity has been constructed in rejection to Western values, and so even in rejection of the separation of religion from politics. The resentment against Western powers fuelled the Islamist cause, as more and more leaders called for freeing the Middle East from foreign intrusion.

In conclusion, our analysis has revealed that Imperialism has basically reverted its official attempt to democratize and economically advance former colonies, since Imperialist Powers exploited the inferior economic position of former colonies -which has been created by the same Western Powers through the creation of a “core-periphery” relation- in order to improve their economies and to foster their domination. Imperialism has created a generalized resentment toward Western practices and institutions, such as democracy and secularism, which lead to the rise of non-democratic regimes and fundamentalism.
The failure of the Mandate project primarily lies within the Western conviction that their model of development was the best one and, therefore, universally applicable. Orientalism has provided the theoretical base for such superiority claim as well as a moral justification for Western exploitation of others’ resources. Consequently, former colonies’ regimes were never able to obtain legitimacy in people’s eyes, as they were merely puppets used by the foreign invaders in order to control and limit people’s real participation in the policy-making process. Since the state has been discredited, radical Islam was able to fill that void by exploiting those sentiments that the Western powers themselves had created throughout history.
CHAPTER II – THE CASE OF PALESTINE

2.1 Zionism\(^{16}\)

The inquiry about the colonization of Palestine requires a chapter of its own. The case of Palestine entails specific reminders to the history of two different civilization – Arabs and Jews – both of them claiming the sovereignty over the same territory, and of three religions – Islam, Christianity and Judaism – which consider Palestine as their “Holy Land”, therefore, it needs to be considered separately from the history of colonialism as it was realized within the other Middle Eastern states of the former Ottoman Empire.

Moreover, Jewish colonization was not motivated by any economic meaning, therefore it did not respect the parameters of classical Colonialism/Imperialism (Weinstock, 1973: 53). First of all, because Zionists’ colonialism was not aimed at “civilizing” the indigenous population, but it was specifically designed to completely overwhelm Palestinian native culture in order to replace it with the Jewish one. Accordingly, Jewish advanced in the colonization of Palestine because of spiritual and social motives, and they achieved their primary aim even though Zionists had neither an army nor a consistent amount of capital to deploy for their purposes, unlike the Imperialist Powers (Safty, 2009: 12).

The Arab-Israeli question has its roots in the second half of the XIX century. The territory of Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire, and its inhabitants (457,592 people) were mainly Arabs, while Jews constituted only a minority of the population (25,000\(^{17}\)) and their presence was justified by religious means (Kayyali, 1978: 11). However, initially, Jewish aspiration over the Holy Land was simply a romantic idea that arose from the oppression to which Jews were subject within Eastern Europe, where they still lived in the ghettos (Weinstock, 1973: 50).

Nonetheless, Zionism was born exactly as a way to overcome Jewish minority condition within European states. Furthermore, the emergence of Zionism was strictly connected with the Enlightenment process and the consequent spread of liberal ideas within Europe and, in particular, among European Jews. Such phenomenon led to a double outcome: one side, social integration and, on the other side, a growth in the Jewish new nationalist sentiment and in the will for a colonialist fulfilment (Safty, 2009: 1).

In fact, while secular Jews decided to integrate within the European society, others feared that Judaism could be threatened by the assimilation with non-Jews civilization and the consequent hostility and moral degeneration Jewish people would have faced (Mosé, 1992: 65). As the Jewish thinker Moses Hess (1812-1875) advocated in his book “Rome and Jerusalem”, Jews needed to develop nationalism in order to develop

\(^{16}\) Ideological and political movement that lies on the recognition of Jewish national unity within the Promised Land

\(^{17}\) Demographics of Israel: Population of Israel/Palestine (1553 - Present), \url{http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/population-of-israel-palestine-1553-present}
a natural historical background, according with the view by which they could never be respected as long as they rejected their origins (Safty, 2009: 1).

In 1882, as aftermath of the Russian pogroms and the following anti-Jews legislation which limited Jewish dwelling residence to Ukraine and Belarus, the first club “Hoveve Zion” (Zion lovers) was funded in Warsaw, and then others were created all over Europe (Mosé, 1992: 66). The ideologist of this movement was Leon Pinsker18 (1821-1891) who promoted the idea according to which, far from being a temporary phenomenon, anti-Semitism was “an inherited aberration of the human mind” that could not be eradicated (Safty, 2009: 2).

Therefore, the solution to the Jewish question should be found in the creation of a Jewish nationality. As a consequence, the aims of these associations were to spread the knowledge of Hebrew and to promote the colonization of Palestine (Mosé, 1992: 66).

In fact, the first aliya of Bilu19 dates back to 1882 and it was possible thanks to Edmond James de Rothschild, who bought a piece of land in the current central area of Israel and created the first colony, Riscion le-Sion, in Jaffa (Bachi, 1950: 82). Nevertheless, in this first stage, political Zionism was not interested in Palestine as such, but the attention was mainly focused on the acquisition of any territory on which soil an independent Jewish state could be founded (Safty, 2009: 2). Moreover, the colonization now was still mainly aimed at creating the basis for proving employment to all Jews, as Arab peasants could still be hired within Jewish farms (Prakash, 1995: 218).

As the Dreyfus Affair20 erupted in France in 1894, Zionists became strongly convinced that they would never be integrated within European society, since it was considered being intrinsically anti-Semitic, therefore they concluded that Jewish problem was mainly a national one and, therefore, they started promoting a Jewish separated identity (Mosé, 1992: 68). In addition, according to Theodore Herzl (1860-1904), since the Jewish question had an international reach, even Great Powers should have helped Jews in creating their own country (Mosé, 1992: 69), possibly in Argentina (Safty, 2009: 2).

In 1896, Herzl published “Der JudenStaat” (The Jewish State) in which he addressed Jewish question: in his opinion, despite Jews always tried to be loyal to their native country, they would always be seen as alien in Europeans’ eyes, specifically because of their condition of numerical minority within the society (Safty, 2009: 3). Therefore, Herzl was able to transform anti-Semitism into a unifying factor, which would have bonded all Jews together as well as made them strong enough to from a state (Safty, 2009: 3). Moreover, Herzl even insisted that the territory of such state should have been large enough to meet the requirements to be defined as a nation (Oke, 1982: 329).

18 In 1882, he published a brochure called “Auto-emancipation” that has been adopted as a belief by the other Zionist clubs.
19 Young middle-class Russians that migrated to Palestine in 1882, in particular they were members of the Russo-Jewish students’ organization of Khrkhov. The term comes from the first letters of a verse in the Bible: “Beth Ja’kob lechu we-neclachah”, which means “Jakob’s home, let’s go”.
20 Alfred Dreyfus was a Jew in charge of the French army. In 1894, he was accused to be a German spy and to conspire against France. His process became well-known all over Europe and, according to the opinion of the majority, Dreyfus’ only fault was being Jewish. From this moment on, Herzl became convinced that European people were so filled with anti-Semitism, that Jews could have never be safe in their condition of minority (Gelvin, 2009: 567).
Successively, the idea of Palestine was advanced in order to respond to the failure arising from pressures from the native population that Jews faced when they tried to infiltrate in Argentina. According to Herzl, since Palestine had geostrategic importance to European Powers, Zionists could exploit this situation in order to obtain the support of European states, since the latter could take advantage of Jewish location within the Eastern Mediterranean area in order to advance in the complete takeover of the Middle East (Safty, 2009: 4).

Actually, the project of creating an exclusively Jewish state could not have been developed in Palestine, since its territory was already inhabited by a Muslim and Christian majority, but Zionists never mention that. Conversely, in its early stages, since Palestine was not inhabited by any European, Zionists considered it as an “empty land” and the Jewish movement even manifested this biased view within the slogan “a land without people for a people without a land” (Prakash, 1995: 214)

In 1897, Theodore Herzl promoted the First Zionist Congress in Basle, in which 200 Zionist delegates from all over the world agreed on the so-called “Basel Program” (Oke, 1982: 329). Within this protocol, they stated: “Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in Eretz-Israel secured under public law. The Congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

1. The promotion by appropriate means of the settlement in Eretz-Israel of Jewish farmers, artisans, and manufacturers.

2. The organization and uniting of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate institutions, both local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.

3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and national consciousness.

4. Preparatory steps toward obtaining the consent of governments, where necessary, in order to reach the goals of Zionism”21.

Basically, the Program advanced the idea of establishing a national home for all Jews in Palestine, which had to be secured by public law and reached through diplomatic means - all of that without consulting or even informing the Palestinian population. Thus, in such Program, the original and much more mystique version of Zionism appears modernized and shaped according to the contemporary nationalist spirit and to the point that, from now on, Jews nationalism has been labelled as “political Zionism” (Weinstock, 1973: 51). In addition, within this Congress, Zionists created the Zionist Organization and elected Herzl as its leader. In turn, he designed the creation of the Jewish Colonial Trust, a bank that served as Zionists’ main financial instrument for supporting Jewish colonization efforts (Oke, 1982: 329).

Nevertheless, the final decision on Palestine was in the hand of the Sultan Abdulhamid II, who ruled over such territory and the related population. Therefore, Herzl went to Istanbul and tried to convince the Sultan to sign a charter that enabled Jews’ colonization of Palestine in exchange for 20,000,000 pounds (Oke, 1982: 330). In fact, since in that period the Ottoman Empire was facing an economic crisis, Herzl thought it was an offer that the Sultan Abdulhamid II did not dare to refuse.

Actually, the Empire was facing a more pressing problem as European powers controlled the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. Once Herzl understood that, he came up with a plan to make the Sultan able to re-gain control over its own finances: while the Jewish syndicate would have bought up the debt on the stock exchange within three years, the Ottomans would have issued the Imperial Charter for the Colonization of Palestine and, on such basis, the new-founded Jewish-Ottoman Land Company (JOLC) would have set up the basis for Jewish settlement in Palestine (Oke, 1982: 330).

However, the situation was far more complex than that: in a moment in which the Empire was suffering from separatists claims from the Balkans and East Anatolia, Jewish colonization could have fostered another nationality problem within the Ottoman domain (Oke, 1982: 331). In addition, since Palestinian territory could not possibly have welcomed all the persecuted Jews around the world (10 million people), the Sultan rightfully thought that Zionist project entailed not only the establishment of a Jewish government in Palestine, but it was even aimed at Jewish territorial expansionism (Oke, 1982: 332). Moreover, even the transfer of Palestinians from the Holy Land was a concept intrinsic to this project: Herzl plotted to push Arabs out of Palestine by gradually occupying the land and then denying to people employment (Safty, 2009: 5).

Therefore, since Zionists failed in obtaining an agreement with the Ottoman Empire, Jews turned their attention towards Great Powers. First of all, in order to elude the Ottoman anti-Zionist regulations, that basically limited Jewish immigration in the Holy Land for religious purpose only and, anyway, without exceeding a three months’ permanence, Jews managed to receive protection from all the Great Powers through the system of capitulation, which not only secured protection, but it even granted to Jews special privileges and the possibility to come under their country’s jurisdiction. Moreover, in 1893, Great Powers obtained a concession that allowed to Jews legally resident in Palestine to buy land (Oke, 1982: 337).

A prominent role was played in this sense by United Kingdom, since Jewish pogroms in Russia provoked a massive outflow of Jews toward British coastline. For this reason, the Balfour Government examined the questions advanced by Herzl, trying to find a solution to end Jews immigration in UK. Several countries were proposed as new Jewish national home – such as Cyprus, the Sinai, Uganda - but all these alternatives were strongly rejected by Jewish socialist delegates from Russia, among them Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952), who insisted on Palestine (Safty, 2009: 6).

In fact, in the aftermaths of the failed Russian Revolution of 1905, a new wave of pogroms strengthened Jewish participation to Zionism as this ideology was able to unite both their commitment to socialism and their aspirations for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine (Weinstock, 1973: 51). Indeed, left-wing views about Palestinian colonization entailed the creation of collective agricultural communities, such as collectivist (moshavim) and communist farms (Kibbutzim\(^{22}\)), based on the ideals of both socialism and Zionism (Gelvin, 2009: 573).

The main left-wing Zionist ideologist was Ber Borokhov (1881-1917), who developed the theoretical framework of “Workers of Zion”, the main social-Zionist party in Eastern Europe and Palestine. He basically

\(^{22}\) Pl. of “Kibbutz”; hebrew word that literally means “gathering, clustering”.

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solved the contradiction between Zionism and socialism by stating that Zionism was the basic precondition for achieving the socialist revolution (Prakash, 1995: 215).

In Borokhov’s view, since Jewish people had an “abnormal” social structure which kept them at the margins of the non-Jews dominated economic life, they would naturally be compelled to migrate in Palestine in order to work inside the agricultural and industrial sectors thus, creating a working class able to bring about class struggle and, consequently, the development of a socialist society (Prakash, 1995: 215). Moreover, Borokhov justified the choice of Palestine by stating that Palestinians would never be able to form a single nation since they never organized themselves against external influence but they rather accepted and adapted to every cultural model imposed on them from abroad (Prakash, 1995: 216).

Consequently, the second wave of Jewish immigration started in 1904 but, in this case, it was a real colonization since, through the creation of the Jewish National Fund in 1901, the Zionist Organization was able to buy lands in the most fertile areas of the country, on whose territory they built new cities, like Tel Aviv (Mosé, 1992: 76). Even if Jews were formally restricted from purchasing land by Ottoman laws, they managed to buy territories through bribery perpetrated toward government officials, local Arabs – mainly absent landowners-, consular agents and by registering the land under fictitious names (Stein, 1978: 32).

Built on the land acquired through Jewish purchases, the so-called “labor-Zionist” camps set in motion policies in order to effectively achieve a complete control of the economic and political power of the sole Yishuv23, namely by creating an economic separateness from the native population through patterns of up-rootedness and dispossession at Palestinians’ expanses (Abed, 1998: 8). In fact, in such territories, Jews developed a new proletariat working class basically by prohibiting native population’s employment within Jewish farms or factories. Zionists thought to do so because they could not stand the competition arising from cheap local labour, since integrating the local working class would have meant to lower wages and this, in turn, would have discouraged immigration (Gelvin, 2009: 575).

This attitude was justified on the basis of the doctrine of “Hebrew labour” (Weinstock, 1973: 52), a theory developed by an early disciple of Borokhov, Yitzhaq Ben-Tzvi (1884-1963), who soon became the leader of the Zionist movement in Palestine. According to his view, Jews had to put aside class solidarity in order to develop their own employment in the framework of a capitalist economy. Only when capitalist development would have created the necessary conditions for securing Jewish full employment, Arab workers could have been integrated within the Yishuv economy (Prakash, 195: 219).

By 1914, the Jewish population in Palestine amounted to 85,000 people, 60,000 more units if compared to the 25,000 in 1882 and, after WWII, the number would rise to 464,000 (Weinstock, 1973: 55). Furthermore, even the total amount of land owned by Jews increased from 25,000 dunums24 in 1882 to 420,600 in 1914 (Weinstock, 1973: 56). Basically, on such territory, Jews were able to develop a “state within a state”, namely a nation that was totally independent from the Ottoman Empire and which even possessed an independent

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23 It literally means “settlement” and identifies the Jewish community in Palestine
24 The “dunum” is an Arab unit of measurement of the land adopted from the Ottoman period (1 dunum=0.247 acre)
national identity: in fact, Jews had their own semi-autarchic economy, their own self-government and a common language (Hebrew). Moreover, the Zionist community developed a set of independent institutions, such as the Jewish Agency, representing the Zionist Organization, and the National Community, representing local Jewish population, that together formed the Knesset\textsuperscript{25}, as well as an independent military force (Haganah), several political parties, labour unions and an independent educational system (Ben-Ze’ev, 2011: 17).

As a result, Palestine was gradually falling in the hand of well-equipped Zionists, while Palestinians were threatened with poverty and eviction. In fact, the development of the Zionist society proceeded at a different path if compared to the one of Palestinian people, who were not only segregated inside their own land, but they were even robbed of those rights and means by which they could have rightfully corrected the grievances resulting from Jewish usurpation (Abed, 1998: 9). These are the roots of Arab people’s resentment toward both Jews and mostly Christians feudal landowners, as the latter profited from high price land sales to Jews at the expanse of Arab tenants (Kayyali, 1978: 22).

Consequently, the anti-Zionist propaganda spread through Arab newspapers and thanks to representatives inside the re-born Ottoman Parliament. Moreover, by 1909, the Arab opposition took organizational form and it started to promote a strategy aimed at boycotting Jewish businesses through protests against land sellers (Pappe, 2006: 11) which manifested through occupation, violence and destruction of property (Gelvin, 200: 576). But it was not before 1914, that the press played a crucial role in mobilizing the public opinion against Zionists and in setting the basis for mass mobilization in the aftermaths of WWI (Kayyali, 1978: 39).

In fact, since the Ottoman Parliament remained insensitive to their anti-Zionist efforts, Palestinian joined secret nationalist organizations and, when King Hussein (1854-1931), the Sharif of the Mecca, started to organize protests against the Ottoman Empire, many Palestinians joined his cause (Kayyali, 1978: 44). Nevertheless, before the end of WWI, Arab resistance was too heterogeneous and organized to form a Palestinian nationalist movement, as the educated Palestinians identified themselves as Ottomans and the population was divided along religious lines -Christians and Muslims (Gelvin, 2009: 577-578)-, clans (hamula) as well as along geographical lines (Ben-Ze’ev, 2011: 17).

Conversely, the Zionist Organization was launching a huge Pro-Zionist campaign through media in order to secure international support to their cause, in particular by emphasizing Zionists’ strategic value within British Imperialism (Safty, 2009: 7). In fact, as long as Jewish immigration and settlements were favoured by UK, Britain would have secured the Suez Canal, since Jews would have served the Imperialist cause as well as constituting an effective guard for the protection of the canal. Nevertheless, in their public campaign, Zionists and Weizmann in particular, always denied having any type of aspirations over Palestine and they even dismissed the importance and the size of Arab presence in Palestine, as a mean to gain British support (Safty, 2009: 8-10).

\textsuperscript{25} Israeli Parliament
Actually, Britain was playing on two fronts, making contradictory promises to both Jews and Arabs during WWI, without even knowing if the British faction would have won the war.

First of all, Britain secured its dominion over Palestine in a series of secret agreements with the Allied forces, particularly in the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), by which the Allied Powers agreed on granting a provisional international administration to Palestine (Safty, 2009: 9). Then, on the Arab side, McMahon (1862-1949), the British High Commissioner in Egypt, promised to recognize Arab struggle for independence in exchange for Hussein’s declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire, resulting in the Anglo-Arab agreement of 1915 (Kayyali, 1978: 44).

While, on the other side, after several meetings, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour (1848-1930) promised to Jews that Palestine would become their national home in 1917 (Pappe, 2006: 13). In fact, within the Declaration, Balfour stated: “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 this 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.”

The motivations behind this declaration, apart from the strategic control of the Suez Canal, are several. First of all, British Prime Minister Lloyd George (1863-1945) wanted to repay Weizmann, the President of the Zionists Organization after Herzl death in 1904, for its war-time efforts in supporting UK. Secondly, Zionism was considered to have international importance, since it had attracted Jews out of communism and, finally, Balfour emanated this Declaration because of his personal interests toward Zionism as a moral, religious and philosophical issue (Safty, 2009: 14-16).

There was an underlying contradiction contained within the Declaration: basically, the realization of the Zionist project - the creation of a Jewish state - could be accomplished only if the conditionality clause, meaning the respect of the rights of the local non-Jewish community, was violated (Safty, 2009: 22).

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27 Weizmann had a method for extracting acetone from maize and acetone was used for producing artillery shells.
2.2 British Colonialism and Colonial Land Policies

As a result of the Balfour Declaration, the relations between Jews and Arabs exacerbated. In fact, during WWI, the Ottoman Empire landscape was shaken by several Arab protests in favour of nationalism and independence (Kayyali, 1978: 43). Furthermore, in 1917, British General Allenby (1861-1936) “liberated” Jerusalem from the Turkish rule and there he installed a military regime to administer the conquered territories (Gavish, 2005: 18). In fact, by conquering Palestine, British Prime Minister Lloyd George meant to modify the Sykes-Picot agreement in order to obtain the exclusive British control over Palestine (Cohen, 2017: 14). At the same time, Zionists took advantage from this context, as Weizmann advanced a massive plan that was meant to prepare the ground for a massive Jewish immigration in Palestine (Gavish, 2005: 23). Moreover, thanks to the collaboration with the Zionist Office in London, Weizmann was able to form a Zionist Commission for Palestine, with the aim of helping the military forces in all the matters dealing with Jewish establishment in the Holy Land (Gavish, 2005: 23). During the war, this Commission handled the more immediate necessities, such as land acquisition, settlement and development of natural resources. Since, within the provisional administration, some Ottoman rules were still preserved for practical reasons, such regulations prevented Zionists from acquiring land from 1918 to 1920. In such a delicate situation, Balfour intervened by assigning to Zionists the responsibility of conducting surveys that entailed the mapping and investigation of Palestinian lands for their classification (Gavish, 2005: 25-26). The Zionist Commission would remain in Palestine for three and a half years and it functioned mainly as an independent government, working in cooperation with the British (Segev, 2001: 141-142). Thus, within the British military administration (Occupied Enemy Territory Administration, OETA), under Clayton’s leadership, Palestine was reshaped: water supply was improved, the health system was able to end several epidemics, the city government was re-organized, tax-collection was refined, infrastructures were re-built and improved (Segev, 2001: 189-191).

Although Britain did not receive the official Mandate over Palestine until 1922, after the San Remo Conference (1920), the military administration was transformed into a civilian Mandatory Government with Herbert Samuel (1870-1963), a well-known Zionist, as the first British High Commissioner in Palestine (Kayyali, 1978: 78). In addition, the Balfour Declaration was replicated in the articles 6 and 11 of the Mandate, which entailed the formation of close settlements and the promotion of intensive cultivation by Jews (El-Eini, 2006: 260).

As a consequence, Jewish immigration within Palestine was regulated through a general Immigration Ordinance in 1920: entry was authorized for immigrants which could be maintained by the Zionists organization, persons that could prove to be self-supporting, people with religious occupations and family members of the Yishuv (Smith, 1933: 66).

Nevertheless, according to the Hague convention, which regulates civilian administrations, UK had to preserve the status quo as much as possible, meaning it had to apply the Ottoman law in force at the moment of the
conquest (Bunton, 1999: 31). Actually, Ottoman legislation was deliberately misunderstood, and it did not remain in force for long, since British administration continuously introduced amendments that could suit to British colonial priorities (Bunton, 2007: 38).

For instance, since Palestinian land laws were an “unintelligible compost” of Ottoman laws, provisional laws, judgements of different tribunals, administrative provisions having the force of laws, which were further complicated by the introduction of post-war Public Orders, Ordinances and Amending Ordinances, this confusion was exploited by Britain in order to reshape the legislation according to its colonial interests, meaning that British officials could basically determine what constituted “Ottoman law in force” in Palestine by choosing between different sources of law (Bunton, 2007: 39-40). As a result, the Ottoman legislation was even “anglicized”, meaning that, to the extent that new ordinances were promulged in English, they entailed the importation of principles from the English law (Bunton, 1999: 35).

In addition, since there were no court in operation left, British administration created new land courts in which British officials became completely responsible of laws governing property relations, as judicial power was granted to them (Bunton, 1999: 37). In this way, the line between judicial and administrative functions became so blurred that Britain was able to create a unique legal system by carefully selecting those Ottoman laws which had to be enforced (Bunton, 1999: 42).

Moreover, such land courts had to provide for the settlement of a title to land and the decision over disputes concerning ownership as well as classify the land according to the prior Ottoman categories. First of all, the concept of miri28 was translated in expansive terms as “Governmental land”, so “state property” (Bunton, 2007: 44). Secondly, military basis, roads, forestry and public open spaces within villages fell within the category of “state land required for public purpose” (Home, 2003: 296). Thirdly, regarding the uncultivable land, such as the Nagev desert and the desert at the east of Hebron, the British administration had the responsibility to decide about its cultivation (Home, 2003: 296-297). Therefore, private land (mulk) constituted only 7% of the territory located within Arab villages (Home, 2003: 296). Moreover, as public good increased, even the extent of British control increased, since the Mandate government had a higher degree of discretion in managing a more and more vast portion of land (Bunton, 2007: 45).

Thus, an important instrument used by British administration to enforce its control over Palestine consisted in a strategic use of colonial land policies. Since the majority of land owners did not registered their property, the Mandate power initiated the first cadastral survey of the land in 1921 (El-Eini, 2006: 255). Moreover, since, during the war, people were subjected to universal conscription, the Palestinian lands were uncultivated or even destructed by Turkish forces (Stein, 1987: 4). In order to reshape this situation, instead of advancing a comprehensive plan for a land reform, British civil administration preferred to confirm the validity of the

28 Within Ottoman legislation, this classification entailed a land to which the state detained ultimate ownership. Individuals could retain the right of possession and usufruct (tassaruf) and heritable use rights but, if not cultivated within three years, the land could be reverted to the state and then prepared to be cultivated by anyone who wanted to. Each user had to register his land but actually much of miri land was held with no/imperfect registration. It represented the majority of cultivable land (Home, 2003: 296).
Ottoman Land Code of 1858\textsuperscript{29}, which was anyway modified by extra-legal procedures of land transfer and methods of circumventions within land registration (Stein, 1987: 31).

The first act concerning land policies was the Land Transfer Ordinance of 1920, according to which individuals holding immovable properties had to obtain a written permission from the military administration in order to keep that property. Concessions could be refused if: the extent of the property was considered being excessive for one individual, so if the area exceeded 300 dunums in size (£1,000 in value); the individual buying the property was not resident in Palestine, so basically allowing the purchase only to Jews, since they were the sole financially viable segment of Palestinian residents; if the land had been sold within the year, in order to protect previous Zionists acquisitions; and if the new owner did not intend to cultivate his land at once (Stein, 1978: 44-48; Bisharat, 1994: 498).

Such act was meant to avoid the creation of large estates, land and price speculation as well as keeping small landowners and tenants on their land, in order to avoid the insurgence of a landless class that would have been dependent upon British finances (Stein, 1978: 46-52). We shall not forget that, despite it was formally prohibited, between 1919 and 1920 Zionists had entered into agreements with many fellaheen\textsuperscript{30} to acquire their land at a set price. Nonetheless, when the Land Register was opened once again, Jews exploited the economically disadvantaged position of Arab sellers for retreating their previous agreement and they informed their counterparts that they would pay only half of the price (Stein, 1978: 48).

As timid Arab landowners’ protests rose in 1921, High Commissioner Herbert Samuel responded by temporarily suspending Jewish immigration and by encouraging Arab participation within the Mandate. Nevertheless, when the Arab delegation had the opportunity to oppose to the administration’s decision which eliminated restrictions to land transfers in 1921 (Land Transfer Amendment Ordinance, LTAO), it was focused on other matters- such as Jewish immigration- and the provision passed unanimously within the Advisory Council (Stein, 1978: 50). Besides, both the Colonial Office official and members of the Palestine administration thought that, since Zionists had a troubled financial condition, the removal of such restrictions would not dramatically affect the future Palestinian landscape (Stein, 1978: 49).

On the contrary, such Amendment favoured speculation, as both Jews and Arab landlords were able to accumulate respectively land and capital, while any legal protections were denied to small landowners and tenant (Stein, 1978: 51).

In fact, the LTAO only required the tenant in occupation at the time of transfer to be entitled to a maintenance area. In order to circumvent such provisions and to sell the land without occupants to Jewish purchaser, Arab landlords offered compensation to tenants before the actual transfer and, since tenants were highly indebted, they found themselves in a position in which it was difficult to refuse an amount of money that sometimes was equivalent to their two years’ income (Bisharat, 1994: 499). As a consequence, throughout the Mandate period,

\textsuperscript{29} The Ottoman land code stated that, if a piece of land has not been cultivated for three year, it became state properties.

\textsuperscript{30} Farmer/agricultural labourers (sing. Fellah)
the state land was slowly alienated and sold to private Jewish owners for speculative purposes (Stein, 1978: 12).

With the First White Paper, published in 1922, Samuel reassured the Arab delegation that His Majesty’s Government did not contemplate to subordinate Palestinian population, language or culture (Safty, 2009: 95). On the other hand, such statement even reiterated British promise to Zionists by confirming the right of Jews to stay in Palestine but, at the same time, it highlighted that Jewish immigration would be regulated according to the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine (Cohen, 2017: 81).

In 1922, the League of the Nations approved British Mandate over Palestine, with the meaning of administering the territory on behalf of the native population and to ensure the development of self-governing institutions (El-Eini, 2006: 14). Thus, Palestine’s responsibility was transferred to the Colonial Office that shaped British colonial policy according to British interests, instead of administering Palestine as a “sacred trust of civilization” (Safty, 2009: 60). In addition, as noted before, the Mandate for Palestine even included the Balfour Declaration, and Zionists worked in cooperation with the British Administration in order to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine. As a result, preferential rights were granted to the *Yishuv*, as they were placed under the Jewish Agency authority (Safty, 2009: 61).

However, at that time, the general perception was that both Arab sellers and Jewish purchaser were increasing their profits thanks to rewards and benefits deriving from land transfer, therefore several devices were established in order to facilitate such seller-purchaser relationship, namely mechanisms which protected the identity of the seller as well as other methods aimed at circumventing the tenants’ legal rights (Stein, 1978: 71). This entire process was scrupulously designed to further facilitate the acquisition of land by the Jewish National Fund as well as to protect the reputation of the Arab seller and to make possible selling land at a higher price by taking advantage of the tenant’s disadvantageous position (Stein, 1978: 72).

Such legislation had the goal of fulfilling what was stated within the article 6 of the Mandate document, meaning to set the basis for the development of a Jewish national home in Palestine (Bunton, 2007: 44). In addition, within the seller-purchaser contract, Jews inserted specific clauses, such as the performance clause, that were used to fine the seller in the case in which the latter decided not to comply with the contact’s obligations (Stein, 1978: 76).

With the Protection of Cultivators Ordinance (POCO) in 1929, Arab owners could rightfully remove tenants from their occupation without giving them neither a “subsistence area” nor a monetary compensation (Stein, 1978: 53). Although such provisions was meant to be applied only to tenants which retained the land in occupation for at least two years, it was actually applied to all Arab cultivators with no exceptions, since the latter were forced to abandon all their claims over the land, eventually to the point that the POCOs was emended in 1934 (El-Eini, 2006: 256).

The Jewish National Fund was therefore able to take advantage from such land regime to the extent that, through the Palestine Land Development Company, it was able to purchase an amount total to 240,000 dunums of lands, specifically located within the Jezreel Valley (Stein, 1978: 56). Nevertheless, until 1929 disturbances,
Jewish never advanced in efforts aimed at designing a master development strategy for the establishment of a contiguous exclusive Jewish area within the Palestine’s borders.

Within the land regime, even the tribute system was changed and, as the burden of taxation became excessive, in 1930s, *fellaheen* tried to organize politically against the British rules, but this attempt failed mainly because they were not effectively supported by Palestinian political leadership, who was much more interested in preserving their accumulated power even under British administration (Stein, 1978: 25).

In fact, despite virtually the whole native population opposed to Zionism, while the young educated Palestinian middle class decided to organize the resistance and to develop a Pan-Arab ideology, elderly notables opted for acquiescence toward the British rule (Kayyali, 1978: 60-61). Indeed, while they formally adhered to the nationalist cause, Arab notables were also involved in land sales and they exploited the deriving accumulation capital as a mean for retaining their social and economic prominence (Stein, 1978: 69). Moreover, even British administration benefited from the import of Zionist-generated capital, since these resources allowed the construction of a harbour in Haifa as well as the Baghdad-Haifa railway and oil pipeline (Cohen, 2017: 81).

In 1929, tensions arose as a result of Jewish demonstrations along the Wailing Wall, sacred for both Jews and Muslims. Since this site has always been under Muslim administration, Jews challenged the status quo as a mean to demonstrate their growing influence in Palestine (Safty, 2009: 100). Clashes started when Jews tried to position screens to separate men from women during the prayer for the Yom Kippur day. According to the duty of maintaining the status quo, British military forcibly removed those screens (Kayyali, 1978: 139). As riots and protests were perpetrated for months and the number of deaths increased on both sides, His Majesty’s Government (HMG) appointed a Commission of Inquiry led by Sir Walter Shaw (1863-1937), with the aim of investigating the most immediate causes of such disturbances (Cohen, 2017: 84). From the inquiry emerged that riots began as external manifestation of Arab feeling of animosity and hostility against Jews, which in turn derived from the fear that Jewish immigration and acquisition of land in Palestine not only denied the basis of national self-determination, but it would even create an Arab landless class (Cohen, 2017: 86).

At this point, the British Labour Government responded by appointing another commission, this time led by sir John Hope-Simpson (1868-1961), in order to inquire over Zionists land settlement and immigration in Palestine. The Hope-Simpson Report concluded that Arab anger derived from the Zionists’ exclusivist policy of land acquisition, by which Jews had boycotted Arab labour and created unemployment (Safty, 2009: 103). In fact, Hope noted that the remained Arab land was insufficient even for the maintenance of the next generation of Palestinians and, therefore, he urged the need of an agrarian reform (Cohen, 2017: 87). As a consequence, he strongly advised to stop or, at least, to reduce Jewish agricultural immigration until the moment in which Palestinian economy was completely recovered (Safty, 2009: 104).

These findings became the basis for a new White Paper in 1930. In this document, Lord Passfield (1859-1947), the new British colonial secretary, stated that the Balfour Declaration had to be abrogated and Jewish land purchase had to be stopped, since none Arab possession could be sold without creating an Arab landless class.
of cultivators (Cohen, 2017: 85). In fact, in 1929, as Jewish settlements had expanded to the extent that they covered the majority of Palestinian cultivable land, the Paper claimed that “at the present time and with the present methods of Arab cultivation there remains no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of such undeveloped land as the various Jewish agencies hold in reserve”.

For what concerned Jewish immigration, the Paper ruled that it had to be stopped until the British Government did not undertake a massive agricultural reform in Palestine or, at least, it had to be restricted in accordance with Palestinian economic absorptive capacity (Smith, 1993: 84). In this way, the question of Jewish settlements had to be subjected to the insurance of Palestinian rights as well as the establishment of a self-government in Palestine (Safty, 2009: 103).

Quickly, Zionists advanced a huge campaign in the United States as well as in the United Kingdom to put pressure on the British government, so to make it abandon their new Palestinian policy. The political and economic weight of Zionism forced the Prime Minister MacDonald (1866-1937) to overrule the Passfield White Paper with the infamous “Black Letter” (1931), in which he stated that the 1930 White Paper should be interpreted in a way that did not precluded any type of immigration in Palestine nor any Jewish land purchases (Cohen, 2017: 100).

The decision to reverse the White Paper was due mainly to two factors. First of all, the 1930s economic crisis that further reduced British Treasury funds, which now could not finance anymore an agricultural reform in Palestine. In addition, the crisis furthered British dependence on the Zionist-generated capital in Palestine (Cohen, 2017: 102). Secondly, the Labour opposition was too weak to counterbalance the public storm that Zionists had created.

As Palestinian leadership had always had a cooperative relationship with the mandatory authorities, such bond was suddenly discredited by MacDonald capitulation to Zionists’ pressure. In fact, Arab masses now turned their attentions toward radical Palestinian movements, claiming to undertake a military action against British (Safty, 2007: 104-105). Consequently, as Arab community further splintered, the Jewish one further increased in its importance, since they succeeded in their effort of creating a national home in Palestine despite Chancellor, Hope-Simpson and Passfield’s intentions.

From the British point of view, the resettlement of landless Arabs was considered crucially important to restore political stability in Palestine therefore, the Development Department, under Lewis French, was established in order to advance programmes exclusively in the Arab sector (Gavish, 2005: 151). Lewis French had the task of both drawing up a scheme for the replacement of landless Arab farmers and of determining how much state lands could be made available for the settlement of Jews (Safty, 2007: 105). In his report, French concorded with the Hope-Simpson findings, meaning that there was no land available in Palestine, every

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dunum has been already subjected to property rights or tenancy. Therefore, Jews land purchases could continue only if the land could be expropriated in some way (Safty, 2017: 105).

Once again, Zionists influence and pressure made the new British coalition Government, installed in 1931, ignore such report. In addition, Weizmann even got to choose the new High Commissioner to Palestine, who had to replace the pro-Arab John Chancellor. So, thanks to the appointment of a pro-Zionists High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope (1874-1947), Zionists greatly improved their position in Palestine (Safty, 2007: 106). In fact, even due to a new spread of anti-Semitist sentiments in Europe, legal immigration toward Palestine, as well as illegal one, was greatly favoured and the Yishuv doubled from 200,000 to 400,000 people between 1931 and 1935 (Cohen, 2017: 102).

In the meantime, both Arab and Jewish leadership changed. On one side, the leadership of the Palestinian national movement was taken by the Mufti32 Hajj Amin al-Husseini (1895-1974), who challenged the old Arab Executive by calling for a religious-inspired solidarity of all Muslims. In his opinion, resistance had to be directed against both Zionist colonialism and British military occupation, since without the latter, Zionists would have never been able to reshape Palestine and oppress its population (Safty, 2009: 111).

On the other side, in 1933, the Labour wing of the Zionists Organization, led by David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), won the election and obtained the control of the Jewish Agency (Safty, 2007: 107). As Jewish immigration increased more and more, land acquisition accelerated as well as the creation of state-like institutions, over all the Haganah (the Zionist military organization).

Particularly related to the development of the Zionist army, it is important to underline that, when, in 1935, an illegal arms shipment destined for Tel Aviv was discovered, Arab leadership became increasingly convinced that the only way to stop both British occupation and Zionist colonialism was through armed resistance (Safty, 2007: 112). Therefore, various Palestinian movements converged under Mufti leadership and they tuned to direct action, initially by non-violent campaigns and then by proper armed resistance in the period between 1936-1939. Such actions can be explained in the light of the feeling, common among Arab people, that if no limitations on Jewish immigration and land purchases were imposed, they would soon have become a minority in their own country (Kayyali, 1978: 187).

In 1936, the Mufti called for a general strike and a nationwide non-payment of taxes, in accordance with the principle “no taxation without representation”. Nonetheless, Arab civil disobedience was exploited by Zionists to put pressure on HMG to allow Jewish purchasing of the land near their existing settlements, for defensive purposes (Stein, 1978: 175).

As the relation between Arabs and the British administration became more and more precarious and as Britain was not able to satisfy Palestinians’ right to self-determination, Zionists strengthened their ties with the British Government. In fact, since Islam was considered being the main danger and the cause of 1936 Arab Revolts, the Mandatory power furthered Jewish immigration within Palestine artificially-designed borders (Kayyali, 1978: 66). In addition, as Arab rebellion intensified, the British Administration authorized the development of

32 A “Mufti” is an expert jurist who issues opinions about the interpretation of the Islamic laws
a Jewish special police force and, at the same time, it increased its military forces in Palestine with the aim of crushing the Arab general strike, which eventually ended in 1936 (Safty, 2007:117).

Beyond to these measures, HMG called for another Royal Commission of Inquiry, which issued its report in 1937. For the first time, the Peel Report recognized the impossibility to conciliate British promises to Jews and to Arabs, since the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine was rightfully seen as a serious obstacle to Palestinian national independence (Safty, 2007:118).

More importantly, this Report advanced a “Partition Plan” for Palestine. Accordingly, Palestinian territory should have been divided into three parts: an Arab state including those Palestinian territory with an Arab majority population; a Jewish state comprising the predominantly Jewish Palestinian territories; and another part which included religious sites and that had to remain under British Mandate (Kayyali, 1978: 207). It is important to highlight that despite, at that time, Jewish hold only 5.6% of the Palestinian territory, the Partition Plan proposed to give to Zionists 40% of Palestine, a portion which coincided with the most fertile and developed lands (Safty, 2007: 119). Basically, this scheme entailed far more than the establishment of a Jewish national home because it not only extended in size the area of Zionists colonization, but even the creation of a Jewish state. Furthermore, since there were 225,00 Arabs inside the area allocated under the dominion of the Jewish state, Peel proposed a plan for the “transfer” of the native population, perhaps in Transjordan (Safty, 2007: 119).

However, the conclusion laid down by the Peel Commission did not please neither Arabs nor Zionists. While Arabs’ reasons to announce a second stage of revolt are quite obvious, on the Zionist side, the Partition Plan did not go far enough, since they wanted the whole Palestine’s territory (Safty, 2007: 120). In fact, in this period, Ben-Gurion began to develop the idea of conquering by force the territory that he though should have been placed under the authority of the Jewish state. Nevertheless, Zionists had to wait for the opportune historical moment, the one which would have made Jewish more able to deal with the presence of the native population majority in Palestine (Pappe, 2006: 24).

On the other side, Arab undertook a second stage of revolt which consisted mainly in establishing an armed resistance that succeeded in bringing Galilee, Hebron, Beersheba and Gaza under Palestinian control in 1938 (Safty, 2007: 125). In order to put an end to what would be known as “Great Arab Revolt”, the British army launched a violent armed campaign that entailed collective punishments, mass arrest, deportation (Gelvin, 2009: 582).

Meanwhile, the European scenario was rapidly overturned by the rise of Hitler and its Nazi and anti-Semitic propaganda, carried out through the persecution of Jewish, and the imminence of the war put pressure on the British Government to issue the last White Paper on Palestine in 1939. This Paper basically entailed to limit Jewish immigration (only further 75,000 Jews were admitted entering into Palestine within five years, beyond this term, no more Jewish immigration would have been allowed), to further control over land acquisition and it denied that the creation of a Jewish State was ever part of British policy. Rather, HMG favourably saw the establishment of an independent Palestinian state (Gelvin, 2009: 583).
Such U-turn in British colonial policy from a pro-Zionist to a pro-Arab one has to be contextualized within the WWII scenario: since, in 1939, war was seen as inevitable and UK needed Arab support in order to fight Germany, Arab states would have never helped Britain if the Colonial Administration continued to foster Arab alienation within Palestine (Safty, 2007: 129).

On the other side, the balance of power in Palestine had slowly shifted toward Zionists even thanks to the British, which had both put an end to the Arab Revolt by disarming the rebels and deporting its leaders and which had even supported the arming of the Jewish settlement police, mainly formed by Haganah volunteers trained by the British (Safty, 2007: 131). As a consequence, Zionists had all the right prerequisites to bring the whole Palestine under their control and, moreover, they had the support of U.S.

In fact, in 1941 Ben-Gurion, an activist Labour militant who emerged as a leader of the Zionists movement, formed the American Palestine Committee with the purpose of spreading an intensive pro-Zionist campaign able to win the support of American public opinion (Safty, 2009: 140). Furthermore, in the Zionists Conference in New York in 1942, Ben-Gurion advanced a maximalist program according to which he claimed the rejection of the White Paper and the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in the whole Palestine (Safty, 2007: 135).

As Britain collected more and more victories during WWII, the threat of a German invasion of the Middle East no longer existed so that UK could now turn her attention on the post-war settlement and away from the 1939 White Paper, that was completely rejected in 1943.

Conversely, Arab states were moving closer to support the latest White Paper, as they stated in the Resolution on Palestine drew up during the first Covenant of the Arab League between Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan (Safty, 2007: 137). Nevertheless, it was too late for going back.

The entrance of United States in the war, the American leisure to UK, and the Nazi massacres of Jews in Europe had completely turned the political scenario in Zionists’ favour, which anyway had already created the embryo of the future Jewish state throughout the whole Mandate period and even before. In fact, in Palestine, the Jewish Agency created a “state within a state”, with institutions, educational and social services, intelligence, government and army of its own, a state that was oriented toward self-sufficiency and that was far more developed compared to the still rural Palestinian society.
2.3 1948: the creation of Israel

During the WWII, Palestine had a disastrous economic situation, with high levels of unemployment, slowed exports and halted construction works. The situation changed when Palestine was transformed by the British into a huge war-supply depot for UK, favouring the creation of new factories and the take-off of Palestinian economy (Segev, 2001: 963). Nevertheless, within the WWII context, Britain emerged as weak and ruined and, consequently, British imperialism was about to come to an end. In fact, as United States were becoming more and more powerful, Zionists understood that the world balance of power would shift away from Europe and they aligned with the American power in order to put pressure on UK to reject the 1939 White Paper as well as to give up its control over Palestine in favour of the Jewish minority (Safty, 2007: 138).

In fact, from 1940s, UK had to face two distinct but overlapping conflicts in Palestine: on one hand, the Jewish anti-British rebellion while, on the other hand, a horizontal conflict between Jews and Arabs (Ze’ev, 2011: 170). All this situation was further complicated by a massive illegal immigration of Jews into Palestine (nearly 80,000 people), carried out by the Jewish Committee on Illegal Immigration, established in 1937 (Safty, 2009: 142).

As the British forces obtained a victory at El-Alamein in 1943 and the quota period for Jewish immigration would have come to an end one year later, the British War Cabinet appointed a Ministerial Committee on Palestine with the aim of setting a long-term policy for the Mandated territory to be carried out after the war. In particular, starting from the findings of the Peel Commission, the newly appointed Committee had to draw up a report for the partition of Palestine based upon the territorial distribution of the existing Arab and Jewish settlements (El-Eini, 2006: 345-346).

Specifically, in the Final Report, the partition considered three basic needs. First, the creation of an autonomous Jerusalem state as a religious metropolis and an Arab state which had to be prevented from Jewish expansionism. Secondly, the creation of a Jewish state that comprehended Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jaffa and in general the best Palestinian lands. Such state was 76,000 dunums larger than the one drafted in the Peel Report and had an important industrial and economic capacity. Moreover, the Report entailed that Arabs should be replaced through voluntary transfers in the eastern Jordan Valley and in the southern Syria, with assistance given not by direct grants but through development projects. Finally, British strategic interests in the region had to be maintained (El-Eini, 2006: 347-354).

On the American side, instead, President Roosevelt saw the Jewish question as an international one, since the European Jewish problem became evident, he claimed the need to organize an international effort to solve the European refugee problem through Jews’ resettlement among U.S., UK, Canada, Australia and Latin America (Safty, 2009: 148). Such strategy was not welcomed by Zionists, since it would have reduced the impact of the Jewish propaganda machine, which mainly relied upon the issue of European Jews’ homelessness and on the fact that Jews had to be necessarily relocated in Palestine.
When Roosevelt died in 1945, his successor, Harry Truman, proved to be more sensitive to the Zionists’ cause and urged UK to allow 100,000 Jews into Palestine at once (Safty, 2009: 151). Neither this plan satisfied Jews, who feared that this strategy would have set back their demand for the implementation of a Jewish state in Palestine. Consequently, Zionists opposed to the US attempts to admit European refugees into the American soil and they forcibly intensified Jewish illegal immigration within the Palestinian borders, even though many would have preferred to emigrate toward America (Safty, 2009: 151). Nevertheless, this strategy proved to be successful for the Zionists propaganda, as it crystallized a biased view of the Palestinian conflict, that was perceived mainly as a heroic and patriotic Jewish struggle against British, while Arab presence was completely obliterated from the narrative of this conflict, in its first stages.

Moreover, between 1944-1946, Zionists’ paramilitary underground organizations (Irgun$^{33}$ and Stern Gang$^{34}$, headed respectively by Menachem Begin and Itzhak Shamir) carried out nearly forty attacks and this number doubled in the last two years of the British Mandate (Ben-Ze’ev, 2011: 171). In fact, the anti-British campaign led by Zionists was based upon a strategy of terror, as delineated by Jabotinsky$^{35}$, that reached its climax when the Stern Gang murdered the British Minister of State in Cairo, Lord Moyne, in 1944 (Safty, 2009: 139). Unlike the Great Arab Revolt, this time the British were unwilling to crush Zionist campaign, but rather UK officials acquiesced to the terror tactics to hasten the departure of British troops from the area (Stafy, 2009:139). Nevertheless, through the Haganah, the Jewish Agency mobilized to track down the dissident forces to the extent that even Churchill, a strong Zionist supporter, halted all further considerations about increasing Jewish sovereignty in Palestine after Zionist terror attacks. Consequently, this massive terror action, that would be known as the saison$^{36}$, was halted in 1945, as it did not produce any political reward for the Jewish community in Palestine (Cohen, 2017: 235).

Therefore, Ben-Gurion changed strategy as he aligned with Jewish dissident forces in order to demonstrate Jewish superiority against the British. The meri ivri (Hebrew revolt) started in 1945 with a planned sabotage on the British railway system, and then it continued in 1946 with a second large-scale action, the “night of the bridges”, in which Zionists destroyed all the land bridges connecting Palestine with its neighbour countries (Cohen, 2006: 236).

Furthermore, in 1946, the Irgun blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing indistinctively British, Arabs and Jews. Nonetheless, as it took the form of a simple disarmament campaign against Jews, British retaliation was mildly if compared to the treatment they have reserved to Palestinians in response to the Arab Revolt (Pappe, 2006: 25).

So, the Zionists leadership understood that the meri ivri drifted out of control and it did produce only further counter-blows which would have only undermined Zionists’ capacity to withstand the assault that Arabs would

$^{33}$ Even known as “Etzel”, the Irgun splitted from the Haganah in 1931 and it was led by Begin in the 1940s

$^{34}$ Also known as LEHI, the Stern Gang splitted from the Irgun in 1940

$^{35}$ He was a Russian Revisionist Zionists leader.

$^{36}$ Litterally, it means “the hunting season”. 
have launched. As a consequence, Ben-Gurion suggested to take the diplomatic path and to be open to political compromises, retreating from the maximalist program of Baltimore.

In 1945, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was established with the task of examining the issue of the settlement of Jewish Displaced Persons in Palestine. In its report, the Committee recommended that 100,000 Jews should be authorized to enter in Palestine and that the territory should not become neither a Jewish nor an Arab state, but it would remain under the Mandate until a state system could have been set up (El-Eini, 2006: 361). Nonetheless, in the London Conference in October 1946, Arabs rejected the plan because they feared that such strategy would lead to a partition.

Meanwhile, as a result of the new international scenario, UK had lost its primary role in favour of two new Superpowers – namely, US and USSR – and its economy was crippling because of the pound devaluation. For these reasons, it became inconvenient for the British to hold a remote and complicated place like Palestine, but rather British efforts should have been aimed at recovering their domestic economy by promoting a welfare state.

In addition, the Jewish Agency succeeded in putting pressure to the Truman Administration for accepting a partition plan in Palestine as, on the eve of the mid-term elections in 1946, President Truman enounced the famous Yom Kippur speech (Cohen, 2017: 239).

In this statement, Truman both disavowed the British plan for a cantonal partition of Palestine as well as the Zionists’ alternative, but he even pledged its support to find a solution to the Palestinian question which should be the result of a compromise between the two visions. Despite the “moderation” of Truman’s words, such speech fostered the belief according to which not only he had declared to be favourable to the partition (Cohen, 2017: 239), but he had even regarded with favour Zionists’ maximalist demands (Safty, 2009: 159).

Meanwhile, as Ben-Gurion - entrusted with the defence portfolio (Bitachon\(^37\)) in 1946- understood that UK was about to leave Palestine, he started to develop a new strategy which would have been implemented as soon as the British were gone (Pappe, 2006: 28).

Basically, the aim of this new approach- known as “Plan C”- was to get Jewish military forces ready for carrying out an offensive campaign, that would lead to a unilateral declaration of independence at the expanse of Palestinian native population. In particular, such actions entailed killing Palestinians’ political leadership, inciters and officers, damaging Palestinian sources of livelihoods and attacking Palestinian villages (Pappe, 2006: 28). As a consequence, in February 1947, the newly elected Labour Government announced the British withdrawal from Palestine and submitted the question to the newly born United Nations’ organization\(^38\).

The Palestinian question passed to the Special Committee for Palestine (UNSCOP), made up of eleven members which had no prior knowledge of the situation in Palestine. However, after briefly visiting Palestine, they came up with two reports (Pappe, 2006: 122). The majority one entailed the partition of Palestine into a

\(^{37}\) In Hebrew, it means “security” and here it is referred to the Jewish struggle to create their own state no matter what, since this term has been used in order to justify arms puchases, preparations for the future state and, most of sl, harms against the Palestinian native population.

\(^{38}\) The League of the Nations was dissolved as soon as the WWII started, since the organization failed in its primary scope, meaning to keep peace at international level.
Jewish and an Arab state, with the establishment of an Economic Union and with Jerusalem enjoying an international status, while the minority report stood for the creation of a unitary bi-national state (Safty, 2009: 162).

As the partition plan resulted from the decision of an impartial international body, it could not be contested by Arabs, which have been always opposed to partition. Theoretically, the partition plan had some limitations contained within the UN Charter, such as the respect of people’s right to self-determination (Art.1 of the Charter) and the commitment by which the UN had to promote the well-being of the inhabitants of those territories which could not yet be independent (Art. 73). Actually, all such restraints were completely ignored. Initially, as civil war erupted in Palestine as soon as this resolution became known, the American UN-delegate proposed to suspend the partition and to place Palestine under UN trusteeship (Cohen, 2006: 246). But, in the end, the Partition Plan was accepted, mostly due to the increasing US economic pression on the opponent states39. In fact, Truman desperately needed Jewish votes in order to succeed in the national election and Palestine was crucial to achieve this aim. In addition, the newly born Arab League did not participated in the UNISCOP deliberations because they thought that, in this way, they would boycott such negotiations therefore, Zionists were able to exploit such vacuum to install a bilateral dialogue with the UN (Pappe, 2006: 32).

As a result, adopted by the General Assembly with a two-third majority on 29 November 1947, the resolution 181 gave to Jewish a juridical basis for the creation of Israel (Safty, 2009: 167). In fact, according to such resolution, 56% of Palestinian territory, which included the Negev desert and the majority of cultivable land, was to be given to the Jews (which owned only 5% of Palestinian land in 1947), while the Gaza strip and the western area of Jordan (West-Bank) would have constituted the land of the Arab state, with Jerusalem placed under UN control40. In addition, according to the Partition Plan, the Jewish state would have been inhabited by 498,000 Jews and 497,000 Arab Palestinians, thus in contrast with the Zionists’ dream of an only-Jewish state (Saleh, 2003: 221).

39 Haiti, Liberia, the Philippines, China, Ethiopia and Greece
The Partition not only completely ignored the will of Palestinian native population, but it even abnegated both UN responsibility and the Western professed principle of promoting people’s right to self-determination. Earlier, the League of the Nations’ “sacred trust of civilization” had favoured the development of an alien European society within Arab territories, in this way not only depriving Palestinian society of its own self-development, but even leaving the native population at a Jewish *mercé*.

Consequently, the Partition Plan was not accepted by Arabs while Jewish, instead, quickly implemented the infamous “Plan D”, that would be explained in detail in the next chapter. For our purpose now, it would be enough to say that the aim of this new strategy was basically to gain control of the area entrusted to the Jews by the UN and to keep Jewish settlements within and outside this area safe. In fact, as civil was intensified, the idea that the plan could be implemented only by using force became widely accepted even among Truman Administration (Safty, 2009: 169).

### 2.4. The Arab-Israeli wars

Since the Jewish minority obtained more than half of the territory, despite they constituted only one third of the total population of Palestine, the Partition Plan was a huge achievement for Zionists (Safty, 2009: 175). In addition, in Ben-Gurion’s view, the partition was the starting point for a wider purpose of creating a Jewish state in the whole Palestine, which should have included Transjordan, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. In fact, as soon as the Partition Plan was made public, Ben-Gurion rejected the borders of the new division, as Arabs did, and he stated that the borders would rather be settled by force (Pappe, 2006: 36-37). Moreover, playing in favour of the Jewish community in Palestine, there was the perceived interconnection between the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel (Pappe, 2006: 123). On the other side, Palestinian obviously refused to believe that the UN was giving not only the majority, but even the most fertile areas of their land to the colonizer since, according to the same UN Charter, it was clearly illegal and immoral. Such refusal would be exploited by Zionists’ leadership for justifying the implementation of a systematic expulsion of Arabs from the portion of territories which had been given to the Jews (Pappe, 2006: 124-130).

The ethnic cleansing carried out by Jewish started in December 1947 with sporadic raids against Palestinian villages, which caused the exodus of 75,000 people -mainly part of the social and economic Palestinian elite- and then this strategy was pursued with the adoption of the well-known “Plan D” in March 1947 (Pappe, 2006: 40).
Within the frame of such plan, one of the most cited examples of violence is the well-publicized massacre of 200 Arab civilians in the village of Deir Yasin, in April 1948 (Cohen, 2017: 249), which still remains in the collective memory of Palestinian people. Situated outside the portion of land assigned to Jews by the UN, this village was known for being peaceful as its inhabitants not only refused to carry out violence against the Jewish line, but they even cooperated with the Jewish Agency, as declared by the Israeli historian Jon Kimche (Safty, 2009: 188). Nonetheless, Zionists forces slaughtered 250 people, including children, while they were asleep\textsuperscript{41}.

The reason why Deir Yasin episode was so important in the Zionists’ perspective is mainly due to Jewish aim to create a contiguous portion of land, able to connect even the most isolated Jewish settlement within each other and that should have included “buffer zones” to further protect and separate the Yishuv from Palestinian habitations (Pappe, 2006: 42). On the other side, planning to leave Palestine in May 1948, British officers did not react to this violence, but rather they preferred to watch the two communities harming one another (Safty, 2009: 177).

Consequently, Jewish victories further accelerated both the exile of Palestinians from their own land - a phenomenon that is known as “Nakbah” – as well as the construction of new institutions for the administration of the new Jewish state. In fact, in April 1948, the Zionist General Council had already appointed the Israeli Provisional Government and Council of State and it even had deepened the Haganah military campaign (Cohen, 2017: 250).

Basically, such developments would have permitted the Jewish to present to the UN a \textit{fait accompli}. In fact, even if the outbursts of civil war in Palestine made Washington and the UN considering new strategies to solve this conflict, such as the establishment of a five years-long international trusteeship, these approaches were all impracticable, since they all implied the destruction of an already full-developed Jewish state, which now covered 77% of the Palestinian territory (Saleh, 2003: 279).

Consequently, as soon as the British Mandate came to an end, on 14 May 1948, the Jewish Agency declared the establishment of “Israel”, the new Jewish state recognized both \textit{de iure} and \textit{de facto} by US and USSR (Pappe, 2006: 40; Pappe, 2006: 131), whose territory extended well beyond the borders imposed by the UN Partition (Safty, 2009:203).

Only a day after such proclamation, the Arab League sponsored the creation of an Arab force constituted by people coming from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, united with Palestinian fighters (\textit{fida’iyyun}) within the Arab Salvation Army and the Arab Legion, that, along with Muslim Brotherhood’s volunteers, entered in the former Arab land without having neither any military experience nor skills (Pappe, 2006: 127-131).

\textsuperscript{41} A practice that will return among other Israeli practices against Palestinians.
In fact, such army was very poor if compared to the well-trained and well-equipped\textsuperscript{42} united-Israeli military army, strengthened by the special commando units, the Palmach. In fact, since such commando had exhausted its duty to assist the British army in the remote case in which Nazis would have reached Palestine, its efforts could now be directed towards Palestinian ethnic cleansing and the construction of new Jewish settlements (Pappe, 2006: 45). In addition, the Haganah had even an auxiliary unit, the Field Guard, and an intelligence unit, which had already gathered a great number of information about Palestinian villages and people thanks to the establishment of a strong network of spies and collaborators (Pappe, 2006: 46).

On 20 March 1948, after having declared a ceasefire from June to July, the UN reconsidered its policy in Palestine and the General Assembly called for another immediate ceasefire that was another time ignored by Jewish. In addition, the UN appointed the President of the Red Cross in Sweden, Count Folk Benadotte (1895-1948), as mediator for Palestine (Safty, 2009: 207). He went to Palestine and, after visiting the refugee camps, Benadotte wrote in its report: "I am deeply concerned with the plight of some three hundred thousand Arab refugees scattered in Arab countries and Arab-controlled areas of Palestine. Their suffering will be intensified when winter comes. Most of them left practically all of their possessions behind and have no means at their disposal(...) It would be an offence against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes while Jewish immigrants flow into Palestine, and, indeed, at least offer the threat of permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who have been rooted in the land for centuries."\textsuperscript{43}

In conclusion, the mediator for Palestine recommended that, since Jewish had already occupied Western Galilee while Egyptians had already seized the Negev Desert, such areas should remain under the control of the actual occupying forces and he rather suggested to allow to Palestinian refugees to return to their homes (Safty. 2009: 208).

Therefore, the Truman Administration supported such proposal by sponsoring the UNRWA (UN Relief and Working Agency), formed by those American entrepreneurs who wished to implement a sort of Marshall Plan for the Middle East in order to promote better living conditions and to defend refugees’ rights (Pappe, 2006:142). Nevertheless, such Agency proved unable to fulfil its goal since it only moved refugees into temporary camps in the prospect of their repatriation, according to the UN Resolution 194 issued in December 1948 (Saleh, 2003: 282). In fact, such document imposed the implementation of the Palestinian refugees’ right to return to their homes and it stated that compensation for property losses should be issued to those people who did not wish to return. Moreover, the Resolution 194 established the UN Conciliation Commission (PCC, Palestine Conciliation Commission) with the responsibility to solve the conflict in Palestine through diplomatic means (Saleh, 2003: 282)

\textsuperscript{42} From June 1948, Zionists were able to purchase arms from the Eastern bloc – in particular from Czechoslovakia and USSR-while, obeying UN’s dispositions, UK imposed an embargo on Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, whose armies employed British made ammunition (Pappe, 2006: 131)

Nevertheless, the Bernadotte plan was completely in contrast with the de-Arabization that Jewish were carrying out from a month now and the report he wrote was affecting badly Zionist propaganda in the West. Therefore, in September 1948, Bernadotte was murdered by the Stern Gang and, moreover, the Zionist army violated the truce by advancing a major offensive attack against the Arab forces, the “Operation Ten Plagues”, which aimed both at securing the Galilee and at conquering the Negev (Safty, 2009: 209-210) as well as prohibiting refugees’ repatriation (Pappe, 2006: 145).

The Arab League understood its army was facing a certain defeat and it showed its members’ willing to find a compromise with Israel and to deal with the Palestinian refugee problem within the PCC framework. It was only a year after the war started, in May 1949, that, under American pressures and in exchange for Israeli entrance within the UN (Saleh, 2003: 283), Ben-Gurion agreed to sign the Treaty of Lausanne, basically accepting Israeli commitment to comply with the UN RES. 194 (Pappe, 2006: 143) . However, as soon as Israel joined the UN and therefore it was legally recognized as a state by the international community, Israeli leadership reneged the Treaty and continued with its expansionist policy (Safty, 2009: 232).

After such failure and since basically Jewish had shown their preponderance in the war-field, Israelis stood in a superiority position, thanks to which everything they would have advanced in form of a peace proposal should be accepted (Pappe, 2006: 238). But rather than proposing a strategy for a durable peace, Israel only signed an armistice with Jordan in Rhodes in March 1949. According to this agreement, the involved parties committed their respective armies not to surpass the so-called “Demarcation Lines” or “Green Lines”, a border which could be modified only through a similar agreement between the parties.

Nevertheless, after King Abdullah was assassinated in 1951, the guerrilla continued along the borders between the Israeli Forces, now united within the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces), and the Palestinian nationalists, mainly politicized refugees, which regarded the Muslim Brotherhood as a model to follow and which carried out several incursions within the Jewish territory (Pappe, 2006: 147-148). Furthermore, among such nationalists, Yasser Arafat (1929-2004) became the leader of a new born Palestinian organization, “Fatah” which recruited a large number of young Palestinians, thanks to its strategy of spreading political activism and even thanks to a general rise in the education levels among Palestinians, who exploited the educational opportunities their displacement could offer them (Pappe, 2006: 150).

This new “national” awareness led to the establishment of a new young educated and urbanized class among Palestinians which, even if in different locations, all agreed on setting up two main goals, namely the creation of a Palestinian state and the return of 2 million Palestinian refugees to their motherland (Pappe, 2006: 150-151). Furthermore, the armed struggle was seen as the only way to recapture Palestine and to fight Zionism, which has been described in the article 19 of the PLO Charter as a “colonialist movement in its inception, aggressive and expansionist in its goals, racist and segregationist in its configurations and fascist in its means

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44 Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement, 3 April 1949, http://www.mfa.gov.il,
45 Literally “victory”.
46 Palestinian Liberation Organization that will arise from Fatah’s institutionalization in 1964.
and aims. Israel in its capacity as the spearhead of this destructive movement and the pillar for colonialism is a permanent source of tension and turmoil in the Middle East in particular and to the international community in general. Because of this the People of Palestine are worthy of the support and sustenance of the community of nations.\footnote{Text taken from Jewish Virtual Library (1998), Palestine Liberation Organization: The Original Palestine National Charter(1964), http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-original-palestine-national-charter-1964}

On the other side, Zionists had increased their population thanks to the Law of Return of 1950, according to which, regardless of his nationality\footnote{In fact, this law was mostly directed toward Arab Jewish which were being discriminated at home.}, each Jew has the right to return in their natural motherland and to obtain the Israeli citizenship\footnote{Knesset (1950), Law of Return 5710-1950, http://www.mfa.gov.il, http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfa-archive/1950-1959/pages/law%20of%20return%205710-1950.aspx} and, furthermore, the martial law was imposed within the entire Jewish territory. Within only four years, 700,000 new Jewish immigrants settled within the Israeli land (Gelvin, 2009: 755).

The subsequent Israeli-Palestinian war’s framework was offered by an international crisis which dominated the bipolar tensions in 1956, meaning the Suez Canal Crisis. Such episode is considered within the literature as the main British foreign policy fiasco (Verbeek, 2016: 2). Moreover, since after the war Israel was able to conquer a piece of land from each Arab state, this war had a crucial importance in the Arab-Israeli framework because now it had acquired inter-state characteristics (Safty, 2009: 238).

The UK military intervention failed in achieving its two major immediate objectives, namely the denationalization of the canal and the downfall of the General Nasser, who ruled Egypt from 1952. In addition, this crisis ended the political career of Sir Anthony Eden (1897-1977), the leader of the Conservative party and Prime Minister of Great Britain. On the other hand, all these aftermaths contributed to fuel the myth of Nasser, the father of Pan-Arabism, through Middle East. In fact, it was the first time in the history that an Arab leader forced the Western armies to retire.

In 1956, when U.S. denied to finance the construction of the Egyptian Aswan dam\footnote{Mainly because Egypt did not signed the 1955 Baghdad Pact, stipulated between Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Jordan and UK against the spread of communist influence in the Middle East.} (Richardson, 1991: 371), General Gamal Abd El-Nasser (1918-1970) made a public speech in Alexandria claiming that he had finally nationalized the Suez Canal Company, which had the purpose of organizing the traffics through the maritime passage and of collecting the shipping fees. Such canal was built between 1859 and 1869, thanks to British and French founds, with the meaning to cut a vast number of miles off a sea journey from Europe to Asia.

Therefore, British forces remained at controlling the Canal for a century in order to protect UK interests in the area, thus arising discontent within the Egyptian government and people, that could not even go near the Canal. In this context, the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company was welcomed by the entire Egyptian population, since they felt like they were finally released from the imperialistic power which had always exploited their native land.

Instead, for Britain, the nationalization was a \textit{casus belli} (Richardson, 1991: 371). In fact, not only the Suez Canal was crucial for British trades with India and for the passage of British oil supply – nearly 20.5 million
tons of oil on annual basis passed through the canal to UK (Richardson, 1991: 372) but, moreover, in that period, the Middle East was a key area within the Cold War context, since USSR tried and succeeded in bringing these countries under the socialist influence, as in the case of Egypt.

In fact, within Egypt, Soviet influence was even more obvious considering that Nasser had made an alliance with Czechoslovakia in exchange for obtaining weapons’ supplies at a half price in 1955 (Kimmerling, 2003: 551; Cohen, 2017: 287). In addition, the Soviets had offered their economic aid for the construction of the Aswan Dam -which would be completed in 1970 (Westad, 2017: 381), and USSR even trained Egyptian forces. On the other hand, US had previously sponsored an anti-Soviet and mutually-defence pact (the Baghdad Pact in 1955) among Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and UK (Cohen, 2017: 285). Therefore, the question of Suez has to be contextualized in the US-USSR scenario in order to be fully understood.

There are further motivations behind Britain’s intervention in Egypt and the most pressing one is the following. In this world scenario, UK had the necessity to be recognized as the main European superpower, a stable and strong ally for U.S. and for British people. In fact, when Nasser started to challenge Great Britain with his nationalistic rhetoric, raising the Arab world against the colonial oppressor and proclaiming to follow a socialist approach in economy and politics, it seemed like a direct threat not only to Britain, but to the whole Western-bloc.

As the Senior Minister MacMillan made clear, a British failure to end the Egyptian nationalization of the canal would reduce the international status of UK to that of Denmark (Veerbek, 2016: 2). So, the British Prime Minister was ready to go to war to protect UK international reputation in such a delicate moment. Consequently, UK military action had two objectives: the official one was to re-gain the control of the Canal for trade’s reasons, the un-official aim was instead to provoke the downfall of Nasser’s regime and its interference with British policy in the Middle East.

Moreover, Israel was a natural ally to the Anglo-French cause. In fact, after the Czech-Egyptian agreement, Israel could not sit and wait for an attack by the Egyptian forces, strengthened thanks to their modern arms and training, but rather Zionists were more likely to opt for starting a preventive war against Nasser (Cohen, 2017: 287). Therefore, the three Powers naturally converged within a single alliance in order to identify an effective strategy that could have justified military intervention in the light of the new code of behaviour settled by the UN, in this way hoping to have American aids secured, since the latter were vital to the final outcome of the war.

Therefore, Great Britain’s leaders accepted the so-called Challe-plan, designed by the French General Maurice Challe, which, later on, would lead to the Sevres Pact and to the Operation Musketeer. In fact, after an agreement with Egypt for the international control of the Suez Canal failed, the main idea became to involve Israel in the strategy in order to frame the Suez crisis into the Arab-Israeli conflict’s context and, as noticed before, since the ongoing guerrilla along the Israeli-Palestinian borders was escalating, Israeli leadership was exactly looking for this type of excuses to get rid of Arab presence and to conquer the Sinai.
Moreover, thanks to this strategy, France and UK could use the legal justification of protecting international interests in a war between Israel and Egypt in order to legitimize military intervention not only in front of the public opinion, but overall in eyes of Americans, whose aids the “triple alliance” was desperately in need of. For instance, through various diplomatic channel Israel tried to put pressure on US to send weapons to the Jewish in order to restore the military balance in the Middle East (Cohen 2017: 288).

Nevertheless, US never gave its consensus to such military action. On the contrary, British strategists considered US support as naturally given, in this way misleading American signals and instead following the assumption - based on the long-term cooperation between these two great powers - that U.S. would have helped Great Britain with its quest, especially in the Middle East area. By contrast, the negative outcome of the military intervention in Suez shows that, in this specific Cold-War period, the main interest of U.S. was not to keep a great influence in the Middle East through its alliance with UK, but rather to show an image of the Western-bloc which had to be as democratic and liberal as possible, in opposition to the image of the Eastern-bloc (that had already been damaged by the USSR military occupation of Hungary in the same year). As a consequence, U.S. stood in defence of the self-determination principle.

This attitude was surely a U-turn in US foreign policy since, in the previous years, U.S. had tried to secure the access to the former colonies’ resources, such as uranium, oil, raw materials. Truman administration even intervened in Iran in 1951 where, to secure their oil imports, U.S. directly intervened within the domestic political affair by advancing a covert operation in order to overthrow the nationalist government of Mossadeq, who had nationalized the main country’s oil company at British expanses. Instead, in this moment Eisenhower wanted to avoid being seen as the opposer of nationalism, since it could have paved the way toward Communism (Westad, 2017: 383).

In addition, British leadership did not take into account that U.S. was on the eve of the presidential election and it would have been difficult for Eisenhower to be re-elected if he gave his consensus on the Anglo-French arbitrary use of force (Richardson 1991: 377). Neither it was considered the fact that, if USSR would have threatened to intervene within the war, as it happened, the Soviet bloc’s disposal and extent of conventional armies was noticeably superior to that of United States, which would have been forced to use its nuclear weapons, thus triggering mutual destruction. Consequently, the entire military operation resulted in fiasco.

Sticking to the original plan, on 29 October 1956, Israel started the war by launching a vast-scale offensive in the area of the Sinai in order to reach the canal. Two days later, UK and France issued a joint demand claiming the withdrawal of both Egyptian and Israeli forces from the canal. As expected, Nasser ignored the recommendation, thus giving to the European powers the “rightful” pretext to use force in order to protect the Suez Canal (Saleh, 2003: 234).

Despite the Egyptian army was overwhelmed by Western forces and the IDF conquered the Sinai and Gaza in only two weeks, the armies had to retreat due to both the 2 November 1956 UN Resolution, which demanded the forces to leave their war posts, and the certainty at this point that US would have never intervened in support of its historical allies. According to the UN Resolution, the area along the Egyptian-Israeli border
would be presided by the new UN peace-keeping forces and Israel kept its right to access to the Eilat port, thus the right of passage through the Suez Canal (Kimmerling, 2003: 55).

Nevertheless, while Israel had obtained a military victory and its army showed to be fully prepared to face every kind of threat, Palestinians exploited their failure to strengthen their resistance structures. For instance, and most importantly, in 1958 Fatah was institutionalized and it was able to develop a national structure capable to sustain not only an armed struggle, but even to set the basis for an independent Palestinian politics (Pappe, 2006: 163). Moreover, the pan-Arab sentiment was further strengthened by Nasser 1956 victory. In fact, thanks to this war, the Egyptian leader became a hero to the entire Arab world, and he gave to people a new hope for a future free from Western domination.

Such rhetoric attracted foremost young students and workers, who joined the military branch of Palestinian nationalists and together they formed the Palestinian Liberation Army, the military branch of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), created by Arafat in 1964 with the aim of organizing a comprehensive armed struggle against Israel (Pappe, 2006: 164).

In addition, the language used by Nasser in its public speeches generally overestimated Arab military capacity and foresaw an imminent victory over Western regimes (Saleh, 2003: 236). Quite on the contrary, actually pan-Arab rhetoric was used to divert people attention from what was really going on domestically, meaning the denial of political right and freedom guarantees, widespread corruption and slow economic growth.

As Palestinian raids and Israeli reprisals incremented in the following years, they escalated into a proper war in 1967, in the well-known Six-days war. This time, the excuse that Israeli leadership used to justify Jewish military intervention against Egypt, Jordan and Syria was a Syrian bombardment over the northern Zionists settlement, which was anyway only a reaction against Israeli air raids across its northern borders (Saleh, 2003: 236). Actually, the reason behind Israeli attack was mainly to conquer further territories in order to secure from Fatah incursions those Israeli cities that were only 15 kilometres away from the border (Saleh, 2003: 235).

Tensions originally arose when an Israeli aquifer was built to channel the water belonging to both countries and transfer it from the north to the south of Israel (Pappe, 2006: 167). Already in April 1967, the first aggressions between Israel and Syria started. As a consequence, Nasser moved its troops toward the Israeli borders in order to support Syria and Levi Eshkol (1895-1969), the new Israeli Prime Minister, responded by a similar action. A further Israeli retaliation would be triggered by the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipment operated by Nasser, which basically blocked the Israeli traffic to the port of Eilat (Safty, 2009: 238).

Nevertheless, in this case, the Israeli performance was so poor that Eshkol government was substituted with a national unity’s one, led by both Menachem Begin (1919-1992), the former leader of the Irgun, and Moshe Dayan (1915-1981), the former Israeli Defence Minister.

On 5 June 1967, as soon as it became clear that, despite Nasser had initially advanced its troops, he would have never started a war, Israeli air forces attacked a destroyed the Egyptian army and a similar action was
replicated against both Jordan and Syria. Within only six days, the IDF was able not only to advance and occupy the West Bank, but even to control the Golan Heights.

Nonetheless, Israeli acquisition beyond the Green Line were nullified by the Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, by which the UN highlighted that, according to its Charter, any type of territorial acquisition obtained through the use of force is illegal, thus null. As a consequence, such Resolution stated that Israeli forces had to retreat from the territory they had occupied in the 1967 conflict and Israel had to respect “the sovereignty, the 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”\(^5\).

Nevertheless, the principle “land for peace”, even though it was accepted by Nasser, it was rejected by its Israeli counterparts, Ben-Gurion, who rather preferred land (specifically, Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai and the Golan Heights) to peace.

In addition, after having reached its peak in terms of military assets, Israel could now be seen as “strategic partner” especially for the American proxy war against the spread of socialism and in fact, the Jewish state became central within the American containment policy, as it became the US “democratic post” in a surrounding socialist, communist, military and USSR-supported Arab regimes.

On the other side, Palestinians continued to be forced to flee from their native territory toward nearer Arab states (in particular toward oil-rich countries from the 1950s), in such a way increasing the number of Palestinian refugees living in camps in Palestine, or in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon up to 1.5 million (Pappe, 2006: 187). Such community mainly gravitated toward the sphere of influence of *fedd'iyyun*, as the UNRWA had limited its responsibility to the one of a simple relief agency (Pappe, 2006: 187). Consequently, refugees’ living conditions were humiliating, as they could not purchase land nor own a house in Syria and Lebanon and, in general, they could be employed only in the construction business and receive low wages. These conditions created a favourable ground for PLO for filling a vacuum created by the lack of any type of state apparatus, as the Palestinian Organization was now able to both organize an armed and militarized struggle against Israel and to compete with UNWRA for social and economic welfare activities.

In fact, in 1970, the PLO proceeded with the nationalization of the welfare system through the establishment of an organization named “Samed”, which was originally developed in order to assist family members whose relative were killed during a nationalist struggle, it even dealt with question such as unemployment (Pappe, 2006:190). In addition, the organization established the Red Crescent, a sort of Muslim Red Cross, so more than a simple medical assistance service, since it had the responsibility to deal even with the production of household commodities.

The PLO’s structure changed, particularly along Leninist lines, leading to the creation of a centralized democracy that was developed around three main committees: the executive committee (cabinet), which elected the government, that, in turn supervised over the parliament, named the Palestine National Council,

plus the Palestinian Liberation Army, which split into the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) in 1968 (Pappe, 2006: 190-192). As a consequence of this renewed institutionalization struggle, Palestinian guerrilla activities improved in their extent and reach, most of all in Jordan. There, King Hussein (1935-1999) attempted to disarm the Palestinian armed resistance and it resulted in a blood bath, known as the “Black September”, in 1970. Successively, the PLO had to move its headquarters to Lebanon, where it planned the famous 1972 attack to the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games.

Meanwhile the so-called “war of attrition” carried out by Egypt and Syria was consuming Israel. In particular, the two Arab countries carefully prepared their military apparatus and they planned an effective strategy in order to reverse the effects of the 1967 war: the plan mainly consisted in a synchronized attack on Israel on both the northern and the southern front, which had to be carried out the day of the Yom Kippur\(^{52}\) (Saleh, 2003: 239). The attack had to came as a surprise but, actually, Golda Meir (1898-1978), the Israeli Prime Minister, was informed of such plan by King Hussein of Jordan, as a sort of revenge against Palestinian armed actions in Jordan before the Black September (Kimmerling, 2003: nota 17, Parte I).

Nevertheless, Israel was not afraid of entering into war, quite on the contrary it was looking for another opportunity to show its military superiority but, this time, the Arab army was far more prepared than before and the IDF lost about 3,000 men (Pappe, 2006: 207). For instance, the Israeli Barlev Defence Line, which was considered to be the most invincible first defence line in the whole world, was bypassed by the Egyptian army within only few hours. But, when Egypt decided not to move toward the Sinai, as previously concorded with Syria, Israelis were free to concentrate their efforts toward the northern border and they succeeded in advancing through Syria until 25 km from Damascus (Saleh, 2003: 240).

On the opposite front, Jewish managed to penetrate inside the Egyptian mainland but, when they were only 101 km far from Cairo, the Jewish army had to stop due to the Security Council’s immediate ceasefire, in the framework of a more comprehensive peace effort’s responsibility underlined within the UN Resolution 338 (Saleh, 2003: 241). Such efforts materialized only in 1978 within the Camp David Agreement, signed by the Egyptian President al-Sadat and the new Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin under US sponsorship. According to such agreement, Israel had to retire from the Sinai in exchange for Egyptian formal recognition of Israel and the signature of an Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, which would take place one year later (Safty, 2009: 245) and that said nothing about Palestinians.

Obviously, such peace did not stop the Israeli leadership from realizing their primary objective, meaning to de-Arabize Palestinian land, and they proceeded in planning how to neutralize Palestinian nationalist leadership, which settled in Lebanon from the 1970s.

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\(^{52}\) It is the Jewish holiest festivity which literally means “days of atonement”. During this occasion, even secular Jews dedicate their time to pray, fasting, abstention from work, from using the car.
2.5. From the Lebanese Wars to the Conflict in Gaza

Israeli efforts to crush the new PLO headquarters started in 1978 with the infamous “Operation Litany”. Thanks to the collaboration with the South Lebanon Army, a military force formed by the Lebanese Christian Maronite militia, the IDF was able to penetrate in the southern part of Lebanon (Kimmerling, 2003: 79). The Security Council reacted by issuing two resolutions (425 and 426) that condemned Israeli occupation and established an UN-presided buffer zone between the two states. Nevertheless, four years later, the Israeli Prime Minister Begin would find another excuse to further penetrate into Lebanon. This time, the main Israeli justification laid in the Arab attempt to assassinate the Israeli ambassador in London, Shlomo Argov (1929-2003), who, however, only remained injured. This event was used as a pretext by Israeli leadership to approve the operation ironically called “Peace for Galilee” (Pappe, 2006: 219). Basically, the plan was presented as a self-defence action by which Israeli forces should had stop only 40 km inside Lebanon. However, Israeli intention was to occupy the capital, establish a pro-Israeli government there and to definitely crush the PLO (Safty, 2009: 219). In fact, through the massive use of air raids and bombings, Israeli invaders were able to make their way into Beirut, which was sieged until the total evacuation of PLO fighters and leadership, which was forced to move to Tunis (Safty, 2009: 216).

In such context, the Maronite militia -closely connected with the IDF- carried out the massacre of 2,400 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila (Saleh, 2003: 244) to the point that Ariel Sharon (1928-2014), the Defence Minister of the Begin government, was forced to resign (Kimmerling, 2003: 95). Despite in 1983 Sharon was judged by the Kahan commission as personally bearing the responsibility of such massacre, he not only remained unpunished but, in 2011, he will even become Prime Minister of Israel.

These wars against Lebanon caused a great number of victims from both sides and numerus movies and books have been produced on such events, which still today are used in the historical narrative of both peoples (Bar-Tal, 2013: 192). The wars ended only when the UN sponsored an agreement according to which Palestinians should have safely leave their headquarter, while Israel had to withdraw from Lebanon (Saleh, 2003: 244). Nonetheless, Israel definitely retired its troops only in June 1985 and, anyway, a South Lebanon Army contingent remained within the zone with the aim of preventing eventual terrorist attacks.

On the other side, after these conflicts, Arafat moved toward opting for a peaceful strategy and he started to put pressure on US to be the promoter of peace between Palestinians and Israelis (Pappe, 2006: 221). However,

54 In fact, the PLO had nothing to do with the attempt to murder ambassador Argov, which was rather carried out by an anti-Arafat group, led by Abu Nidal (Prior, 1999: 33).
despite his efforts, Arafat was unable to fill the concrete distance between the PLO headquarters and its people, that was instead moving toward preferring much more radical Islamic groups to lead their struggle against the occupiers like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, (Saleh, 2003: 251), as Arafat’s strategy did not produce any result (Pappe, 2006: 230).

This spreading of a patriotic and Islamic attitude amongst Palestinians, coupled with the humiliating conditions in which they were forced to be subject to within the Occupied Territories by Israeli policies, led to the first Palestinian Intifada, on 8 December 1987. The last straw was the latest Israeli settlers’ provocation made in the same day, namely a deliberate collision between an Israeli truck and a van full of Palestinian workers, which leaved four Palestinians dead and seven injured (Saleh, 2003: 252). Palestinians arose and took the streets in Gaza protesting against such injustice.

The “First Intifada” revolt is known from the way by which Palestinians carried out their resistance, namely with the only means they had, so by throwing stones against Israeli force, which symbolizes the great scarcity of means owned by Arab forces in their struggle against a much more well-equipped IDF. Despite such action, the revolution manifested mainly through pacific dissidence, namely fiscal strike and civil disobedience (Graham, 2005: 31).

The Israeli military leadership reacted to such Intifada with the “Iron Fist Policy”, which mainly consisted in “bone breaking”, the use of tear gas, mass arrests with no trials, torture, destruction of private properties and deportation (Saleh, 2003: 243; Pappe, 2006: 233-235). As a consequence, giving the great number of deaths on the Palestinian side, mainly women and children (Pappe, 2006: 233), the General Assembly condemned Israeli actions so that violence decreased, even due to better control techniques acquired by the IDF.

Meanwhile, in 1988, on the wave of such demonstrations, the PLO declared the establishment of the state of Palestine -that would be later formally recognized by 90 states- on the basis of the UN Resolutions 181 and 242, so by implicitly recognizing Israel. Such document has to be contextualized in the framework of Arafat’s struggle to improve the PLO-US relationship, resulting in the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference in 1991, which triggered a trilateral discussion between Palestine, Israel and Jordan.

This negotiating process came into being in the form of the Oslo Accords, namely a Declaration of Principles signed by Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995) at Clinton’s presence (Pappe, 2006: 241).

In such document and within the framework of establishing a five-years long ad interim agreement between the two sides, Israel and the PLO drew up a series of principles to respect, namely Israeli withdrawal from Jericho and Gaza and a gradual transfer of power from Israel to the PLO in order to set in motion the first Palestinian political election for the Council (Pappe, 2006: 241). In addition, subjected to the “peaceful implementation” of this agreement (basically, subjected to Israeli veto), Israel committed to negotiate another

58 This discussion was most of all favoured by the Labour Zionist movement.
agreement with the PLO regarding their three most pressing issues: refugee problem, the question of Jerusalem and statehood.

Nonetheless, from 1994 onwards, Israel began a massive campaign of settlements-building coupled with land confiscation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as well as the erection of fences delineating West Bank’s partition (Safty, 2009: 243), thus violating that part of the Oslo document which stated: “Neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status of negotiations.”

Two years later, the Oslo Accords II divided the West Bank’s territory into three zones:

1) Zone A (4% of Trans-Jordan and the entire Gaza Strip) was under the control of the PNA;
2) Zone B (surrounding Zone A) was under both Palestinian civil control and Israeli military one;
3) Zone C (Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories) under Israeli authority.

In addition, according to the agreements, Israel and Palestine had to form a single economic unit, with a joint custom and taxation system (Pappe, 2006: 274). As a consequence of the balance of power, which was greatly in favour of Israel, the latter was able to dominate over the important aspects of the economy while Palestinians remained underpaid and their economy underdeveloped.

In 1996, the first election in the occupied territories saw the victory of Fatah, whose representative, now led by Mahmoud Abbas, even known as Abu Mazin, acquired most of the important seat inside the Cabinet (Pappe, 2006: 273). While the PA was trying to reach a long-term peace with Israel through diplomatic means, from this year on, the Islamists campaign of terror started to be externalized through the use of suicide bombings, a strategy that has been first used by the Hezbollah to liberate the southern part of Lebanon from the IDF patrol (Pappe, 2006: 275).

In 1997, under Netanyahu leadership, the Palestinian subdivision was further deepened by the Israeli Military Governor of the West Bank, who basically denied to Palestinians the right to freely enter in the Zones B and C without a permit, thus limiting Palestinian Zone A-residents’ right of movement (Safty, 2009: 248). A year later, the Wye River Agreement implemented the Oslo Accords and it dealt with issues such as the redeployment of Israeli occupational forces within some areas of the A and B zones.

In 1999, another memorandum was signed between the two sides, the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, which stressed the intention to carry out further negotiations to settle peace on the basis of the previous UN resolutions. Nonetheless, the efforts deployed for negotiating both the memorandum and Camp David accords in 2000 completely vanished when Sharon took the leadership of the Likud, the Israeli conservative party.

In fact, Sharon famous provocative walk over the Mount Temple became the casus belli of the Second Intifada, as Palestinians started to threw rocks at Israeli soldiers, which responded with rubber bullets (Safty, 2009: 252). In such occasion, Israeli repression intensified and the IDF carried out the Operation “Defensive Shield”,

60 The major Palestinian city are comprehended in this zone, such as Nablus and Ramallah
which mainly consisted in occupying and securing the main Palestinian cities in a way that would have reduced the freedom of movement for both Palestinians and humanitarian aids.

According to the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 2,202 Palestinians died during the implementation of such Operation and the brutalities carried out by IDF force were described by the Human Rights’ Commission and Amnesty International as “crimes against humanity”, such as unlawful killing, torture, denial of humanitarian services and the use of Arab civilians as “human shields”.

After such events, Palestinian militias advanced their unity of action and they all virtually agreed on using suicide bombing, which was considered as the only mean by which they could stop Israeli occupation (Pappe, 2006: 277). In such a context, it is to frame the destruction of the Jenin refugee camp and the consequent massacre carried out by Israelis, in April 2002.

From this moment on, any attempt to dialogue seemed to be useless. In 2003, George W. Bush’s proposal for a “Road Map” for a permanent two state solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state by 2005 was followed by the Security Council Resolution 1379, stating that “a settlement, negotiated between the parties, will result in the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.”

Nonetheless, this Road Map was never accomplished, as Sharon completely repudiated the Road Map’s obligations and, in 2002, he advanced the construction of a “temporary” separation wall in the West Bank (called, the “Iron Wall”) whose route greatly violates the 1967 borders (Safty, 2009: 263). In addition, in order to secure its territorial superiority, Israel carried out further operations, such as the “Operation Rainbow” and the “Operation Day of Atonement”, which, through the use of strategic bombing, killed thousands of Palestinians. After, Israel reoccupied the territories from which it had withdrawn in order to isolate Arafat, which was accused of organizing the suicide bombings attacks, in its compound in Ramallah (Pappe, 2006: 278). Arafat died in 2004.

In 2005, Sharon decided to unilaterally withdraw Israeli forces and settlers from the Gaza Strip, whose territory would be controlled by Hamas, which won the political election in 2006. As a result, the organization of Isma’il Haniyeh and the one of Abu Mazen started clashing with each other for the control over Gaza and the latter would leave the territory, which would be declared “hostile” and subjected to a total blockade. As a result, the Palestinian territory would result further divided between the Hamas government in Gaza and the one led by Fatah in the A and B zones in Trans-Jordan.

A new attempt to reach an agreement was undertook by Bush within the Annapolis Conference. At the presence of the G8 nations, Palestinian and Israeli representatives committed themselves to follow the principle contained in the Road Map, in more general struggle to reach peace by 2008. Nonetheless, an escalation of violence in Gaza would re-start the war that would reach its peak in the “Operation Cast Lead”.

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even referred as “Gaza massacre”, in which, according to the Israeli NGO “Breaking the Silence”, Israeli soldiers used white phosphorus as a weapon.

Then, in 2010, Abu Mazin was able to address to the General Assembly a request in order to change the Palestinian status within the UN from observer to non-member State. Such request would be followed by the Resolution 67/19 which gave to Palestine the power to join other international organization as well as to participate to international treaties\textsuperscript{64}.

Nevertheless, tension was still high, and the situation deteriorated when, in 2013, Abu Mazin declared that he had reach an agreement with Hamas for an attempt to national reunification. As a consequence, a security council was established within the Knesset the same day of the Palestinian reconciliation and such council would give carte blanche to Netanyahu to decide over the future of the Occupied Territories, namely the extension and the increasing in the number of Israeli settlements.

“From September 2000 – when the second intifada broke out – through February 2017, Israeli security forces killed 4,868 Palestinians who were not taking part in hostilities. About a third of them (1,793) were under the age of 18.”\textsuperscript{65}


Israel/Palestine after the construction of the “Iron Wall”
CHAPTER III – ISRAELI POLICIES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

3.1 Dalet Plan and Military Rule (1948-1967)

The Jewish plan to create in Palestine a contiguous portion of territory inhabited exclusively by Israelis was born among the Jewish European elite in the XIX century, but then it spread among the masses and it has been felt at individual level when such ideology was translated into military terms and instilled in the troops. In fact, Jewish leadership prepared different Plans for the takeover of Palestine. In 1945, the “Plan Aleph” (Plan A) dealt only with the establishment of a Unilateral Declaration of Independence, while the “Plan Bet” (Plan B) referred mainly to the military strategies to undertake against Arabs, in the event of a possible intervention in support of Palestinians (Safty, 2009: 180). Then, when the UN Partition Plan (Res. 181) was accepted by the General Assembly, in November 1947, Zionists drew up two new plans, such as the “Plan Gimmel” (Plan C) and the well-known “Plan Dalet” (Plan D).

In fact, the UN partition could not possibly be accepted by Jews (nor Arabs), since it created two main problems. The first one was purely legal and it concerned land ownership, as not only Jews did not own the majority of cultivable land in the proposed Jewish state, but such territory did not fall neither into the state domain category, therefore it could not be automatically assumed by Israeli government (Khalidi, 1988: 12). The second problem was that, according to the partition, almost 25,000 Arabs would have lived within the Jewish state, compared to only 1,250 Jew inhabitants within the Arab one (Khalidi, 1988: 11).

Consequently, since Palestinians constituted the majority of the total population in Israel, this disastrous “demographic balance” could not possibly be compensated only through a massive Jewish immigration, but the latter had to be coupled with other means, such as mass expulsion of Arabs (Pappe, 2006: 66). In addition, the most urgent problem for Jews was to carry out such expulsion before the end of the British Mandate so that, when the regular Arab armies would enter in Palestine, they could have not possibly relied on the support of the local population (Khalidi, 1988: 15).

Foremost, such Jewish strategy was fuelled by two different impulses. On one side, Jewish exploited Palestinians’ political and military vacuum, which were mainly generated from the departure of Palestinian

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66 At the end of the XIX century, Zionist ideas started to spread in Europe.
67 It was a revised version of Plan A and B.
68 Since, according to the partition, Jews would have obtained more than 50% of Palestinian soil, despite they hold only 7% of it. In addition, Jews receive the most fertile land as well as 400 Palestinian villages (Pappe, 2006: 34).
69 “Of 13,500,000 dunums (6,000,000 of which were desert and 7,500,000 of cultivable land) in the Jewish state according to the Partition Plan only 1,500,000 dunums of cultivable land were Jewish owned” (Khalidi, 1988: 12).
70 The term “ethnic cleansing” did not existed at that time.
political elite and educated class in the second wave\textsuperscript{71} of fleeing (Pappe, 2006: 41). On the other side, Jews had to take advantage of the opportunities arising from British withdrawal and from Arab rejection of the UN Resolution 181. In fact, while Zionists in 1947 had already succeeded in creating a strong network of political and economic institutions within their enclave in Palestine, Arabs could not rely on any type of similar institutions after British civil services did not operate anymore (Tovy, 2014: 4). Therefore, this was the right moment for Zionists to take over Palestine, since they could now exploit Arabs’ disadvantageous position and focus their efforts in realizing their master plan, meaning the creation of an exclusive Jewish state in virtually the whole Palestine.

In addition, already in 1946, the Jewish Agency started preparing the soil for the establishment of the Jewish state on the diplomatic level, as its leadership began negotiating with King Abdullah of Jordan about the division of Palestine and, after the 181 Resolution, they reached an agreement according to which, in exchange for Abdullah promise not to join the Arab forces, Zionists were willing to grant to Jordan part of the Israeli territory at the west of the Jordan River (West Bank)\textsuperscript{72}. The reason behind such secret deal was that the Jordanian army was by far the most prepared Arab army so, thanks to such agreement, Zionists successfully managed to limit their action to a small portion of territory, which was anyway inhabited by a small number of Jews (Pappe, 2006: 61).

As a consequence, Plan C was put into operation when British troops were withdrawing from Palestine, so from December 1947 to March 1948, as a sort of initial “countermeasure” strategy against Arabs (Tovy, 2014: 3). The “Plan C” consisted mainly in exploiting both UK retirement as well as the absence of any sort of central military or political control on the Palestinian side, in order to take advantage of the British military and civilian installations and to proceed with the complete take-over of the whole territory between the Mediterranean sea and the Jordan river (Pappe, 2006: 129).

However, it has to be underlined that the official Zionist military organization, the Haganah, refrained from participating into direct action (Tovy, 2014: 3). In fact, in this first stage\textsuperscript{73}, the penetration into the Arab areas was carried out by the main Jewish underground paramilitary organizations, the Irgun and the Stern Gang, which employed organized and systematic terror campaigns as well as repeated raids against Palestinian villages\textsuperscript{74}, with the hope that it would lead to Palestinians’ exodus (Safty, 2009: 181). Nonetheless, until March 1948, no massive Arab fleeing happened and not a single Arab village was freed from its inhabitants, on the contrary, in spite of Israeli raids and explosions, Arabs stood their ground (Khalidi, 1988: 14).

On 10 March 1948, the Haganah commanders decided that it was time to go on the offensive footing\textsuperscript{75} and the so-called “Plan D” (\textit{Tochnit Daleth}), elaborated by Yigael Yadin (the IDF\textsuperscript{76} operations chief), the master plan

\textsuperscript{71} From April to May 1948.
\textsuperscript{72} Abdullah made this tacit agreement with Zionists because this was the only way to add a most fertile piece of Palestinian land to the arid Jordanian territory.
\textsuperscript{73} Only after “Plan D” was proclaimed, the various Jewish military organization will act within a single army.
\textsuperscript{74} The massacre of Deir Yassin has been described in chapter II.
\textsuperscript{75} The UN had just recommended to the Security Council to establish a temporary UN trusteeship over Palestine (19 March 1948).
\textsuperscript{76} Officially established on 31st March 1948 (Kimmerling, 2003: 27).
for conquering Palestine, was officially launched (Kimmerling, 2003: 27). It consisted of thirteen operations77 (Safty, 2009: 186), whose aim was basically to realize the very first Zionists’ dream, meaning to transform the Arab state into a de facto Jewish one by acquiring control over both the “Jewish” state, as designed within the Partition Plan, as well as over the Jewish settlements outside the designated Israeli area.

Such aim could be pursued only through the use of force, in order to both conquer as much land as possible and to expel the native population from it, in order to de-Arabize the country. In addition, in order to reach such objectives, the plan even listed several strategies to undertake, namely psychological blitz, encirclements, inspections, potential destruction of hostile villages, consequent expulsion of the inhabitants -named “transfer”, summary executions, mass arrests, and even their extermination (Khalidi, 1988: 7; Pappe, 2006: 234).

Furthermore, the conquest of land was coupled with Palestinians’ transfer, operated through the “Transfer Committee”, which was already appointed in 1947. This Committee had a dual function: initially, it had to acquire information concerning the wealth and the land fertility of Arab villages, then it dealt with distribution issues, such as how to allocate the spoils of war among the different Jewish kibbutzim and settlements (Safty, 2009: 180).

Therefore, a crucial point in such strategy were settlements, considered as a necessity for the establishment of the Jewish state and, at the same time, they were seen as an integral part of the defense system. In addition, even mixed Arab-Jews cities -namely Jaffa, Haifa, Tiberias- were to purge from their Arab inhabitants (Pappe, 2006: 129). Consequently, what came out from “Plan D” was an offensive doctrine that was justified by macro-security aims, first of all defending Jews and the settlements they inhabited78.

When, after the Israeli Declaration of Independence on 14 March 1948, the “D” state of emergency was proclaimed, its first and most immediate aim was to link even the most remote Jewish settlements one to another and to complete such territory with further acquisitions, which would have serve as “buffer zone” between Israeli settlements and Palestinian villages. So, since Palestinians were unwilling to leave their homes, Jews would have displaced the indigenous population, and hardships were justified as necessaries for providing the Yisuf with a place where they could finally be safe from persecution (Safty, 2009: 178).

The outcome of the war was clear almost since its beginning, as the Jewish army was far better prepared and equipped compared to the Arab one. In fact, even before the first Arab-Israeli war started, the Haganah was a full-developed military apparatus, with a centralized structure of command and control and, moreover, it could rely on a Western-trained and well-experienced leadership (Pappe, 2006: 140). In addition, the Israeli troops enjoyed the support of the Palmach units79, an air force and a navy, tanks, heavy artillery and they outnumbered by far the Arab forces, which reached 3,000 units by 1948 (Pappe, 2006: 62).

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77 Eight of which were addressed toward Arab targets outside the Jewish designated area. The first one, “Operation Nachshon”, was carried out to secure the trip to Jerusalem, as the road passed through numerous Arab villages.

78 This strategy arises from Herzl’s theory of “the lesser evil”, meaning that any hardship committed at the native people’s expanses was outweighed by the fact that such land would have solved the Jewish problem.

79 Special Israeli commando units established during the Mandate with the aim to assist British forces against the Axis Power.
Therefore, after the war, IDF troops managed to conquer 20,000 km² of territory (6,000 km² more compared to what was established in the UN’s resolution 181) and to purge out the majority of Arab citizens, realizing an ethnic cleansing. In particular, already by the end of 1948, “IDF razed some 400 Palestinian villages, expelling or forcing the flight of some 750,000 Palestinians”, completely turning Palestinian rural and urban landscape into a Jewish one as well as deporting a consistent number of Palestinians into labour camps, where they were forced to do any job that could have empowered Israeli economy (Graham, 2005: 29; Pappe, 2006: 234). At the end of the war in 1949, only 100,000 Palestinians lived within the Jewish territory, compared to the 800,000 who lived there before 1948 (Safty, 2009: 185). Zionists realized a miracle because not only they expanded Israeli territory beyond the borders defined by the 1947 UN Partition Plan, but they even succeeded in entirely cleansing these lands from its native population as well as completely destroying Palestinian society in order to prevent its rehabilitation (Graham, 2006: 11).

Hence, Palestinians would remember such war as the one provoking the Nakbah, namely the Palestinian catastrophe, which would be a strong unifying factor in the historical narrative of Palestinian nationalism as well as a recurrent symbol within Palestinian nationalist ideology. In fact, in the aftermaths of the first Arab-Israeli war, nearly one million Palestinians became refugee, mostly living in camps in Gaza, West Bank as well as Lebanon, Syria and Jordan (Pappe, 2006: 141).

On the other side, according to Kimmerling’s findings, within Jewish collective memory, not only Palestinians willingly “abandoned” their territories, but even the 1948 war is remembered as a war that was fought against both British and Arabs for Israeli national liberation and that Jews managed to win against all odds (Pappe, 2006: 140). For instance, a study conducted in 2012 by professor Bar-Tal, a famous Jewish sociologist, has shown how the 1948 war’s memory is important still today as, according to a 2008 pool, the majority of Israelis (55%) defines the West Bank as a “liberated territory”, while only 32% of the population consider such territory as being “occupied” (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2014: 18).

Moreover, the “achievements” Zionists made during the so-called “Independence war” furthered the belief according to which Jews would have eventually succeeded in Judaizing the whole Palestine. Nonetheless, they had to limit their expansionistic goals, since Zionists were well aware that the complete elimination of the Arab ethnicity from Israel would have never been realized, at least in the short-run. Consequently, the path toward the complete Arab ethnic cleansing had to proceed step by step.

Firstly, it was crucial to ensure the control over Arab population and to safeguard Jewish citizens in the region, then Zionists had to create a territorial contiguity between their various settlements, in order to both realize

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80 They existed until 1955.

81 Kimmerling is a famous Israeli sociologist and historian. These findings can be found in its 2004 article titled “Benny Morris’s shocking interview”, (available on https://electronicintifada.net https://electronicintifada.net/content/top-israeli-historian-analyzes-benny-morris-shocking-interview/4968) in which Kimmerling claimed: “In the earlier stages of my research, I was shocked to discover that a major “purification” of the land (the term “ethnic cleansing” was unknown in that period) from its Arab Palestinian inhabitant was done during the 1948 War by the Jewish military and para-military forces. During this research I found, solely based on Israeli sources, that about 350 Arab villages were “abandoned” and their 3.23 million dunums of rural land, were confiscated and became, in several stages, the property of the Israeli state or the Jewish National Fund. I also found that Moshe Dayan, then Minister of Agriculture, disclosed that about 700,000 Arabs who “left” the territories had owned four million dunums of land.”
and protect Israeli territorial unity as well as to fragment Palestinian people and territories, in a way that would have perpetuated Israeli occupation, that was anyway justified as being temporal. And in fact, already at the end of the war, Palestine had been divided into two territorially ill-defined entities: the West Bank, full annexed to Jordan, and the Gaza Strip, under Egyptian military rule (Pappe, 2006: 140).

Furthermore, in 1949, Israel refused to comply with the UN Res. 194(3), which unconditionally demanded to repatriate and/or to compensate Palestinian refugees. Actually, on 18 April 1949, Ben-Gurion proposed to the Conciliation Commission the “Gaza Plan”, according to which Israel would have accepted the repatriation of all the Strip’s refugees, if such territory would have been included within the Israeli border (Tovy, 2014: 48). However, this proposal was not yet fair, as Israel should have granted unconditional repatriation to all the refugees it created without deducting further Arab land. At this point, on 15 June 1949, the Israeli Defence Minister, Moshe Sharett (1894-1965), proposed to show Israeli willingness to respond to the UN Resolution by a written statement in which Israel would have promised to accept 100,00 refugees when the state of emergency ended. Such number was chosen as it was seen as sufficiently impressive to re-obtain US favours and, in addition, 25,000 refugees, most of all Bedouins, were already returned to the Negev after the war (Tovy, 2014: 57-59).

Nonetheless, the “100,000 proposal” (actually 75,000) was rejected in September mainly because Israelis refused to negotiate on the number of refugees they would have repatriated (Tovy, 2014: 63-64) despite the fact that, with the “Gaza Plan”, Israel was willing to welcome way more refugees (nearly 300,000). Therefore, Arab states rightly concluded that Israel was only interested in acquiring land rather than carrying the burden of refugees. Then, Israel totally rejected repatriation by using the formal justification according to which, since it had already absorbed Arab-Jews (Mizrahim) and Arab states had already received Palestinians and Arab-Jewish properties, an exchange of people and properties had already taken place (Kimmerling, 2003: 32).

Nonetheless, Israeli master plan was to turn the confiscated Palestinian properties as well as Muslim and Christian holy sites into an exclusive and perpetual Jewish property (Pappe, 2006: 159). In order to fulfil such goal, already in December 1948, the Knesset passed the “Emergency Regulations Relating to Absentees’ Property”, according to which the expropriated Palestinian land was labelled as “abandoned property” (Tovy, 2014: 29). As such, the land was subjected to several limitations, as it could not be used by the enemies (Arabs) and it had to be protected “on behalf of its owner” by an Israeli custodianship, thanks to which the state could have both temporarily use this asset or lease it (Tovy, 2014: 29).

Technically, the custodian of the abandoned asset could not sell it nor decide its fate, for instance it could not be used as soil for Jewish settlements. In order to solve this problem and to fully exploit the land, another Law was passed by the Knesset in 1950, the “Absentees’ Property Law” which basically transformed the state trusteeship into a state ownership (Tovy, 2014: 30). In this way, the expropriation was retrospectively legalized and Palestinian assets could be sold to private or public Jewish owners as well as directly to the Jewish National Fund otherwise, after a proper process of forestation, the land would become a forest (Pappe, 2006: 246-252).
Throughout this first period, the process for the expropriation of land was finalized by several laws, with the aim of preventing Palestinians to re-gain ownership over their former territories. In 1953, Israeli leadership addressed the “Land Acquisition Law”, which legalized further expropriations and then, in 1960, the “Law of the Land of Israel” and the “Law of Israel Land Authority” forbade to sell or lease Jewish-owned land to non-Jews. In 1967, the process of transfer to the JNF was finalized with the “Law of Agricultural Settlements”, which dealt even with water quotas (Pappe, 2006: 253). As a result, at the end of such campaign by 1967, 92% of the country’s land was under Jewish ownership, conversely Palestinians had lost 4 million dunums of their motherland (Pappe, 2006: 160).

Meanwhile, those 150,000 Palestinians left within the Israeli territory (17% of the total Israeli population) became Israeli citizens but, until 1966, they were placed under a military regime which, regardless of the right to vote and to be elected, denied them any other primary right, namely the freedom of movement, the freedom of expressions and, foremost, the equality before the law (Pappe, 2006: 251).

Under the umbrella of such military rule, which was based on the British Mandate’s emergency regulations (1945), officers had great discretion in deciding the future of the so-called “Israeli Arabs”, as virtually all Palestinians could be arrested or either expelled if they were vaguely suspected of supporting Palestinian nationalism (Pappe, 2006: 155).

In addition, as they were even confined in a small portion of territory, namely in the Negev and Galilee (Graham, 2005: 27), Palestinian minority within Israel suffered from a rapid proletarization of its society, which was mostly agrarian. As a result, since the level of unemployment in such a community was very high, unskilled peasants were forced to accept underpaid jobs or no job at all (Pappe, 2006: 157).

Furthermore, new Jewish settlements were built on the spoils of the expropriated Arab villages, whose name and landscape were completely “Hebraized” in order to fully de-Arabize Palestinian land, most of all, its history was erased, through a process known as “memoricide” (Pappe, 2006: 257-260). In fact, until 1953, Israeli troops proceeded with massive expulsions, villages’ depopulations and land appropriation, which were justified in the name of protecting security and public interests.

In such framework, the 1950s were crucial for the militarization of Israeli society, which was favoured, on one side, by the Law of Return (1950), that made Israeli population three times bigger (Bachi, 1950: 82), coupled with the obligatory conscription (Security Service Law, 1949) and, on the other side, the Yadin doctrine was enriched with two practices developed by Horowitz, namely “indirect approach” and “flexible response”. According to these approaches, since, due to chaos within the battlefield, it was not always possible to ensure the regular command and communication chains between the commander and the troops, soldiers should have developed their own enterprising spirit in order to be able to anticipate orders (Kimmerling, 2003: 35).

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82 Nonetheless, Israeli-Palestinians were unable to form their own party but they rather preferred to support the Communist Party, in part because of its internationalist rhetoric, in part because through the party, people could obtain career support as well as receive a higher education in the Eastern bloc (Pappe, 2006:180).
83 Military analyst.
84 Meaning the use of non-conventional means to destroy the enemy.
These developments produced a double mechanism on Israeli society. On one side, there was the necessity to homogenize Israeli multi-ethnic people under a common ideology through a strategy called “melting-pot process”, which mainly consisted in the revival of Hebrew and Zionist ideals as well as in a more general modernization of the society by means of indoctrination of the new Jewish immigrants (most of all Arab Jews) coupled with the creation of new proper Israeli narrative, culture and language (Pappe, 2006: 168). This strategy arose from the both need to increase the size of Israeli population -as it had lost 6 million souls in the Shoah- , which in turn would have further consolidated the Jewish state and the Zionist ideology, as well as the need to exploit an underpaid but consistent workforce (Arab Jews) for Israeli economic take-off (Pappe, 2006: 176-177).

On the other side, Jewish upper-class felt the need to differentiate themselves from the common people, most of all from the newcomers, for its members’ operative capacities and heroism. Consequently, young Jews put their efforts into several un-official missions aimed conquering territories that would be donated to Israel. Specifically, as numerous Bedouins’ ambuscades happened in such area, a lot of Israeli soldiers died in the attempt to make the trip to Petra safe (Kimmerling, 2003: 52).

Nonetheless, some of these soldiers, like the ones belonging to the “Unit 101” of Ariel Sharon, succeed in their goal. In fact, in 1953, through a private initiative, such Unit was able to revenge their companions by both killing some Bedouins in the Negev desert as well as fulfilling the challenge. Consequently, people started to identify themselves in these heroic figures and such process in turn contributed in enforcing both national fervor and fighting spirits, as it was used as a frame to both interpret the Jewish military successes as well as to justify Israel’s predominance in the region (Kimmerlig, 2003: 53).

The return to militarism as well as the hawkish Israeli politics were the primary causes which led to the Israeli 1956 aggressive campaign. In fact, as Ben-Gurion returned to power as Defence Minister in 1955, he devised several attack on the Egyptian soil and in Gaza in the attempt of provoking a war, so to perpetuate its expansionistic policy by adding the Sinai to Israeli conquests (Pappe, 2006: 162).

Despite the UN forced Israeli troops to withdraw from the conquered territories, the 1956 war not only represented a great victory for Israel, but it can be seen even as the crowning achievement of the militarization process which shaped Israeli society. Furthermore, since both the Israeli and the Palestinian governments had abandoned their respective welfare responsibilities during the conflict, this vacuum was filled, on one side, by Jewish fundamentalism and on the other side, by political Islam.

Thus, in this period we assist to a fundamental political radicalization which was accompanied by a rhetoric of aggressiveness that then turned into action in 1967. In fact, these circumstances, coupled with a massive built-up of the military, fuelled both the Zionist cause as well as political adventurism so, when in 1967 Nasser blockaded the Eilat port, Israel exploited such occasion to attack the Arab forces once again and to show its military accomplishments so far. And in fact, within only six days, the IDF managed to conquer the Golan heights, the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
3.2 The “enlightened occupation” or “partial integration policy” (1967-1987)

After the six days war, the famous resolution 242 of the UN’s Security Council was addressed in 1967. By citing the Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolution emphasized “the inadmissibility of the acquisition of the territories by war”, then it imposed the complete “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied” and the “termination of all claims or state of belligerency and acknowledgment of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State”.

However, the resolution was ignored by Israel due to translation problem which made imprecise the meaning of the first point: “Importantly, the resolution refers to territories, not “the” territories. The omission of the definite article was intentional and has played a significant role in framing the assumptions and expectations of all parties involved since 1967. Resolution 242 was drawn up by the British government. Lord Caradon, UK ambassador to the UN at the time, stated the following: ‘We didn’t say there should be a withdrawal to the ’67 line; we did not put the ‘the’ in. We did not say all the territories, deliberately. We knew that the boundaries of ’67 were not drawn as permanent frontiers; they were a cease-fire line of a couple of decades earlier. We did not say that the ’67 boundaries must be forever; it would be insanity’ ”(Sher, 2011: 1).

Thanks to this “trick”, the Jewish State was basically able to ignore the resolution and to start deciding over the future of its new territories. In particular, since Israeli occupation had different means according to the territory where it was realized, I will focus my attention on the administration of both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as such regions were vital for Israel for at least two main reasons. Firstly, because such additional territories could have been strategical from a geographical and militaristic point of view, since they would have functioned as a buffer zone to further protect Israel from external incursion. Secondly, these territories were seen as integral part of the biblical Jewish land so, they had to be annexed to Israel and to become only-Jewish land – besides they have been inhabited by Arab for over a hundred years (Gordon, 2008: 5). And in fact, as Jewish treated the territory as an extension of Israel, and not as Occupied Territories (from now on, OT), with all the underlying international regulations related to such status, in the immediate aftermaths of the war and within the framework of Israeli expulsion policy, 200,000 Palestinians (called “nazihun”86) were forced to flee from West Bank (now called by Israel “Judea and Samaria”) through eviction or in exchange for some money (Pappe, 2006: 194).

Nonetheless, in deciding how to manage the new land they acquired, Israeli policy-makers, led by the Prime Minister Levy Eshkol (1895-1969), faced a dilemma. In fact, on one side, if they decided to integrate West Bank and Gaza into the Jewish state, they would have to integrate even Palestinian people within it, and so

86 It means “uprooted” and this term has been used to distinguish these refugees from the 1948 ones.
Israel would have to renounce to the idea of retaining a Jewish-majority\(^{87}\) (Kimmerling, 2003: 19). On the other side, if Israelis decided to preserve the borders, this could have led to the establishment of two geopolitical units within a very restricted area (Arnon, 2007: 4).

In order to solve such dilemma, basically Israeli leadership never decided between these two options, but rather they tried to separate the issue concerning the land from the one dealing with its people. Therefore, Israeli policies introduced several mechanisms aimed at expropriating Palestinian land without annexing it\(^{88}\) as well as regulating Palestinians every-day life without granting them the Israeli citizenship (Gordon, 2008: 6).

So, in order to obtain more land as possible with as few Arabs as possible, Israel coupled occupation with the so-called “Allon Plan”\(^{89}\), advanced by the Israeli Labour Party (which ruled the government from 1967 to 1977). According to such strategy, since in Zionists’ view there was no such a thing like Palestinian people, the only possible partner for deciding over the occupied areas was Jordan.

Basically, the Plan implied the transfer of Palestinians to the Jordanian government, which would have been responsible of administering Palestinian society, while Israel should have maintained the military control over the same territories, in order to secure Jewish settlements\(^{90}\) (Safty, 2009: 240; Kimmerling, 2003: 21). Nonetheless, such option was never finalized, as Israel offered to Jordan a smaller portion of territory compared to the one decided in the 1948 secret agreement, and king Hussein’s proposal of creating a federation between Palestine and Jordan was rejected by both Israel and the PLO (Pappe, 2006: 209).

Then, Israel proceeded with the transfer of the entire system of military training into the West Bank as well as the displacement of all the infrastructures needed to realize the occupation within the OT. Israeli leadership used to talk about “enlightened occupation”: so, first of all, it entailed to be something provisional and, in addition, it was configurated as an occupation that, in theory, would have granted to Palestinians a large autonomy. The choice to use such term as “enlightened occupation” responded to the need to facilitate the management of Palestinian, as Israeli leadership though that the temporary status of Israel domination would have prevented the formation of an opposition inside Palestinian society (Gordon, 2008: 25).

Instead, the occupation was actually realized by means of martial law, curfew, ghettoization, demolition of houses and unjustified executions and detentions as well as the complete elimination of any form of dissent mainly through the expulsion/deportation of Palestinian nationalist leaders, especially during the first months of occupation (Kimmerling, 2003: 60). Regardless of how illegal and how brutal these actual measures were, they were very limited if compared to the force that Israeli army could have potentially deployed, and such

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\(^{87}\) This situation generated -and still today generates- into Jewish society a strong anxiety, mainly arising from the fear of the physical annihilation of Israel as well as the loss of Jewish demographic majority and, consequentially, the erasure of Israeli national identity. So, the will of annexation was won by the certainty that no one in Israel would have ever accepted a bi-national entity’s State.

\(^{88}\) In line with this attitude, the Green Line was basically erased from school textbooks and maps, in a general attempt to re-write history and to present the occupation as temporary, moral and non-existent (Gordon, 2008: 7).

\(^{89}\) Officially presented on 27 July 1967.

\(^{90}\) This was the “Jordanian Option”, advanced by the Israeli Labour Party.
possibility of carrying out more lethal acts of violence has been used as a threat to further facilitate population management (Gordon, 2008: 54-55).

Despite, according to the international humanitarian law (in particular, according to the 1949 Forth Geneva Convention about occupied territories) such actions were illegal, Colonel Meir Shamgar, the Israeli military advocate general, found an *escamotage* in order to reject the applicability of the humanitarian principles. According to him, since the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been seized respectively by Jordan and Egypt in 1948, such territories should be considered not as “occupied” but as “disputed” (Gordon, 2008: 26). Nonetheless, such justification could not be extended to Palestinian people, which had to be protected under the Geneva Convention regulations\(^91\), but it never happened.

Quite on the contrary, Israel’s aim was to realize a complete disintegration of Palestinian society (de-Palestinization) through the imposition of a policy known as “partial integration”. This kind of policy was implemented in a way so that it would create such level of economic, political and social dependence of the OT upon Israel that every possibility of creating an independent Palestinian sovereignty would have been nullified (Graham, 2005: 30).

This situation was achieved, first of all, through legislative means. In fact, according to the principle of “enlightened rule”, Israel claimed that it would have developed and enacted the “rule of law” inside West Bank and the Gaza Strip for the very first time but, rather, the Jewish state created a comprehensive legal system which set out the basis for the establishment of a wide-spread controlling apparatus by which Israel was able to rule directly over Palestinian people.

Therefore, initially, Israel accepted to act in compliance with the Hague Convention (1907), according to which the occupying power should apply on the conquered territories the laws that were in force at the moment of the occupation. As a result, the OT legislation consisted mainly of a complex system of Ottoman, British Mandatory, Jordanian (in West Bank) and Egyptian (in the Gaza Strip) laws, which were anyway derogated by the new Israeli military decrees having the force of law (Gordon, 2008: 27). This system was far from promoting a proper “rule of law”, but rather it has basically given to Israel *charte blanche* about the future of Palestinians, as it could enact law according to its wishes and priorities.

For instance, Palestinian displacement and transfer continued to be induced through different means, such as destruction of houses or expropriation of land (which have been used even as a mean to clear the way for the construction of settlements), the revocation of residence permits and, finally and most importantly, the promotion of a complex system of ethnic pass which basically constrained Palestinians’ freedom of movement (Graham, 2005: 29-38). In fact, only those Palestinians who were vetted and approved by the Israeli Secret Services could obtain an ID, which anyway did not give them the permit to travel wherever they wanted to, since they needed a special authorization for that (Pappe, 2006: 201).

\(^{91}\) Which protect even the Palestinian right to self-determination.
On the economic level, the partial integration was achieved through the implementation of a core-periphery model\(^\text{92}\), thus increasing Israeli economic power by exploiting both Israeli superior bargaining power and economic structure as well as the benefits deriving from the availability of cheap labour and raw materials within the OT (Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 91-92).

As soon as occupation started, one of the first measures that Israel undertook, was to close every Arab financial and monetary institutions in order to give the responsibility over OT monetary policies to the Bank of Israel. Furthermore, the dependency relationship has been developed through the implementation of two different process: domination and integration.

In fact, in order to achieve domination, and so the exploitation of Palestinian available natural endowment, the economic boundaries between Israel and the OT have been eliminated (“open-bridges policy”) through the adoption of a Israeli unilaterally-shaped “quasi-Custom Union”, particularly designed to maintain the control over the periphery’s supplies (Arnon, 2007: 4-5; Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 93-103). Consequently, the Green Line border was basically opened only in one direction as, while Israel had unlimited access to the Palestinian market, Palestinians’ economic interaction with the Jewish state were strictly regulated by custom revenues, specifically designed to protect Israeli producers and workers (Gordon, 2008: 72).

Accordingly, integration was favoured by the construction of new transportation infrastructure networks, with the aim of both tightening Israeli grips over Palestinian territories as well as maximizing Israeli import within West Bank and Gaza Strip and to provide the Israeli markets with cheap labour force, favouring Palestinian employment within low-skilled and labour-intensive Israeli industries (Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 93; Kimmerling, 2003: 17).

The integration of Palestinian workers within Israeli economy responded to the primary need to reduce unemployment within OT and it was used as a mean to ensure normalization in order to better control the population. In fact, by ensuring higher standards of living, Israel thought it would have prevented any possibility of social upheaval (Gordon, 2008: 76-78). Palestinian wages in Israel were always low (at least 50% lower than the Jewish ones) but anyway they were at least 10% higher than the one that employees would have received if they worked within the OT. Consequently, as wage rose, even Palestinians’ standard of living did, since unemployment fell and the OT experienced a rapid economic growth (Gordon, 2008: 66; Pappe, 2006: 232).

However, Palestinians’ economic prosperity did not come from the OT domestic productive capability but rather from Palestinian labourers’ remittances ultimately payed by Israel, so that OT economy depended basically on Israeli transferred resources (Gordon, 2008: 74). In fact, through the promotion of a process of “de-development”, Israeli economy was able to absorb 2 billion dollars surplus profits coming from the OT (Pappe, 2006: 232). “De-development” was achieved through a dual strategy: on one side, the improvement of individual prosperity, as individual purchasing power of Palestinian increased, while, on the other side, the promotion of communal stagnation, since the indigenous economic base was progressively weakened by

\(^{92}\) The model which has been used by the Western countries in the neo-imperialism era.
discriminatory trade practices, structural weaknesses or other means by which the selective integration of Palestinian economy was carried out (Sufyan, 2007: 124-125). It resulted in a double-way economic flows: on one side, cheap labour and pre-capitalist commodities flew from the OT to Israel while, on the other side, Israel exported capital-intensive products toward the OT (Pappe, 2006: 232).

Therefore, even if Israeli policies promoted innovation and modernization in order to make the Palestinian economy prosper, the Jewish state did it in a way so that the OT economy developed in complementarity and not in competition within the Israeli one. For instance, within the agricultural sector, Israeli authorities established regulations regarding the quantity and the quality of Palestinian products, so that they could meet the requirements of Israeli industries and, mostly, as a mean to reduce the competition with Israeli agricultural products (Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 96).

Along with these measures, due to the employment of Palestinian workers within Israeli labour force, many rural areas remained vacant and thus, from 1980 onward, the land was confiscated by Israel, according to an Ottoman law which prescribed that land could be expropriated if it had not been farmed for three years (Gordon, 2008: 86). Thanks to these regulations, Israel was able not only to seize land, but even to take control over the major OT’s water sources (Gordon, 2008: 72). In fact, Israel basically exploited and still exploits OT water sources to supply both Israel and its colonies, while Palestinians are precluded from developing their own water resources (Prior, 1999: 33).

In addition, regarding Israeli industrial sector, it has been expanded within the OT, as some labour-intensive industries have been moved there in order to exploit the closeness to raw materials, cheap labour and to the Arab underdeveloped markets, thus increasing Israeli manufacturing output by 60% already in 1969 (Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 98). Accordingly, Israeli military administration strongly prevented the development of capital-intensive industries within the OT as well as external trade between the OT and the neighbour Arab countries, so that Palestinian industry could be re-oriented solely toward the satisfaction of Israeli demand (Gordon, 2008: 73). For instance, local initiatives were discouraged, duties and taxes for Palestinian manufacturing industries were increased and transferred directly into Israeli pocket, thus erecting structural constraints to the Palestinian industrialization process (Arnon, 2007: 10).

Another mean of control was the alteration of the educational system in a way that could have both fragmented Palestinian society and even suppressed any national sentiment through the strict use of censorship as a mean to eliminate any reference to a shared Palestinian past (Gordon, 2008: 57-59). This strategy was used in a way such as OT students could not possibly identify themselves as Israelis and neither they were permitted to see themselves as Palestinians, but simply as Arab93 thus, with the aim of erasing Palestinian particularity and claims in order to prevent the development of a unitary Palestinian national narrative (Gordon, 2008: 60).

In fact, Palestinians were encouraged to identify themselves not according to their nationality, but rather according to their Arabness or with other identification means which already existed within the society, namely

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93 The word “Palestinian” was eliminated from every textbook and newspaper and it was substituted with the word “Arab”.

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hamula\textsuperscript{94} and religion. In fact, Israel strongly supported both Muslim and Christian leadership in order to create a religious friction among Palestinians and as a mean to neutralize the secular nationalist movement (Gordon, 2006: 95).

In fact, as Israeli military government preserved the existing municipal system and the inherited local leadership within the OT as a mean of normalization, the Jewish state was able to limit the activities of such bodies mainly to infrastructures’ management issues and to use municipalities as a mean to control the local population (Gordon, 2008: 97-99). When the first local elections were held in the OT (1972), the traditional elite won, and it was a success for Israel.

First of all, it is important to underline that maybe a crucial factor which led to this result could be the fact that only 5% of the total population could vote, since a Jordanian law limited the voting right only to those over-21-years-old males who held a property and which have paid all their taxes (Gordon, 2008: 101). However, through this election, Israel thought it reached its objectives, since it legitimized the occupation, it strengthened Palestinians’ internal divisions\textsuperscript{95} and, finally, it was able to obtain local leadership’s loyalty and co-optation through a careful distribution of favours (Gordon, 2008: 101).

Nonetheless, Israel did not fulfil its goal. Quite on the contrary, economic dependency, high disparity between Israeli occupiers and Palestinian inhabitants and the absence of basic infrastructures within the OT only filled the nationalist sentiments and generated cross-class alliances among Palestinians against Israeli rule, leading to the re-emergence of Palestinian national identity.

Already in 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was born and it gradually started to organize the guerrilla. Its primary merit was to provide unification of Palestinian people, to focus the international attention on Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a national (and not only humanitarian) problem and, overall under Arafat’s stewardship, it developed a new national consciousness in which self-determination was crucial.

For instance, in 1970, PLO was able to hide itself in Lebanon and from there it started to both attack Israel directly with missiles raids as well as to organize terroristic attacks, like the one done in Munich’s Olympic Games in 1972 or the other one carried out at Tel Aviv’s Airport. Those attacks had the aim of shifting world leadership’s attention toward the Palestinian question since, after all, Palestinian did not possess different methods to face Israel in a balanced way, particularly after they had lost Egyptian and Russian protection after the Kippur war in 1973.

However, those acts helped undermine the belief according to which Israel was invincible thus, this phenomenon led to the re-emergence of nationalist protests (Gordon, 2008: 102). In 1974, within the Arab Summit in Rabat, the PLO was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of Palestinian people and then, few months later, it obtained the observer status within the UN (Res. 3237). As a result, nationalists won almost in every municipality during the 1976 local election\textsuperscript{96} and they started supporting peaceful local resistance through the promotion of demonstrations and protests against the Israeli ruler (Gordon, 2008: 105).

\textsuperscript{94} Extended family or clan.
\textsuperscript{95} Since the power of the elected of official was based on traditional divisions.
\textsuperscript{96} The first in which women had the right to participate.
Furthermore, the 1973 war and the subsequent peace agreement signed between Israel and Egypt in 1978 had a strong influence even within Israeli society, as it generated domestic social upheaval among Israeli middle class. As noted in the previous chapter, the Kippur war lasted longer and caused the death of much more people if compared to the other Arab-Israeli wars, as Arab forces were more prepared and better equipped than before. Consequently, Israelis started protesting and blaming at the political leadership because of their incapacity to coordinate military operations or to prevent the imminence of the war (Kimmerling, 2003: 66).

At the same time, given the recent social outbursts within the OT, Israeli people became more aware of the implications deriving from occupation so, protestors started dividing along political lines, generating two different extra-parliamentary movements: on one side, those who believed that Israel should have to forcibly annex the OT within its borders while, on the other side, those who were firmly convinced that it was unjust to deprive Palestinian people of their rights for so long (Kimmerling, 2003: 68). In such framework has to be contextualized the creation of the “Gush Emunim”: it was a group, officially funded in 1974, formed by the first generation of Israelis settlers, which exhorted the “authentic Jewish” to conquer and colonize their Holy Land (meaning the entire Palestine) in order to create an utopian society under the law of the Halachà, the Jewish supreme law, and the rabbis’ judgements (Kimmerling, 2003: 38).

So, in order to stabilize the situation, a commission of inquiry was established to investigate over Israeli war crimes’ responsibilities and Israel found its scapegoats in David Elazar, major chief of the IDF, and Shmuel Gonen, chief of the southern front. Nonetheless, people started losing faith in their political leadership, as shown by the results of the 1973 election, in which the right-wing nationalist Likud Party was able to considerably increase its political weight within the Knesset, until it was finally able to form a coalition government under Menachem Begin leadership in 1977 (Kimmerling, 2003: 69).

Therefore, from 1977 to 1984, as the Likud Party led by Begin took the power in coalition with the Gush Emunim, a new plan appeared, the “Greater Israel”/”Drobless” Plan, which was aimed at re-establishing the Jewish state as it was during its biblical times, so as defined within the book of the Genesis: it implied the annexation of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as the Golan Heights and territories beyond the Jordan River (Pappe, 2006: 210).

Another time, the main instrument used to fulfil such goal was Jewish settlement colonization, as settlements were arbitrarily built in the new territories not only as a mean to separate Palestinians from their Arab hinterlands, but even as way to create a Jewish geographic and demographic reality within the new Israeli conquered land, which could have prevented the rising of a unitary Palestinian entity (Graham, 2005: 28-29; Prior, 1999: 32). The settlements were closely linked with Israeli government and served as outposts to capture further territories (Falah, 2003: 190).

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97 The small party of Ariel Sharon (Kadima) joined the Likud right before the election. Sharon became the Israeli Defence Minister.
98 During the occupation, Israeli government never approved a plan for establishing where and how many Jewish settlements were to be built.
In addition, extraterritoriality was granted to Jewish settlers in the OT, thus creating a double legal system, one for Jewish and another one for non-Jewish, inside the same entity (Gordon, 2008: 28). In fact, Israel basically decoupled citizenship from geography, as while Jewish settlers maintained full citizenship rights, Palestinians under the same regime did not have any civilian or political right (Yiftachel, 2006: 85). However, full and unilateral annexation promised within the “Greater Israel” plan by the Likud government was never accomplished\(^9\). In fact, even though Israel would have never granted neither citizenship nor social assistance to Palestinians, the number of Palestinians within Israel and the OT amounted to 1,3 million people and, given the high growth rate of the Arab population, an unilateral annexation would have irreparably transformed Israel into a *de facto* bi-national state (Kimmerling, 2003: 20; Prior, 1999: 30). Rather, Israeli leadership preferred to solve the “demographic problem” by retaining a Jewish majority and by instruments such as ethnic cleansing, expulsion and deportations.

From this moment one, Israeli politics would be more radical and even more aggressive, despite the apparent attempts to reach peace. For instance, Camp David agreements with Egypt need to be contextualized politically in order to be fully understood. In fact, Israel could have not possibly realized Palestinians’ “politicide” without the support of the most powerful Arab state within the area, which, in turn, could not possibly have helped Palestinians with their national claims (Kimmerling, 2003: 78). The second step toward Palestinian epuration consisted in the attempt to eradicate PLO and Al-Fatah infrastructures as well as Palestinian national leadership through the invasion of Lebanon in 1978 and another time in 1982.

This aggressive strategy was coupled with an image of openness toward OT inhabitants, as in 1981 Menachem Begin replaced the military government with a Civil Administration, mainly with the aim of creating the impression that the occupation was going to end, while it actually functioned as a mean to further integrate the military government inside the Palestinian society as well as to further curtail municipal limited authority (Gordon, 2008: 108-109). In fact, as local leaders decided not to cooperate within the new governing bodies, they were immediately dismissed, substituted by Israeli officers and their institutions were shut down.

Nonetheless, on the other side, Palestinian nationalist leadership succeeded in filling the institutional void created by years of Israeli rule by exploiting NGOs’ instruments in order to reduce the gap between people’s needs and the actual services the civil administration provided. In this way, even if they operated underground, Palestinian political parties were able to cement a fragmented population and to develop an institutional apparatus which could have helped transforming the local resistance struggle in a national one (Gordon, 2008: 153).

Then, under the Labor-Likud government (National Unity Coalition Government, 1984-88), settlement efforts have been further accelerated. As a consequence, in 1988, Israel had succeeded in confiscating 52% of West Bank’s land, on which soil 117 Jewish colonies have been built, and 40% of the land in the Gaza Strip, which was labelled as “state land” (Prior, 1999: 33).

\(^9\) Even because the former Labour member Moshe Dayan accepted to become Foreign Minister of the new government only if Begin decided to leave aside the issue of annexation.
All these developments made the Israeli exploitative and oppressive forces clearly apparent in Palestinians’ eyes and they became aware that the occupation was not intended as a temporary measure. Moreover, another factor which triggered the following Intifada, can be identified within the overall effect resulting from the policy of partial integration that Israel had carried out throughout the first twenty years of occupation, namely OT total economic dependency upon Israel. It manifested through obvious economic deprivation, land expropriation and rise in unemployment rates.

3.3 The internal closure (1987-2000)

The first exclusively Palestinian reaction to their masters was finally realized when the first Intifada broke out in 1987, as wide protests took place first in Gaza Strip and then, during the second or third week, clashes spread even within the West Bank. The catalyst for such manifestation was triggered by a car incident provoked by an Israeli vehicle which injured seven and killed four Palestinians while they were returning from work from Israel (Prior, 1999: 34). The next day, Palestinians took the street in Jabalya and, regardless of few exceptions, they started protesting mainly through pacific means, such as general strikes, parades, civilian disobedience, the illegal flying of Palestinian flags, the famous stone throwing and, most of all, a strategic use of both local and foreign mass medias (Kimmerling, 2003: 100).

Moreover, such actions spread rapidly among the whole OT and peaceful Palestinian manifestations were organized and coordinated at a national level by a stronger and unified nationalist leadership (NUC, National Unified Command) thanks to a decentralized network of popular committees\(^\text{100}\) and through bayanas (directives) which were clandestinely printed and sent all over the West Bank and within the Gaza Strip (Kimmerling, 2003: 100). Even Palestinians in Israel joined the uprisings by proclaiming the “Day for Peace”, a day in which Palestinians of both sides of the Green Line manifested against the occupation (Pappe, 2006: 234).

Although IDF’s troops responded violently, initially Israelis failed to take the First Intifada seriously and they underestimated its potential. In fact, the Intifada was not a sporadic social outburst which could be easily subsided, conversely it was an all-out confrontation, the final escalation of repeated clashes between Palestinians and the military, which happened on a regular basis from 1982 (Gordon, 2008: 148; Gazit, 2003:

\(^{100}\) Which were born during the period of the 1967-87 occupation, in order to organize social activities and to provide such basic social infrastructure that the Israeli civilian administration failed to provide.
None of the Israeli authorities within the OT was able to predict that such a widespread and long popular uprising was about to come (Gazit, 2003: 289). In 1988, the Minister of Defence of the national unity government, Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995), initiated the so-called “Iron Fist” policy by ordering a massive deployment of Israeli troops within the OT to repress the Intifada by violent means, anyway without using firearms, since the international media attention was focused on portraying the realities of the Intifada\textsuperscript{101}, but rather by deploying tear gas, systematic beatings and plastic bullets, as well as arbitrary detention and the complete closure of some Palestinian villages for several days (Kimmerling, 2003: 100; Gordon, 2008: 156).

With the aim of creating a leadership vacuum, Rabin even introduced a policy of mass incarceration, which was directed not only toward those Palestinians who effectively participated in the demonstration, but even toward those people who were simply suspected for being part of a political faction, such as Fatah or the Islamic Jihad (Gordon, 2008: 158). However, due to the continuous imprisonment, there was a continuous change within the Palestinian local leadership, as other young people took the place of the incarcerated leaders. Even torture was used as a mean to extract vital information, which could serve to counteract the “ticking bomb” threats (Gordon, 2008: 159).

Since the population was basically defenceless, such aggressive Israeli policies resulted in tens of thousands of Palestinians injured or even handicapped, including children and, most of all, women (Gordon, 2008: 157; Pappe, 2006: 233). In fact, during the period of the uprisings (1987-1991), women and children played a central role, as showed by the high number of casualties in which they were involved (Pappe, 2006: 236). Nonetheless, the punitive measures enacted by Israeli soldiers did not stop Palestinians from protesting, but rather made them more resolute to continue their struggle, even because now it was difficult for Israel to hide behind the policy of “normalization” and the means used to endure occupation were for all to see (Gazit, 2003: 293; Gordon, 2008: 166).

In the peak of the Intifada, in 1988, the PLO released from Algiers the Palestinian Declaration of Independence, in which the Palestinian National Council declared the existence of a Palestinian state whose border were defined by the Green Line\textsuperscript{102} (Prior, 1999: 35). In this way, Arafat recognized the existence of Israel in principle, and he even stressed that, although the partitioning of Palestine was a crime against its native population, it was still a necessity to put an end to the conflict (Pappe, 2006: 239).

Consequently to such uprising, Israel decided, on one side, to stop the “partial integration” process within the OT -that it had initiated in 1967- while, on the other side, Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank were fully annexed within Israeli borders, so that they would be excluded from any future territorial compromise between Israelis and Palestinians (Pappe, 2006: 231).

Moreover, from 1988 until the end of the Intifada, Israel applied within the OT the “entry-permit” policy, which differentiated from the “permit regime” -used in the previous twenty years (1967-1987) - because this

\textsuperscript{101} It was the first time since 1948 that international networks described the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by using Palestinian narrative.

\textsuperscript{102} The Line has been removed from Israeli maps and textbooks during the 1960s.
time there was an individual mechanism of differentiation, which basically denied the entrance in Israel to a
person because of his personal background, preventing him from going to work. In particular, those who were
known for having actively participated within nationalist parties’ struggle were prevented from leaving the
OT (Gordon, 2008: 161).

Furthermore, in order to obtain the permit card (now magnetic), Palestinians were subjected to strict
interrogatories in order to obtain information about their tax payment, family ties, political activities,
profession and even consumption basket and, if something appeared to be unfavourable, their entry within
Israel as well as the travel between West Bank and Gaza Strip was denied (Gordon, 2008: 161).

Most importantly, Israeli officers offered to Palestinians freedom of movement in exchange for their
collaboration within the GSS, the Israeli Security Service operating within the OT. Such mechanism offered
a real time control of the life within the OT, since it used the denial to work as a form of collective punishment
aimed at promoting a “correct conduct” (Gordon, 2008: 163).

Meanwhile, Palestinian OT leadership operating on the ground started to meet in the hotel “Orient House” in
order to plan their diplomatic strategy. When the Gulf War broke out in 1990, they decided to openly support
Saddam Hussein, Israel further tightened Palestinians’ freedom of movement. For this moment on, in fact, the
was a blanket ban on Palestinian mobility, with few exceptions made from workers, merchants, humanitarian
cases, collaborators or important Palestinians personalities (Hass, 2002: 7; Graham, 2005: 31). Nonetheless,
there was still no proper border between the OT and Israel, and it was easy for Palestinians to sneak out;
however, if they were caught, the were subjected to pay high charges (Hass, 2002: 7).

What changed completely the approach toward the OT was the economic burden Israel was facing since the
Intifada broke out. In fact, Israel had a higher military spending\textsuperscript{103} while its incomes were worsening, due to
the fall in Israeli exports toward the OT (Gordon, 2008: 167). People became more aware of the burdens
arising from occupation, as Israeli modes of control were not producing any change.

However, Palestinians paid a higher price: since they were prevented from working in Israel and the OT lacked
the basic infrastructure for their employment, many Palestinians remained without stable sources of livelihood,
and they experienced a drop in their living condition (Gordon, 2008: 167).

In 1992, Israeli elections were won by a left-wing coalition\textsuperscript{104} led by the Labour Party and under the leadership
of Rabin, who elaborated a strategy to retake control over the OT: since Israel could not suppress the Intifada,
it would have to re-organize its means of control in order to normalize the occupation once again, this time by
making it less direct (Gordon, 2008:170).

In his first speech within the Knesset as Prime Minister (13 July 1992), Rabin stated that he intended to achieve
peace and, in order to show Israeli goodwill, he ordered to stop the construction of settlements in the OT area
(Prior, 1999: 36). Actually, he never kept this promise but, on the contrary, the construction of settlement as
well as the expansion of the previous ones were fostered, primarily as a mean to acquire more and more

\textsuperscript{103} Even deployed for the security of Jewish settlers.
\textsuperscript{104} With the centre-leftist party “Meretz” and the Arab Democratic Party.
territories before the negotiations started (Prior, 1999: 36). Moreover, in 1993, Rabin imposed a general closure of the Gaza Strip, limiting the access of food or humanitarian help, and he even ordered to build an electric fence around this territory, dividing Gaza not only from Israel but also from the West Bank.

The beginning of political negotiation between Israel and the PLO was favoured by the aftermaths of the Gulf War, since Syrian ruler, Hafez al-Assad (1930-2000), pledged the U.S. to include the Golan Heights within an international discussion forum, as a reward for the Syrian participation inside the US-led anti-Saddam coalition (Pappe, 2006: 239). So, the Palestinian question was discussed within the Madrid Peace Conference (1991) but nothing came out from this discussion. However, it triggered the beginning of diplomatic relations between Israel and the PLO leadership, which started with informal meetings in Oslo in the same year (Pappe, 2006: 240).

The Oslo negotiations were basically conducted along Israeli lines, since the PLO leadership lacked any professional expertise on legal and strategic matters and, in addition, Palestinians lost the support of a Superpower (the USSR was dissolved in 1989), so the balance power was in favour of the Israelis, who could still count on US favours (Pappe, 2006: 243). Therefore, such accords largely favoured the continuity of Israeli occupation through a strategy of “outsourcing”, by which the Jewish leadership transferred to the PA the responsibility over Palestinian people, but basically Israel continued to control, even if remotely and indirectly, the majority of the occupied land without the burden of managing its population (Gordon, 2008: 169).

Such efforts materialized in the form of a Declaration of Principles 105 (1993) signed in Washington, in which the parties merely agreed on what would have been the subjects of their future negotiations, namely the question of Jerusalem, how to deal with refugees and Jewish settlements within the OT. In addition, the document established that the control of West Bank and Gaza Strip should be gradually transferred to PLO, whose responsibility over such areas was recognized by Israel (Pappe, 2006: 242).

In fact, in 1994, the newly born Palestinian Authority (PA) received the control over the Palestinians in Jericho and in Gaza. Israel even promised to grant mobility between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as to economically sustain the PA in its efforts to develop the basic economic and social infrastructures within the OT (Kimmerling, 2003: 104). Nevertheless, the authority of the PA was strongly limited only to the functions dealing with Palestinians every-day life matters within its areas (Pappe, 2006: 244).

In exchange, Israel required to stop the guerrilla at once and to peacefully implement the interim agreement. Moreover, the article 31 of the Oslo agreement required to both sides not to advance in any actions aimed at changing the status of neither the West Bank nor the Gaza Strip (Pappe, 2006: 243). However, Israel engaged in a massive outlay for the construction of settlements within the OT 106 and highways connecting them therefore, during the following years, Palestinians’ mobility was further limited by Israeli policemen, which had furthered their control over the basic connecting infrastructures and therefore they could inflict enormous brutality at Palestinians willing to pass through the checkpoints (Pappe, 2006: 244).

105 A sort of preamble to the Oslo Accords.
A manifest example of the disparity between Israel and Palestine can be found within the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations (1994). Although, according to such Protocol, Israel was theoretically ending 25 years of economic domination over the OT, actually the regime drawn up in this document was very similar to the one realized during the 1960s, with some modifications (Arnon, 2007: 15). In fact, it entailed the creation of a “Customs Union” between Israel and Palestine, although Palestinians preferred a Free Trade Area, which could have let the PLO to decide over its own trade regime with the rest of the world and moreover, it would have allowed both parties within the agreement to exchange goods without trade limitations or customs duties (Arnon, 2007: 16).

Nonetheless, Israel managed to re-impose its will, by using both the carrot and the stick: basically, Israel threatened to deny to Palestinians the entrance within the Israeli labour market if the PLO refused to accept the customs union (Arnon, 2007: 16). Therefore, since Israel never created the basic economic infrastructures within the OT and Palestinian economy was still dependent on its workers’ remittances, which were ultimately dependent from the possibility to enter in Israel for work, the PLO leadership had to forcibly accept Israeli will.

Moreover, according to such protocol, Palestinians could not have their own currency and, even though the PLO could collect revenues, it could not decide its own trade regime nor its monetary policies (Gordon, 2008: 174; Pappe, 2006: 274). Therefore, by preserving its control over the economic sphere, Israel was even able to limit the proper functioning of the PA, as the latter struggled to provide the population with most of the needed basic services (Gordon, 2008: 175).

In addition, in 1994, the PLO and Israeli Labour government signed the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities, which dealt with the judicial and security spheres’ power within West Bank and Gaza. For what concerns the legal field, the PA could only confirm secondary legislation, which anyway should have been consistent with both the existing agreements and laws, while Israel had responsibility of enacting the legislation within the OT and, moreover, extraterritoriality as well as freedom of movement had to be granted to all Jewish settlers inhabiting the West Bank or the Gaza Strip (Gordon, 2008: 175).

Within this agreement, Israel supported the establishment of a Palestinian police force (consisting of maximum 30,000 units), which was responsible for maintaining internal security over PA’s jurisdiction and for preventing terrorist attacks against Israel (Kimmerling, 2003: 104). Therefore, the PA security personnel operated within the West Bank not to safeguard Palestinian citizens from external attacks or against the occupying power, but rather it was forced to work in cooperation with Israeli forces in order to protect Israeli security’s interests (Gordon, 2008: 189).

Such cooperation would be institutionalized by the Wye River Memorandum (1998), according to which the PA police was obliged to investigate, prosecute and punish all persons who were suspected of perpetuating act of terror. In this way, the PA police was forced to serve as an Israeli instrument to manage the OT population without deploying Israeli own forces and, since the Jewish state threatened to close the borders or

to redeploy its troops inside the OT if the PA did not showed proof that they had advance in concrete actions to stop terrorism, such imposition was accepted (Gordon, 2008: 190).

The use of coercive means by the Palestinian police forces, coupled with the PA inability to manage its population due to the lack of infrastructures, would lead to the PA de-legitimization which, in turn, had two implications. The first one was that the PA further deployed intimidation measures in order to impose its authority over Palestinians, while the second implication is that, as long as the PA resulted weak, Israel was more empowered (Gordon, 2008: 192).

Along with these measures, Israel managed to fragment the Palestinian territory with the Oslo II (Taba) agreement in 1995. According to such document, Palestinian territory was divided into different zones, according to the nature of their security control: the PA should have to assume control over the so-called “area A”, which comprehended the major Palestinian cities (4% of West Bank and Gaza Strip), while the rest of the territory would be divided into two zone, one (area C) controlled exclusively by Israel (which comprehends Jewish settlement and the Jordan Valley) and another one (area B) under a joint Israeli-Palestinian control (Kimmerling, 2003: 103; Hass, 2002: 9).

Called “internal closure” and developed by Shimon Peres (1923-2016) through the creation of ““bantustans”/enclaves”, such system has the aim to separate villages from other villages and people from their neighbors in order to secure Jewish settlements. Moreover, it provides a useful instrument to impede the basic sinews of Palestinian society, to jeopardize West Bank’s territorial integrity in order to create difficult-to-handle everyday problems as well as providing a complex method of authorization to pass every zone (Graham, 2005: 31).

In fact, while the PA had “full” control over an area that basically consisted of a small archipelago, Israel managed to both secure the contiguity of its dominions as well as the discontinuity of the area A by the creation of strategic Israeli corridors connecting the different Jewish settlements, which passed though the West Bank (Gordon, 2008: 178). In order to better understand how deep such separation was, we shall think to the case of Hebron. In fact, the city has been divided into two zones, H1 and H2, respectively under Palestinian and Israeli control, basically denying Palestinians to move freely even within the same city.

Therefore, trough the Oslo agreements, Israel was basically able to free itself from the burden of managing Palestinian population as well as to preserve its sovereignty over the Palestinian territories, not only by restoring the status quo ante (occupation with normalization), but even by further masking the occupation so that to give Palestinians the impression that they have been finally freed from foreign domination (Gordon, 2008: 181).

In fact, on one side, Israel was able to further its control over Palestinian people and goods by imposing months-long closures of the area A, impeding both the entrance and exit of people, even workers, and goods (even food), thus basically managing Palestinian standards of living through the control of Palestinian

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108 This term has been deployed to describe the South African apartheid regime.
109 They were justified as security measures against Palestinian terrorism.
unemployment rate as well as its income and its supplies’ availability (Arnon, 2007: 20). On the other side, Israel showed it was supporting the state-formation process as, in 1996, Palestinians participated in their first national elections for the establishment of both the first Palestinian legislative council and the election of the President (Gordon, 2008: 181).

The majority of the votes went to Al-Fatah, led by Mahmoud Abbas (also known as Abu Mazin), who took over the sulta\textsuperscript{110} and, most of all, he had to deal with a growing Islamic opposition which was carrying out terrorist attack from 1994 (Kimmerling, 2003: 273). Abbas advanced its proposal for the further negotiations: the withdrawal of Israel from the territories it had occupied in 1967, a shared government for Jerusalem and a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem (Pappe, 2006: 274).

Even Israel was facing internal dissents, as showed by Israelis’ violent demonstrations against the Oslo peace agreements, which culminated in the assassination of Rabin by a Jewish orthodox in 1995. After his murder, in 1996, people gave their support to the right faction of the Likud, now led by Netanyahu (Kimmerling, 2003: 116). He did not change radically Israeli policy toward the Oslo accords, on the contrary, he continued to fulfil the obligations delineated within them, such as the withdrawal of Israeli troops from part of Hebron (Pappe, 2006: 275).

Conversely, at the same time, he even continued with the construction of settlements around Jerusalem and he even opened some tunnels under the Haram al-Sharif (the Jewish Temple Mount), an act that Muslims interpreted as a threat against their sacred places (Kimmerling, 2003: 117). This turn of events obviously radicalized both Israeli and Palestinian positions, as the number of settlements increased as well as the number of terrorist attack perpetrated against Israelis and people did not feel safe anymore, so tensions arose. It was evident that the peace agreements negotiated in the 1990s were destined to fail.

3.4 The demographic wall (2000-now)

In 2000, Bill Clinton invited Ehud Barak, the new Israeli Labour Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat to a peace summit at Camp David, in order to further improve Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. Such summit was meant to solve the famous three issues numbered within the Oslo peace agreements, namely the Right of Return, the question of Jerusalem and how to deal with Jewish settlements. Actually, those questions never came up within

\textsuperscript{110} It means “regime” or “government”.

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the discussion, as basically this meeting was set up only in order to advance Israeli humiliating and non-tractable proposal, a so-called “peace of the brave” (Pappe, 2006: 273; Kimmerling, 2003: 122). Palestinians could not hope neither for the return of refugees nor for the establishment of their own independent state with their own capital, but rather Barak offered them to withdraw its troops only from part of the West Bank and totally from Gaza, in exchange for Israeli annexation of three main settlements blocs placed within the West Bank (Ariel, Maale Adumim and Gush Etzion), all the Eastern Jerusalem settlements and a permanent Israeli military presence in the Eastern part of West Bank, basically leaving to Palestinians only 15% of their original motherland (Graham, 2005: 32).

Moreover, tensions broke out over Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount sovereignty in fact, Jewish strongly sustained the idea that they should rule over this sacred place because, under its foundation, lied the ruins of the First Temple (the Temple of King Solomon) while, according to Arafat, the ruins were not placed in Jerusalem, but perhaps in Nablus, therefore he stood Arab claims over the Temple Mount (Kimmerling, 2003: 123).

Then, Ariel Sharon, the new Likud’s leader, contributed to the complete failure of the peace process by an act that would lead to its victory in the 2001 Israeli election. In fact, in order to show its reluctance toward both the Oslo peace process and any concessions to Palestinians, he walked into the Al-Aqsa compound guarded by fully-equipped officers (Gordon, 2008: 197).

It was the *casus belli* of the Second Palestinian Intifada, which broke out exactly the next day to Sharon’s walk, on 28 September 2000. In fact, after the Friday prayers in Jerusalem, people started to peacefully protest against both the humiliating Israeli peace proposal and the Sharon visit, but even against the Fatah-dominated PA and its failure to respond to people’s need (Shlaim, 2014: 1,914). They had to face the violent reaction of Israeli police, which killed thirteen unarmed Palestinians (Pappe, 2006: 277). Soon after, demonstrations erupted all over Gaza Strip and West Bank, originating a full scale-uprising, that would be known as the al-Aqsa Intifada (Shlaim, 2014: 1,787).

As Israeli soldiers escalated in their violence and brutality, social outbursts degenerated into an ethnic war between Palestinians and armed Jewish settlers or proper Israeli inhabitants (Kimmerling, 2003: 125). Differently from the First Intifada, this time Palestinians responded to violence with violence, as they used firearms and, most of all, suicide bombers (Gordon, 2008: 198). In fact, old and new, Islamist and communist Palestinian militias all agreed on the principle of unity of action as well as on the fact that the use of suicide bombing was the sole way to end Israeli occupation (Pappe, 2006: 277).

Deployed as an instrument to respond to the asymmetry between Israeli power and Palestinian fighters, the massive use of suicide bombers turned out to be an effective tactics from the Palestinians’ point of view, as one single man could kill tens of Israeli civilians. Those men became Palestinians heroes, who martyred themselves for the freedom of their motherland and for Palestinian nationalist’ cause (Kimmerling, 2003: 126).

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111 It is the Islam’s third holiest place.
112 The Temple Mount was inside this compound.
113 During the First Intifada only Islamic groups used terrorism while now such tactic was used even by secular groups.
Moreover, such attacks were able to completely paralyze Israelis every-day life since Israelis personal security was at stake.

The use of kamikaze by Palestinians gave to Israel a pretext to deploy its far superior lethal force. In fact, as the Intifada degenerated into a short of war, Israel advanced a more permissive open-fire policy, which enabled soldiers to shot people even when there was no life-threatening danger (Gordon, 2008: 201).

Another instrument that has been used by IDF troops consisted in the use of extrajudicial executions through aerial assassinations, in open disregard with international humanitarian laws. During these executions, IDF soldiers accidentally killed even a great number of bystanders as well as Palestinian leading figures which had nothing to do with terrorism (Kimmerling, 2003: 148).

Moreover, after the beginning of U.S. “war on terror” in 2001 and after that a kamikaze killed 29 people and injured other 150 during the seder in the city of Netanya on 27 March 2002, Sharon advanced the “Operation Defensive Shield”, which was aimed at dismantling all Palestinian terror infrastructures, capturing suspects and confiscating weapons (Kimmerling, 2003: 142). Actually, such operation had several undeclared objectives. In fact, contrary to what was established within the previous 1993 accords, the IDF superseded the PA authority in the area A, as Israeli soldiers freely operated in such territory as they though would fit (Shlaim, 2014: 1,907). The methods they used implied means as blockades, imposition of curfews as well as the complete paralysis of Palestinian social services.

In fact, the next day, Israeli troops and tanks invaded the West Bank and, by using the pretext to drive out terrorists, they destroyed both Palestinian basic infrastructures as well as institutions like universities, mosques, churches and hospitals used to manage the population, and Israel imposed prolonged blanket curfews on several Palestinian cities (Gordon, 2008: 203-204). Hence, Israel re-occupied much of the areas from where it had previously withdrawn and it had succeeded in isolating Arafat in Ramallah (Pappe, 2006: 278). According to B’tselem, the Israeli Informational Centre for Human Right within the OT, 2,202 Palestinians were killed throughout the Second Intifada. In addition, it has been reported that IDF soldiers used Palestinian civilians as human shield.

Such Israeli response to this Intifada reflects the way in which the Jewish state was intended to deal with Palestinian territory from Oslo on. In fact, in contrast with the other phases of the occupation, now Israel had completely abandoned both the idea of directly managing Palestinian population as well as leaving this function to the PA and instead Israeli leadership was moving toward the application of the separation principle, which was considered to be more effective for upholding the occupation (Gordon, 2008: 199-200).

In such a way, Israel’s interest in managing Palestinians was completely put aside in favour of the use much more violent methods in order to crush not only Palestinian latest revolt, but even any Palestinian attempt to self-government by undermining the PA leadership, seen as the ultimate source of pressure against the Israeli plan (Shlaim, 2014: 1,911).

114 9/11 Twin Tower attack carried out by al-Qaeda leader, Osama Bin Laden.
115 Ritual Jewish Passover meal.
Therefore, the purpose of this “disengagement” was to stop any political process until Palestinian leadership would be willing to accept a settlement based on Israeli terms (Graham, 2006: 20). In order to realize such effort, Israel engaged in what Kimmerling calls “politicide” meaning “a process finally aimed to the dissolution of Palestinian population as a legitimate social, political and economic entity [...] the process includes the use of a wide range of social, political and military activities directed toward the destruction of the political and national existence of the entire Palestinian community in order to deny every possibility of self-determination”\(^{116}\).

According to this view, in 2002, the Israeli government initiated to work to the construction of a permanent barrier with the official aim of being a temporary measure to secure Israel from Palestinian terrorist attacks (Gordon, 2008: 212). Actually, the so-called “Iron Wall” meant to separate the West Bank from both the Jewish state and the Gaza Strip as well as to secure Israeli annexation of Jewish settlements. In addition, the permanent barrier responded to Israeli belief according to which a settlement agreement could be found only after Israel’s unilaterally definition of its borders\(^{117}\). Accordingly, the wall has been built deep inside West Bank, as a mean to further confiscate Palestinian land and in order to encircle Jewish settlements, so to incorporate them into Israel properly (Gordon, 2008: 212).

Moreover, not only the Wall responded to the incapacity of Sharon to militarily repress the Intifada, but it could even represent a solution to the “native problem”. In fact, although “before 2002, around 300,000 Jewish people colonized the West Bank and Gaza through 160 settlements and Israelis constituted 15% of the entire population in the area” (Kimmerling, 2003: 42), in Arnon Sofer\(^{118}\)’s opinion, “until 2020, 15.1 million people will live in the territory of historical Palestine but only 6.5 million of them will be Jewish. In addition, 20 years from now, the Jewish majority will decrease from 81% to 65% even within Israeli borders” (Kimmerling, 2003: 20). So, Sharon opted for the so-called hitkansut or “ingathering” policy, which implied the take-over of as much land as possible, with few Palestinians as possible (Pappe, 2006: 251).

Born in Sharon’s mind as “Bantustan plan”, the Wall was constructed along a route that ran entirely within the Arab land (and, obviously, East Jerusalem) and it divided farmers from their field, students from their schools as well as entire villages from their sources of water (Shlaim, 2014: 1,933). It annexed 10% of the West Bank and 49,000 Palestinians but it was meant to push Palestinians toward the eastern big Palestinian cities (“silent transfer”), so that Israeli territory could be further expanded (Graham, 2005: 35).

In fact, through settlement expansions and the system of stratified internal closure, which internally divides the West Bank in separated “cantons” (Ramallah and Jenin with a corridor to Jericho, Bethlem and Hebron plus Gaza, which was disconnected from West Bank), the barrier meant to transform these Palestinian enclaves into disconnected semi-independent entities that will arguably become a united independent Palestinian state.

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116 Original text in Italian.
117 Such project was initially advanced by Ze’ev Jabotinsky already in 1923 as a way to deal with Arabs from a position of superior security and strength.
118 Arnon Sofer is a geographer from the University of Haifa which helped Sharon in developing the “iron wall policy”.
Along with the construction of the wall, Israel introduced a new and stricter permit regime, according to which it is decided who can live within the areas closed by the Wall as well as who can pass through it, at what time and through which gate (Gordon, 2008: 214). Moreover, Palestinians who live near the settlement area are subject to Jewish settlers, which are the major authority within this zone, since, by using the pretext of security, they can convince Israeli soldiers to follow their direct orders.

Within this unfavourable context, in 2003 the Quartet (UN, U.S., EU and Russia) launched the “Road Map” for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It consisted in a series of steps which both entities should have to undertake separately but simultaneously, and which had to lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state by 2005 (Shlaim, 2014: 1,954).

However, while Arafat committed its government to the implementation of the Road Map, Sharon did want to give up all its efforts in undermining both Palestinian sovereignty and the two-state solution. He refused to accept the Plan as it was, the Israeli government issued a lot of reservations regarding its implementation, most notably, they asked to the PA to proceed to the complete dismantling and disarming of the Palestinian militant groups (Pappe, 2006: 292).

Arafat and the Fatah group, as well as Hamas\textsuperscript{119}, announced that they would accept the unconditional ceasefire (or \textit{hudna}\textsuperscript{120}), but the Islamic Jihad group did not and it was virtually impossible for the PA to force the last militant group from carrying out violent actions, since its capabilities has been significantly reduced by Israel itself (Pappe, 2006: 292; Shalim, 2014: 1,965). Moreover, the cease-fire has been ignored by Israel in the first place, since it continued to build and expand Jewish settlements and to arrest and assassinate Palestinian activists, such as Muhammad Seder, the chief of the Islamic Jihad armed faction in Hebron (Pappe, 2006: 293). Such Israeli provocation caused a new wave of suicide bombings retaliation which gave to Israel the excuse to use military power to complete eliminate terrorism and in 2004, Israeli Cabinet authorized the IDF to enact operations aimed at the complete elimination of Hamas leadership (Shlaim, 2014: 1,979).

Few months later, the new Hamas leadership made a secret deal\textsuperscript{121} with Israel, according to which Israel accepted to stop the assassinations in exchange for Hamas promise not to deploy terror tactics (Shlaim, 2014: 1,982). At this point, Hamas leaders initiated to prepare the ground to be integrated within the PA, while Israel advanced the “Unilateral Disengagement Plan” from Gaza which, after all, was the poorest piece of Palestinian land and even the most problematic and populated one (1.4 million Palestinian inhabitants lived within 330 square kilometres) (Shlaim, 2014: 1,992).

This choice has been conditioned by the demographic logic in fact, if Israel did not retire from Gaza, considering the Arab birth rate here (5.5/6.0 children per woman), one day the Jewish State would have been responsible of millions of Palestinians (Graham, 2006: 20). Since Sharon promoted the “disengagement” strategy as it was a further Israeli effort for promoting peace and, as a reward for having pulled out 8,000

\textsuperscript{119} In March 2005, Hams joined Al-Fatah and, together with other eleven Palestinian organization, they signed the Cairo Declaration, according to which all of them accepted a one-year long cease-fire and to participate within the Palestinian national election the following year.

\textsuperscript{120} Arabic term which means pause in fighting which could lead to peace.

\textsuperscript{121} It has been a secret until the publication of Shlomi Edar’s book in 2012.
settlers from the Strip, the hawkish Israeli Prime Minister even obtained from U.S. the approval for the plan, for strengthening the six main Jewish settlement blocs on the West Bank as well as for the denial of the right of return (Shlaim, 2014: 2,004-2,010).

In July 2004, the Palestinian delegation within the General Assembly requested to the Court of Justice a non-binding opinion on both the Wall and Israeli settlements, which were found in open breach with international law (Safty, 2009: 285). In November 2004, Arafat died due to high levels of polonium found in his body but the precise cause of his death was never established. Therefore, in January 2005, presidential elections were held in the Palestinian territories and the moderate Fatah candidate, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin) won (Shlaim, 2014: 2,025).

In 2006, when all the Palestinian organization agreed on solving the conflict by diplomatic and political means, using the pretext that a soldier has been imprisoned, the new Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, started a large-scale operation within Gaza (“Operation Summer Rains”) which entailed mass arrests, air-craft and destruction of properties and infrastructures (Hilal, 2007: 22).

As a result, the 2006 Palestinian election saw the rise of Hamas as the main Fatah competitor and a consequent Islamization of a part of Palestinian society (Hilal, 2007: 22). Therefore, the popularity of this organization steams from both Israeli repressive and humiliating attitude in dealing with Palestinians as well as from the de-legitimation toward the PA leadership, whose historical concessions to the Jewish had only furthered the abuse of Palestinian human rights (Gordon, 2008: 219). This power struggle was triggered even by the condition of scarce resources that Palestinians were experiencing, due to the economic sanctions and the internal closures imposed by Israel on both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Gordon, 2008: 233-235). As sectarian clashes erupted between these two groups and Palestinians were experiencing famine and general scarcity, Olmert realized the destruction of the Palestinian public and private spheres, succeeding in its first attempt to politicide (Kimmerling, 2003: 185).

At this point, Israel decided to basically sabotage Palestinian democracy by undermining what it considered being the main threat, so the Hamas leadership -which, unlike the Fatah one, would have never accepted to settle peace on Israeli terms- through the use of both economic and political means to isolate Gaza, such as the use of blockade. Although it was a useful instrument to prevent weapons from reaching Gaza, the blockade restricted even the flow of food and forced civilian population to enormous and inhuman suffering (Shlaim, 204: 2,043).

Then, in 2008, the “Operation Cast Lead” was launched with the official aim of securing Israeli civilians from Palestinian air rockets but its actual objective was to drive Hamas out of power. Consequently, the IDF invaded Gaza and carried out a massacre which degenerated into a humanitarian catastrophe, as 1,417 Gazans died.

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122 In 2013 his body has been exhumed and Swiss scientists reported such news. Israel has always denied having any involvement in Arafat’s death.
123 Sharon suffered a stroke and he never recovered. He retired from public life and he died in his ranch in 2014.
124 During 2006, the IDF destroyed 292 Palestinian houses within the OT (Safty, 2009: 286).
(compared to only 13 Israelis) and more than 5,000 were injured, most of them were civilians (Shlaim, 2014: 2,051). Nonetheless, the operation did not reach its primary aim, on the contrary, it only strengthened Hamas position as it legitimized radical tendencies even in the eyes of those who were sceptical.

From now on, the leadership of Israel would be led by Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud) who recently has been re-elected for its fifth mandate, despite four accusations of corruption. His hawkish, nationalistic and Zionist attitude has brought about a continuous expansion of Jewish settlements as well as the construction of new ones in order to reach the “Greater Israel” project through a total Judaization of “Judea and Samaria” (West Bank) and any attempt to peace efforts has been essentially blocked to the point that the 2013 Likud manifesto included an explicit rejection for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

In fact, the 2011 Arab Spring was interpreted by Netanyahu not as a larger demonstrations calling for freedom as well as for the recognition of Arab political and civil rights, but it was seen by Israeli leadership as an attempt led by Islamist extremists to annihilate the Jewish state (Shlaim, 2014: 2,068). Therefore, such outbursts were used as a pretext to justify a permanent Israeli military control over the Jordan Valley. Now more than before, security has become central in shaping Israeli decision-making process and it has been realized mainly by a massive deployment of Israeli military power, justified as a mean for protecting Jews against the Arab foes (Amar-Dahl, 2017: 197). Moreover, recently Trump has recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, thus supporting Israeli territorial expansionism through annexation.

3.6 The “Herrenvolk Republic” or “Ethnocracy”

Israel is classified as the sole Middle Eastern democracy. Who states that obviously separates Israel from the territory it has occupied in 1967 and, moreover, even if we consider in our analysis only Israel proper, they ignore the differential treatment that Israeli state-system reserves for non-Jewish people, and so they refuse to take into account the central role that the religion has in shaping Israeli regime.

In fact, although Israelis retain some degree of freedom of expression, they enjoy political and civil rights and the presence of regular (but not inclusive) free elections whereas an independent judiciary system grants the check and balances mechanism, the regime has some characteristics which cannot be labelled as properly

125 Since Israel has no defined borders, Israel proper has ceased to exist after 1967 so, it cannot be considered as a spatial unit of analysis for Israeli polity.
democratic, first of all the existing inequality between citizens and before the law, based on ethnicity and which are anchored to constitutional law (Ghanem, Rouhana & Yiftachel, 1998: 256).

For instance, recently the Israeli regime is becoming more “fascist”, since it has experienced a general reduction of the freedom of expression, that is strictly connected to an increasing tendency to label as “treason” any type of opposition to the current political line (Kimmerling, 2003: 11). Moreover, as noted before, Israeli society has been deeply militarized, as there is a strong link between the military and the political apparatus, due mainly to the fact that, as Israeli leadership has always behaved as Israel were in a constant state of emergency, it promoted an “ideologization” of security, thus its depoliticization (Kimmerling, 2003:12; Amar-Dahl, 2017: 189). Last but not least, Israel has embraced a definition of the “other” (Palestinians), which is seen as a threat to both Israel as a nation and to each Israeli at individual level and which creates a clear internal cleavage within the society, mainly due to the “demographic problem” (Kimmerling, 2003: 13). In fact, as we have analysed, the maintenance of the Jewish demographic majority has always been the primary aim of Israeli policies.

Therefore, several new notions have been created in order to define Israeli particular type of democracy: the “Herrenvolk Republic” coined by Kimmerling or the term “Ethnocracy” as described by Yiftachel and the concept of “Ethnic democracy” of Smootha. The main differences between these definitions are that while Kimmerling considers Israeli regime as authoritarian, for Smootha the regime can be defined as “democratic” since it retains some important democratic features, while for Yiftachel the regime is neither democratic nor authoritarian, as only partial political rights are granted to ethnic minorities.

Regardless of the specific definition of the Israeli regime, which is not our immediate purpose here, the scholars focus on the existing systematic inequalities between Jews and Arabs within Israel and on the constitutional relationship between the ethnic majoritarian group and the ethnic minority, which is characterized by an institutionalization of a segregating system (Yiftachel, 1999: 375).

Therefore, they define the Israeli regime as a two-tier legal system which distinguish two categories of people: citizens (ethnic majority, Ashkenazim Jews) and non-citizens, which can be divided into two further subcategories, non-Jews and Mizrahim. The former enjoy full political and civil rights, while the latter have no rights at all – non-Jews non-citizen Palestinians - (Kimmerling, 2003: 40) or, at least, only partial political rights – Mizrahim and Israeli Palestinian citizens (Yiftachel, 2000: 730).

These ethno-class stratification is the direct by product of one of the main characteristics of the way in which the Jewish state has been established, namely the Judaization process, which has been carried out through the ethnic cleansing of the territory from its native inhabitants, the refusal to recognize their right of return, the dispossession of the Arab lands and the gradual establishment of Jewish settlement on such de-Arabized territory. As we know, through this process, Israel has facilitated the unilateral seizure of territory and

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126 In fact, a lot of Israeli officers entered into the political sphere and they were able to fill relevant positions, like Sharon who became the Israeli Prime Minister.

127 The Judaization process (even called de-Arabization or ethnic cleansing) has been described throughout the previous paragraphs.
resources, thus the accumulation power by one expanding ethnos (Yiftachel, 2006: 35). Therefore, the ethno-
class system, which has been created through the same settling mechanism, still persists today as the allocation
of rights and privileges depends mainly on ethnicity.

What it is new is that the different waves of immigration, as well as the geographic placement of Jews within
Israel and in the former Palestinian territory, has generated the sub-classes of Askenazim and Mizrahim. The
formers are Western Jews that migrated into Israel between 1949 and 1952 and which inhabited inside the
Green Line, within the territory of the former Israeli communal villages. They occupied and still occupy the
upper ranks of the society within the political, cultural and economic sphere, as they were able to maintain
their superiority by politically and culturally subjecting later immigrants to the respect of their values, which
basically made them retain the organizational and political resources of the sovereign state (Kimmerling, 2003:

The latter are Middle Eastern and North African Jews which migrated into Israel between 1950s and mid-
1960s and which inhabited in the areas adjacent to major Palestinian cities, within the former distressed
development towns, so segregated enclaves (Yiftachel, 2000: 728). The Mizrahim community has been
marginalized -because of their Arab culture- through its placement within the geographic and economic
peripheries, and the establishment of an uneven development mechanism based on a core-periphery relation.
However, since they mobilized, today they have been assimilated within the Jewish middle-class and urban
population, although the society is still Ashkenazi-dominated (Yiftachel, 2000: 728).

Moreover, Israel has implemented the principle of decoupling citizenship from geography while connecting it
to one’s religious faith, which allows Jews from all over the world to have automatic citizenship granted as
soon as they enter into Israel while, at the same time, Arabs inside the Green Line suffer from different forms
of discrimination (Yiftachel, 2006: 85). Consequently, in Israel the notion of “demos” is not an identifiable
reality, since it does not cover the Israeli population as a whole, but rather it entails only a precise category of
people inside and outside proper Israeli boundaries (the ethnic majority and its diasporas so, Jews from all
over the world), while indigenous people are basically excluded from the political and cultural realms, as they
are treated as second class citizens (Yiftachel, 2000: 730). Therefore, the Jewish citizens of the other countries
of the world virtually have more rights than Israeli Arab citizens.

The status quo has been achieved thanks to the duality between the democratic façade and the underlying non-
democratic logic of the Israeli regime, which facilitates dispossession, control and the marginalization of the
non-dominant ethnic groups (Yiftachel, 2000: 728).

In fact, Israel does not have a written and rigid Constitution, but rather its legal system is based on several
Basic Laws, which can anyway be amended by a supermajority within the Knesset, as well as on the Halacha,
Jewish religious law deriving from the Torah, which must be respected (Baldin, 2005: 102). The constitutional
structure of Israel has been defined within the two 1992 Basic Laws128 as “Jewish (not Israeli) and democratic

128 Freedom of Occupation and Human Dignity and Freedom.
state”, reflecting the underlining tensions between secular and religious instances within Israel society (Baldin, 2005: 94). However, the main obstacle to democracy does not lie within the Jewish nature of the state, but rather in the process of Judaization that Israel has been carrying out since its early stages and within other successive laws which furthered the Jewishness of Israel (Yiftachel, 2006: 105; Yiftachel, 1999: 370).

On the legal side, the Jewish character of the State has been strengthened by several laws further passed within the Knesset and, since the legal system is fluid (constitution-in-the-making), it can be deepened any time. For instance, already in 1950, with the Law of Return, every Jew had the right to go to Israel while, with the 1952 Nationality Law, Israel automatically granted citizenship to all Jews settled in Israel, while it was denied to Palestinians born within Israeli borders (Yiftachel 1999: 370). Successively, in 2003 the “Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law” imposed severe and draconian restrictions on the access to both citizenship and residency for West Bank’s resident Palestinian spouses, husbands and children of Israeli-Palestinians, basically denying to Palestinian citizens the right to unite with their families (Peled, 2007: 604). Moreover, the discrimination of the Arab minority has been carried out even by means of interpretation of the law, or sentences which have further strengthened the domination mechanism.

Furthermore, the Jewish character of the state is manifested through several legal mechanisms which enforce the central role of religion. In fact, since there is no separation between temporal and spiritual power (Yiftachel, 2000: 737), the respect of the Jewish religious precepts has to be observed even by non-Jews. This system is enforced through mechanisms such as the legal sanctioning of the observance of Jewish holidays in the public sphere as well as the exclusive religious courts’ jurisdiction over all matters concerning family law, which enforces both national and religious endogamy (Shafir & Peled, 1998: 413; S moodha, 2002: 485). Moreover, according to a statute adopted by the Knesset if, when facing a legal question, judges do not find an answer within the caselaw, they are required to give priority to Jewish law, the Halacha (Quigley, 1991: 227; Baldin, 2005: 114). Such tendency derives from the Orthodox Jews “lobby” which aims at creating a sort of “ideal” society subjected to the sacred text and to the authority of the rabbis, with the consequent undermining of Arab equality (Ghane, Rouhana & Yiftachel, 1998: 263).

The centrality of religion in Israeli society is used even as a mean to preserve the uniqueness character of Jews. In fact, along with the definition of the “other” which is perceived as an enemy, it is equally important to fight against the internal enemy, so to avoid the moral and cultural decay which could arise if Israelis decide to embrace the “hedonistic” cultures, such as Hellenism, Enlightenment and Modernism (Kimmerling, 2003: 129). Already stated within the 1948 Declaration of Independence. Moreover, in 1970, Israeli Supreme Court of Justice stated the denial of the existence of Israeli nationality, since it cannot exist an Israeli nation separated from a Jewish one (White, 2014: 45).

Even UK is both democratic and Lutheran. Moreover, in the 1948 Declaration of independence, it was stated that full and equal citizenship would be granted to all non-Jews.

They are excluded from citizenship all people who departed from Israel in 1948 and did not come back until 1952.

Therefore, any critics or opposition toward Jews, the Jewish state or its policies is banned because of anti-Semitism.

In order to justify the existing unequal reality, the regime is supported by an ideological apparatus (Zionism), which employs a biased historical narrative according to which the ethnic-majority is the exclusive rightful owner of the land in question and, at the same time, all the contenders’ claims over the territory as well as their aspirations to achieve political equality are undermined and de-legitimized (Yiftachel, 1999: 368). Moreover, the rightfulness of Jewish possessions is strictly linked with Jewish religion and history, since after generations of persecutions, they have finally settled within their ancestral promised land in which they could finally be free from any form of discrimination. The Zionist character of the state is even enforced by the Flag and Emblem Law, by which the Knesset decided to use the Jewish symbol (the star of David) within the national flag (Quigley, 1991: 227).

The exclusion of a certain ethnicity from participating to Israeli political life is further legitimized through a system of selective openness, by which Arab Israelis are integrated within the society in a limited degree, since they can exercise their basic rights but, however, their marginality within the system is preserved through policies of control and domination which secure Jewish hegemony (Ghanem, 1998: 431).

For instance, although Arab parties participate within the Knesset, they have been victims of a sort of *conventio ad excludendum*, since they were never integrated within the government or, at least, Arab deputies have been always excluded from the main Knesset committees (Ghanem, 1998: 433). This strategy has been used to prevent the raise of an Arab extra-parliamentary opposition which would have been difficult to handle. Therefore, main political decision over fundamental issues about Israel have been taken according to the view of the majority, while the minority could not possibly hope to shape Israeli decision-making.

Moreover, Arab Israelis are exempted from the universal conscription thus, they are excluded from a particular form of socialization (and the linked integration) and, moreover, the fact that they do not serve in the army is used as a mean to further justify their marginalization (Ghanem, 1998: 433).

In addition, the “Anti-terror Law” of 2016 contains a vague definition of what is a terrorist organization and it can be enforced by the law in order to criminalize legal Palestinian action. Moreover, it provides an extensive use of secret evidence in the court and creates new criminal offenses, including any public expression of support for or sympathy with a terrorist group. Another law of 2011 allows courts to revoke the citizenship to people convicted of treason and espionage which held dual citizenship or resides outside Israel.

All the described mechanisms preserve Palestinians in Israel from achieving social mobility, since they are treated as second class citizens and the criterion of ethnic preference preserves Jewish “superiority” in all

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133 It has to be stressed that, according to a 1985 amending law, those candidates that do not recognize Israel as the state of Jewish people, those which do not consider Israel as being democratic cannot partecipate in the election to the Knesset.

134 There has never been an Arab minister (or even an Arab supreme court judge).

135 Usually, when it happened, Arab deputies’ responsibility has been limited to minority issues.


fields, realizing a “tyranny of the majority” à la Tocqueville by both democratic as well as non-democratic means. Despite the resistance of the minorities, which degenerated many times into inter-ethnic violence, majority domination is preserved in Israel through political and legal means which are justified by an ideological apparatus which identifies the “Arab” as the main threat to Israeli security, Jewish majority and same existence. Thus, the historical narrative which has been developed throughout Israeli existence set the moral basis on which Israel justifies in a Machiavellian way every illegal Israeli act toward Palestinians (and even the Iron Wall) as necessary for achieving a greater goal, Israeli security. Consequently, Israel cannot be defined as a democracy, since it lacks some crucial democratic elements, namely the protection of minority rights, equality among citizens, the independence of the state from the religious apparatus as well as from the military one, moreover, it lacks clear territorial boundaries, which is one of the conditio sine qua non to be considered a state. Nonetheless, the international community seems to have ignored such things when it labelled Israel as a democratic state, while the lack of a defined and permanent territorial entity has been one of the reasons why statehood was denied to Palestinians.
CONCLUSIONS

My thesis has dealt with the topic of colonization and its legacies in the Middle East, mainly in Palestine (or what is left of it). The object was to retrace back the fundamental steps which led to the establishment of a colonial empire, under the name of “Mandate”, in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea area and how its realization has shaped Middle Eastern politics, economy and society.

In order to meet this goal, chapter 1 starts by recalling the history of the Ottoman Empire, from its rise to its fall. In particular, the first part of the chapter has been focused on the very first exchanges between the Ottoman Empire and the Western civilization which have generated, on one side, the modernist current, which was based on the *igitrad* (Corrao, 2016: 77) while, on the other side, it led to an epistemological closure, synthetized in the strict adherence to the principle of tradition-imitation of the pre-Islamic standards (al-Sbaileh, 2018: 35-39).

Moreover, the Sultan Abulmecid I promoted a wide project of reform, the *Tanzimat*, which was aimed at improving the Empire according to the European model of development, in order to better deal with Western economic competition. Nonetheless, such process only fostered European economic penetration within the Empire.

When the Ottomans were completely defeated during WWI, the winning power (the Entente forces) divided the Empire into several successor states which completely lacked any ethnic homogeneity and Western powers imposed their dominion over such newly born countries, which came under the name of “Mandate”.

Although the goal of the Mandate was to ensure both the material progress as well as the political and moral development of such state (“sacred civilizing mission”), so that they could became independent (Anghie, 2006: 452-453) actually, we have noticed how the Mandate system exploited the colonial economies for exclusively Western benefits, by establishing a “core-periphery” model which forced underdeveloped states to accept the principles of liberalism, whose implementation made them suffer from international competition (Gelvin, 2009: 501).

In addition, the Mandate powers even shaped Middle Eastern politics in a way that could have facilitated the management of the local population, basically by allying with the old and corrupted elites through a system of patronage thus, preventing any step toward the establishment of pluralism and democracy in the Middle East. Therefore, the imposition of the Western model of development resulted not only in a deep distance between the governors and the governed, but even between the Western lessons of pluralism and democracy and the dictatorial practices they enacted during the Mandate System.

With the new international scenario which generated from WWII, the Mandated landscape became formally independent by 1950s. From this moment until the 1970s, the power in the Middle East has been retained by the conservative oligarchies (within the states under US influence), whereas the new educated nationalist and authoritarian military class took the leadership of the countries under the USSR sphere of influence and they embraced a Pan-Arab ideology, which called for the unity of all Arabs, regardless of their religious faith.
Once they took power, they paved the way toward an authoritarian involusion which stabilized due to several factors, namely the adoption a system of inclusive pluralism, the proclamation according to which they would govern in the name of the Islamic community, and a strong repressive apparatus.

In general, Middle Eastern governments lacked both legitimacy and independence of action, the state was never able to englobe the entire society or to develop an autonomous foreign policy. Democracy lacked its basis, such as a real guarantee of civil and political rights, and democratic institutions – elections, competing parties, media pluralism – were subjected to non-elected actors and foreign regimes (Morlino, 2012: 52). In fact, while Imperial Powers proclaimed to be democratic and secular, thus superior, they demonstrated just the opposite: they intervened within the state borders, preferring a political faction to another, exploiting former colonies’ economic resources and limiting political participation as well as any form of dissent. Therefore, the creation of Arab identity in this period developed mainly in opposition to the Western one (Hashemi, 2009: 143). Therefore, democracy was not only biased, but people even viewed the adoption of liberal democracy as a veiled form of colonial domination, so that even Western-imported secularism was delegitimized by Western domination itself.

After a brief period of massive nationalization of the industrial apparatus, from 1970s, after the regional economic crisis, governments opted for privatizing the industry, resulting in a general spread of corruption as well as in a rise within the Arab unemployment levels. In such a way, the regime that had once found its legitimacy on a more equal redistribution of resource, now turned toward a sort of capitalism which left the majority of people economically marginalised and thus, outside the political arena.

The adoption of economic policies favourable to Western Powers as well as the decline of Pan-Arabism, has fostered people to follow sub-state identities that delegitimized the government. Therefore, marginalized masses found an ally in the Islamic movements which were able to create a strong link with the population by providing them the basic social services that the state was not able to guarantee (Gelvin, 2009: 824-842). Despite these movement were not all political, all of them were based upon a conception of Islam as eternal and universal message, and a shared aim, which was to extend the application of the Islamic laws and to reach social equity within national territories (Gelvin, 2009: 824-842).

Although protest continued for all the last part of the XX century and they culminated in the XXI century with the Arab Spring, a real multiparty system never took off, the Middle Eastern governments still suffer from the logic of corruption and family co-optation, thus they lack legitimacy, and this leaves space for the establishment of other socialization networks outside the control of the state (Corrao, 2011: 15). In this context, radicalization and fundamentalism became attractive in the eyes of people with completely no touchstone beside their religion, and the clash between civilization becomes understandable as religion was distorted and exploited for power meanings.

The second part of my thesis has been focused on the specific case of Palestine, which does not follow the parameters of classical Imperialism, since it has not been carried out by a state and it was motivated by spiritual and social meanings, and not by economic ones. In fact, the framework for Jewish colonization can be found
in the Zionist ideology. It was born in XIX century among European Jews as a way to escape from their condition of minority and the marginalization they were experiencing within the European society (Weinstock, 1973: 50). Although the idea solving the problem by creating a Jewish state in Palestine was simply a romantic idea, the region had a huge geostrategic importance for European Powers in the eve of the WWI, so Theodore Herzl, the President of the Zionist Organization (founded in 1897), engaged in a massive Zionist propaganda and he secured British support to the Zionist cause through the Declaration of Balfour (1917), which already contained an underlying contradiction: basically, the realization of the Zionist project - the creation of a Jewish state - could be accomplished only if the conditionality clause, meaning the respect of the rights of the local non-Jewish community, was violated (Safty, 2009: 22; Pappe, 2006: 13).

Therefore, when UK obtained the Mandate over Palestine, it favoured Jewish immigration and acquisition of land through several colonial land policies by which Palestinian land was slowly alienated and sold to private Jewish owners (Stein, 1978: 12). Thanks to this mechanism, Jewish were able to create a “state within a state”, with their own institutions, a semi-autocratic economy, an army, several political parties, labour unions and an independent educational system (Ben-Ze’ev, 2011: 17). So, when the British left Palestine, in 1947, the newly born UN advanced the so-called “Partition Plan”, according to which Jews (which retained only the 5% of Palestinian territory) obtained the sovereignty over the 56% of the land, while Arabs were confined within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As soon as the Plan became known, the Jewish state proclaimed its independence and then it engaged in a massive plan in order to impose their state over virtually the whole Palestine, which had to be cleansed from its native population. It resulted in the first Arab-Israeli war, which saw a well-trained and well-equipped IDF fighting against inexperienced and un-trained Arab forces, which were completely defeated by 1948. In addition, instead of advancing a peace proposal from its superior position, Israeli leadership only signed an armistice agreement with King Abdullah of Jordan, according to which the respective armies could not pass beyond an agreed border, the so-called “Green Line”.

As guerrilla continued along the borders it degenerated into a proper war in 1956. Using the pretext of the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Nasser, Israel joined the British and French army in their struggle to overthrow Nasser and re-conquering the Canal (Richardson, 1991: 371). The IDF troops were able to conquer Sinai and Gaza in only two weeks. However, the Operation Musketeers was blocked by the UN resolution 997, which deemed the forces to leave their posts to the UN peace-keeping forces (Kimmerling, 2003: 55).

In the period between the second and the third Arab-Israeli war, the Palestinian nationalists were able to re-organize their structure inside the PLO and they improved their nationalist struggle, as Palestinian guerrilla activities improved in their extent and reach.

As Israeli raids increased, the situation escalated into a proper war in 1967. Within only six days, the Israeli troops crushed the Egyptian army and they advanced until they occupied the whole West Bank and the Golan Heights. However, Israeli acquisitions beyond the Green Line were nullified by the UN resolution

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138 Text taken from
242, which highlighted how any type of land acquisition obtained through the use of force is illegal. Nonetheless, Israel would proceed with the construction of settlements in the conquered territories and to subject the native population to its will.

In order to revert the outcome of the 1967, Egypt and Syria planned to attack Israel during the third most holy day in the Jewish calendar, the Yom Kippur (Saleh, 2003: 239). The attack had to come as a surprise but actually Golda Meir, the Israeli Prime Minister, was informed of the imminence of the war by King Hussein of Jordan, as a sort of revenge for Palestinian armed actions carried out in Jordan before the Black September 1970 (Kimmerling, 2003: nota 17, Parte I). However, Israel was not afraid of entering into war but, quite on the contrary, it was looking for another opportunity to show its military superiority. Instead, against all odds, during the fourth Arab-Israeli war in 1973, the Arab army was far better prepared than before (Pappe, 2006: 207) and the IDF struggled to obtain only a partial victory, as they had to retire from the Sinai in 1978, after the signature of the Camp David Peace Agreement with Egypt (Safty, 2009: 245).

At this point, Israeli efforts would be focused on crushing the PLO leadership, which established in Lebanon after the Black September. With the “Operation Litany” (1978) and the “Operation Peace in Galilee” (1982), and with the collaboration of the Lebanese Maronite militia, Israel launched a massive air raid operation over Lebanon (Kimmerling, 2003: 79), thanks to which the Jewish state succeeded in forcing the expulsion of Palestinian national leadership, which moved to Tunis (Safty, 2009: 216). For this moment on, despite his efforts, the PLO leader Arafat would be unable to solve the conflict through diplomatic means and Palestinians would perceive their leadership as distant and ineffective (Pappe, 2006: 230). Therefore, they would turn their loyalty toward more radical Islamic groups, as Hamas or the Islamic Jihad group (Saleh, 2003: 251).

This sentiment would outbursts in the First Arab Intifada in 1987, three years of peaceful Palestinian demonstrations against the Israeli occupier. In order to re-normalize the occupation, Israel advanced in a new peace effort within the Oslo framework. After the agreement, in 1993, the Palestinian territory has been divided into three zones, one completely under Israeli military and civil control (Jewish settlements in the occupied territories), another one under the PLA responsibility, and a third one, surrounding Jewish settlement, under a joint Palestinian civilian and Israeli military control139. Such internal division within the Palestinian territory would be further enforced through the implementation of Israeli permit policies and, after the Second Intifada in 2000, through the construction of the “Iron Wall” which encircles Jewish posts within the OT, basically defining new borders that greatly deviates from the 1967 ones (Safty, 2009: 263).

Chapter 3 has dealt more specifically with the Israeli colonial policies toward Palestinians. From 1948 to more recent days, Israel has established within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip an economic, political and social system which basically denied to Palestinians their right to self-determination.

Proceeding step by step, from 1948 to 1967, Israeli policies have been shaped according to the well-known “Plan D”, a set of offensive operations which aimed at the complete ethnic cleansing of the Jewish land from

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the Arab presence (Kimmerling, 2003: 27). In order to reach this goal, Israeli troops used strategies such as psychological blitz, encirclements, inspections, potential destruction of hostile villages, consequent expulsion of the inhabitants -named “transfer”, summary executions, mass arrest, and even their extermination (Khalidi, 1988: 7; Pappe, 2006: 234). Although Israelis succeeded in acquiring further 20,000 km² from Palestinians, in order to secure more and more land, the Knesset passed several laws with the intent of legitimizing confiscation and expropriation (Pappe, 2006: 159; Tovy, 2014: 29-30). Moreover, at a societal level, Israeli population triplicated after the Law of Return (1950) and the society was strongly militarized with the universal conscription. Moreover, the Zionist ideology was deeply radicalized by the ideas of the new Gush Emunim movement, formed by the first generation of Jewish settlers, whose ideal mainly consisted in the creation of a Jewish utopian society under the Jewish supreme laws and the rabbis’ judgements (Kimmerling, 2003: 38).

During the period labelled as “enlightened occupation” (1967-1987), Palestinian management was carried out through the implementation of a policy known as “partial integration policy”, Israel was basically able to create such level of economic, political and social dependence of the OT upon Israel, that every possibility of creating an independent Palestinian sovereignty would have been completely nullified (Graham, 2005: 30). First of all, such dependence was realized by legal means, in particular through different legislative devices, Israel was basically able to shape the law within the OT as it pleased. Secondly, economic dependence was achieved through two different process: domination, which consisted mainly in the creation of a “quasi-Custom Union” designed to maintain the control over Palestinian resources and workers, and integration, realized by the construction of infrastructure which would have favoured Israeli imports within the OT as well as the integration of Palestinian cheap labour force within the Israeli industrial apparatus (Arnon, 2007: 4-5; Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 93-103). Therefore, even though individual Palestinian purchasing power rose, it was coupled with a general stagnation of Palestinian economy particularly caused by those trade practices and structural weaknesses Israel realized in order to make the OT economy developing in complementarity and not in competition with the Israeli one (Sufyan, 2007: 124-125; Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 96). In fact, Palestinian industry had to be oriented exclusively toward the satisfaction of Israeli demand. The third stage (1987-2000), called “Internal Closure”, starts to be enacted as a direct result of the First Intifada. As Israeli economy was worsening because of the situation within the OT, Rabin exploited Israeli superior bargaining power within the international scenario in order to secure more land through the construction of new exclusively Jewish settlements within the West Bank and then to conduce new peace negotiations with the PLO leadership along Israeli lines (Pappe, 2006: 243). In fact, the 1993 Oslo Accord only fostered Israeli occupation through a strategy of “outsourcing”, by which Jewish leadership transferred the responsibility of Palestinian people to the PA, although by limiting PA authority to a formal executive body which could only enact Israeli will, the Jewish state continued to indirectly and remotely control the majority of the occupied land without the burden of managing its people, (Gordon, 2008: 169; Pappe, 2006: 244). Moreover, as a result of these negotiations, Palestinian territory was basically jeopardized and sub-
divided into three major separated enclaves and Palestinians started being subjected to a more stricter system of checkpoints and permits, which completely denied them to freely go to work or to school (Kimmerling, 2003: 103; Hass, 2002: 9; Graham, 2005: 31).

Then, internal closure was finalized with the fourth phase, the “demographic Wall” one, which started as a direct result of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (2000). From now on, the strategy for managing Palestinians would be the so-called “ingathering policy”, meaning the takeover of as much as land as possible, with few Palestinians as possible (Pappe, 2006: 251). It was realized through the construction of the Iron Wall, as a mean for Israel to unilaterally impose its borders, which strongly deviated from the 1967 ones, as well as to solve the “native problem” through the creation of “bantustans”/enclaves, since they would have secured the maintenance of a Jewish majority population within the Israeli borders, as well as forced Palestinian transfer toward Eastern big Palestinian cities, thus further expanding Israeli territory. In addition, as Palestinian land was divided into different cantons which were not connected between each other, the Iron wall is meant to further prevent Palestinians from establishing a united independent state (Graham, 2005: 35).

In conclusion, Israeli Iron Wall seems to be only the latest and most evident manifestation of an occupational regime which has its roots in 1967 and that has improved its managing strategies throughout the years in order to annex as much as Palestinian land as possible with less Arabs as possible and to fully exploit Palestinian resources. So, during various decades, Israeli policies towards the occupied territories have been turned into more and more segregating ones, practically by making more and more severe the restrictions for mobility and, consequentially, making harder every attempt of contact between Israelis and Palestinians, excluded the violent ones, and dividing Palestinians from Palestinians.

The very last paragraph of my thesis attempts to analyse the Israeli regime in order to try to classify it according to the dichotomy democracy/autocracy. In particular, we found that the regime cannot be defined as being properly democratic, since it retains some characteristics which deviates from the liberal democratic standards. First of all, Kimmerling notices how Israeli society is becoming more and more fascist, since it has experienced a general reduction in the freedom of expression, realized by means of censorship and repression of dissent. Moreover, the perception of the other has been radicalized since the security problem has always been presented as the most pressing problem, to the extent that it has become a sort civil religion, named “securatism”, and that Israeli politics has been deeply militarized (Kimmerling, 2003: 11-13; Amar-Dahl, 2017: 189).

Therefore, the analysis shifted toward an examination of the Israeli two-tier legal system, as its citizens are basically divided into different class along ethnic lines, according to which rights and privileges are granted (Yiftachel, 1999: 375).

Such ethno-class stratification is the direct result of Israeli Judaization process. In fact, the two main Israeli sub-classes, namely Askenazim and Mizrahim, have been created throughout all the period of Israeli territorial expansion, as Askenazim were placed within Israeli upper-class society and inside the Green Line, while Mizrahim community has been initially marginalized through its placement in the geographic and economic
periphery of Israel (Yiftachel, 2006: 35). Consequently, in Israel the notion of “demos” is not an identifiable reality, since it does not cover the Israeli population as a whole, but rather it entails only a precise category of people inside and outside proper Israeli boundaries (the ethnic majority and its diasporas so, Jews from all over the world), while indigenous people are basically excluded from the political and cultural realms, as they are treated as second class citizens (Yiftachel, 2000: 730).

Furthermore, Israeli legal system is not based on a written Constitution, but rather on several Basic Laws, which can be anyway amended by a supermajority within the Knesset, and on Halacha, the Jewish religious laws deriving from the Torah, which must function as a model to respect (Baldin, 2005: 102).

The Basic Laws defines Israel as a “Jewish and democratic state”, a statement that reflects the underlying tensions between secular and religious instances within Israeli society (Baldin, 2005: 94). The Jewishness of the state has been further strengthened by several laws passed within the Knesset, such as the Law of Return (1950) or the Nationality Law (1952), which grants Israeli citizenship to all Jews settled within Israel, while denying the same right to Palestinians born within the Israeli borders (Yiftachel 1999: 370), or even the more recent “Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law” ¹⁴⁰ (2003) which basically denies to Israeli-Palestinians the right to reunite with their families which live in the West Bank (Peled, 2007: 604).

Moreover, the role of religion has become more and more central in shaping Israeli regime, as for instance even non-Jews in Israel are forced to observe Jewish holidays, otherwise they will be legally sanctioned, and religious courts still retain exclusive jurisdiction over all matters concerning family law (Shafir & Peled, 1998: 413; Smootha, 2002: 485).

In order to justify the existing unequal reality, the regime is supported by the ideological apparatus of Zionism which links Jewish superiority and the rightfulness of its territorial possessions in Palestine to the Jewish biblical past (Yiftachel, 1999: 368). Moreover, the democratic façade of the regime is preserved within Israeli political arena through the use of selective participation, by which Arab-Israelis’ opposition is integrated within the Knesset but it is always excluded from the government by the implementation of a “convention ad excludendum” mechanism (Ghanem, 1998: 431-433).

All the enlisted policies and practices enforce the tyranny of Askenazim Jewish majority in Israel, as they prevent Palestinians from achieving social mobility through political and legal means. The discrimination measures carried out against Palestinians are justified by security purposes as well as by a strong ideological apparatus which has been developed according to the Zionist narrative by which Jewish are the rightful and exclusive owners of Israel, whose territory comprehends all the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Moreover, despite the minoritarian segment of Israeli society (Mizrahim, but even Russians and Ethiopians) have fostered pluralistic tendencies within the culture, such trend has not been translated into a multicultural

reality, since both the State itself as well as the Askenazim majority retain a monocultural vision of the society and, therefore, the pluralistic situation is not neither recognized nor legitimized (Kimmerling, 2001: 234).

Therefore, we can state that Israel cannot be defined as a democracy, since it lacks some crucial democratic elements, namely the protection of minority rights, equality among citizens, the independence of the state from the religious apparatus as well as from the military one, moreover, it lacks clear territorial boundaries, which is one of the *conditio sine qua non* to be considered a state.

Recently, in 2017, the ESCWA has launched a report on Israeli policies toward Palestinian people and the question of apartheid. In fact, Israeli regime has developed a system of racial discrimination which can be identified as “Apartheid”, since it is a regime aimed at dividing the population along ethnic lines and at preserving one group’s racial domination. In the case of Israel, Jewish racial domination is preserved by annexing, occupying and fragmenting Palestinian people. In addition, we have analysed how the Israeli regime is effectively aimed at modifying the demographic composition of a territory, by subjecting a particular ethnicity to inhuman living conditions as well as to property expropriation and how Israeli policies have forced Palestinian to live segregated within enclaves and to renounce to all their claims over their homeland by means of law.

Throughout the years, both the Palestinian and the Israeli society have developed their identity according to a cultural and social system which has been called by Bar-Tal as “ethos of conflict”. It is defined as a “*a cluster of shared social beliefs that provide a unique, general and dominant orientation to a society [...] an ethos evolves as a result of continuing experiences of the society, and its beliefs lend meaning to societal life. The ethos, moreover, connects the society’s present and its future goals and aspirations*”\(^{141}\).

Thus, these two societies, especially the second generations, which raised in a conflict situation, experienced nothing but the culture of war, which has been spread into each single aspect of everyday life, such as media, books, newspapers, public debates, films, ceremonies, and rituals. The culture of war has become hegemonic and it is used as an ideological framework to justify actions that would normally be labelled as immoral, such as Palestinian terrorist attacks or Israeli raids against Arab civilians or the very apartheid regime enacted within Israel.

Since their identity have been developed in opposition to one another, the persistence of this biased ideological narrative is one fundamental reason that prevents Israelis and Palestinians from being integrated into a single bi-national society. In fact, according to Bar-Tal, such ethos develops dominant societal beliefs inside the society which are used to cope with the stress as well as to provide self-justification and a sense of unity, in order to eliminate every possibility of internal dissent and perpetuate the conflict situation (Bar-Tal, 2000: 353).

Therefore, when we are addressing the issue regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its resolution, we cannot leave outside from our consideration the societal structure which has been specifically established to

perpetrate the conflict and the resulting polarized and radicalized views held by both societies. Consequently, reconciliation entails not only more honest political efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace negotiation framework but even a radical change within the Israeli and the Palestinian societies, implemented through an educational and cultural bottom-up process able to unveil the protracted historical biased view, according to which Israelis and Palestinians are necessarily historical enemies. However, such efforts cannot overlook the recognition and implementation of Palestinians’ right to self-determination, a right they have been deprived for too long now.
ABSTRACT

My thesis has dealt with the topic of colonization and its legacies in the Middle East, mainly in Palestine (or what is left of it). The object was to retrace back the fundamental steps which led to the establishment of a colonial empire, under the name of “Mandate”, in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea area and how its realization has shaped Middle Eastern politics, economy and society.

In order to meet this goal, chapter 1 starts by recalling the history of the Ottoman Empire, from its rise to its fall. In particular, the first part of the chapter has been focused on the very first exchanges between the Ottoman Empire and the Western civilization. In fact, during the XV century, in the golden age of the Empire, Muslims, Christians and Jews lived peacefully within the Ottoman borders. Although Muslims were the majority and they initially enjoyed some privileges\footnote{For instance, they were exempted from paying a tax for protection, the jigzya.}, thanks to the institution of the \textit{millet system}, freedom of faith and protection was granted to all the followers of the monotheistic religious faiths. In particular, the first part of the chapter has been focused on the very first exchanges between the Ottoman Empire and the Western civilization which have generated, on one side, the modernist current, which was based on the \textit{ikhithad} (Corrao, 2016: 77) while, on the other side, it led to an epistemological closure, synthetized in the strict adherence to the principle of tradition-imitation of the pre-Islamic standards (al-Sbaileh, 2018: 35-39). Moreover, the Sultan Abulmecid I promoted a wide project of reform, the \textit{Tanzimat}, which was aimed at improving the Empire according to the European model of development, in order to better deal with Western economic competition. Nonetheless, such process only fostered European economic penetration within the Empire.

When the Ottoman Empire was definitely defeated by the Entente Forces during WWI, the League of the Nations cut its territory into several successor states, which completely lacked any type of religious or ethnic homogeneity, and which were placed under the control of one victorious power. The article 22 of the Pact of the League established this so-called “Mandate system”, whose purpose was synthetized in the “sacred civilizing mission”, namely to ensure the material progress and the moral and political development of the people which inhabited these territories, in order to pave the way for independence and self-government (Anghie, 2006: 452-453). Basically, since European Powers strongly believed that non-European people were not civilized, they felt the “historical and moral duty” to assist these people in their path toward Western model of development, which was considered to be universally applicable (Dossa, 2007: 889). Actually, the “civilizing mission” was simply an ideological cover in order to perpetrate a massive exploitation of colonial people and resources for the Imperialist Powers’ benefits.

In fact, European Powers exploited colonial economies by incorporating them into the world system according to the “core-periphery” model, which forced underdeveloped states to accept the principles of liberalism, whose implementation made them suffer from international competition (Gelvin, 2009: 501). Then, in order
to assure a less invasive control, the Mandatory Powers, in this case UK and France, created new loyalties by establishing an alliance with the Middle Eastern conservative elite through a system of patronage (Khalidi, 2009: 163), which basically prevented any step toward the establishment of pluralism and democracy within Middle Eastern politics (Owen, 2004: 12). It resulted in a deep distance between the governors and the governed as well as between Western lessons of pluralism and democracy and their dictatorial practices they enacted during the Mandate System.

During the 1920s-30s a new middle class emerged among Arabs and it started developing two different ideologies which prescribed two different paths toward independence. On one side, “economic nationalism” linked economic development with social equity (Gelvin, 2009: 634; Anghie, 2006: 456) while, on the other side, the Muslim Brotherhood called for a general return to the pure understanding of Islam, as the sole mean which could have solved Muslims’ value crisis (Corrao, 2016: 88). It resulted in different protests carried out by oppressed colonized Arab people.

The WWII and the new international scenario, championed by U.S. and U.S.S.R., offered to France and UK one more reason to finally concede independence to their Middle Eastern colonies. However, independence did not mean to stop European intrusion within the colonies’ internal affairs, since the newly born Arab states were forced to grant special privileges to their former colonizing power (Hinnebusch, 2003: 22). Forasmuch as independence was achieved only formally during the 1950s and at a high price, a new educated opposition emerged among the military class (Hinnebusch, 2003: 21) and its authority was supported by USSR. The Egyptian General Gamal Abdul Nasser would champion the cause of Pan-Arabism. Promoted as a supranational identity, Pan-Arabism called for the unity of all Arabs, regardless of their faith, as well as for a socialist reform.

Thanks to several coups, the army was able to took the power and they paved the way for an authoritarian involution (Owen, 2004: 19), as they were able to both repress any dissent through the use of a strong police apparatus, as well as to integrate the masses within the regime by virtually widening the political power while, on the other side, there was not a real guarantee of any political right (Brumberg, 2002: 56-58).

From the economic point of view, these regimes used a state-planning economy in order to carry out a massive nationalization of the industrial apparatus, which was anyway not coupled with a general improvement within the means of production or with an equal redistribution of resources (Issawi, 1982: 169). However, the incomes were concentrated in the hand of the restricted oligarchy (Corrao, 2016: 110) and, with the 1967 regional economic crisis, the socialist dream definitely ended, as one-party regimes decided to privatize national industries.

The economic crisis generated a social one among the young generation of unemployed Arabs (Corrao, 2011: 12) which, after the decline of Arabism, found an ally in the Islamic movements (Hinnebusch, 2003: 88; Smith & Clancy-Smith, 2004: 241). In fact, such Islamic groups were able exploit the political void left by years of occupation in order to create a strong link with Muslim marginalized masses thanks to missionary work and by providing people with social services (Gelvin, 2009: 824-842). Moreover, in much of the cases, the Islamic
ideology was used even by the state regimes, but it was followed only rhetorically, as it was used by terrorist networks and by state elites only to fill their legitimacy void.

In the XXI century, thanks to new technological developments and the spread of social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, people’s demand for political rights reached its peak when, in 2011, a street vendor burn himself to death in front of the police in Tunis and its video spread in the web (Smith & Clancy-Smith, 2004: 243-244). This episode marked the beginning of the “Arab Springs”, a major period of protest which spread all over the Middle Eastern major cities. Demonstrations were led by young people calling for political participation and freedom of speech against the old and corrupted oligarchies, but a real multiparty system never took off (Corrao, 2011: 15).

Therefore, in the first part of the chapter, we have seen how Mandatary States have shaped sovereignty in their former colonies in such a way that it could preserve Western interests, so by aligning with autocratic forces which could have better control and manage its population at the expanse of citizens’ rights.

From a theoretical point of view, the Imperial ideology which fostered the underdevelopment mechanism has been explained according to two theories: the dependency theory and post--colonialism. While the dependency theory focuses on the economic exploitation of the former colonies according to the “core-periphery” relation (Kapoor, 2008: 4-6), post-colonialism identifies the ideology of Orientalism as the primary reason why Imperialism took place. In fact, Orientalism has been defined as a field of research developed in the Western world during the colonization period, that seeks to understand the East in a caricaturized and biased way in order to better dominate it (Saïd, 1978: 232).

By analysing the effects of the imposition of Western modernity over Middle Eastern countries, post-colonial theorists highlight how the use of the liberal-democratic theory has been useless for understanding Muslims’ struggle for democracy (Hashemi, 2009: 24). On the contrary, by using the grid of “Orientalism”, Western powers’ modes of development only exacerbated the social and economic conditions of these people, finally leading to the establishment of authoritarian forms of government and of Muslims’ resentment toward European civilization. In fact, due to the creation of a patronage relationship between Arab oligarchies and the Imperialist Powers, democracy could never take off as it lacked both legitimacy and independence of action. Moreover, the foreign powers acted as “veto players”, since they prevented the development of democratic institutions in order to keep the regime in a state of ambiguity, as it was characterized by repression of dissent and a controlled pluralism (Morlino, 2012: 60). Therefore, in people’s eyes, Westernization and secularism became associated with widespread social and psychological alienation since they have brought about corruption, economic mismanagement, poverty, despotism and human rights abuses (Hashemi, 2009: 140).

Therefore, the analysis contained in the first chapter reveals how Imperialism has created a generalized resentment toward Western practices and institutions, such as democracy and secularism, basically because Imperialist powers exploited such institutions in order to prevent the realization of those rights that democracy is actually meant to protect: the freedom of speech, political participation, individual freedoms and, most of all, the right to have a dissenting opinion.
As secularism and democracy have therefore been delegitimized by their same experience, the by-product of Western “modernism”, meaning the marginalized and uneducated Muslim masses, started relying on fundamentalism, as radical Islamist groups were able to respond to people’s need for education, identity and unity. Moreover, such movements can easily turn into terroristic organization, such as the cases of ISIS or Al-Qaeda, which use a biased interpretation of the Islamic precepts in order to justify their actions and to create blind followers of orders.

In this context, the so-called “clash between civilizations” is explained from an historical point of view and it is considered as a direct result of Western Imperialism.

Chapter II deals with the colonization of Palestine, which did not follow the classical parameters of Imperialism, since it has not been carried out by a state and it was not motivated by economic meanings, but by spiritual and social ones. It was cannot be explained by concepts such as “Orientalism” and the “sacred civilizing mission”, but it was the result of the Zionist doctrine.

This ideology was born as a direct result of Jewish condition of minority within Europe and their marginalization within European society (Weinstock, 1973: 50). Anti-Semitic measures adopted by European states in the end of the XIX century fostered the desire of Jewish people to create a Jewish nationality (Safty, 2009: 1). In 1882, in Warsaw, the first club “Hoveve Zion” (Zion Lovers) was founded and then new others were established in other European capitals (Mosé, 1992: 66). Such clubs spread the knowledge of Hebrew and the idea of creating a Jewish state, maybe in Palestine (Mosé, 1992: 66).

In fact, initially, the Jewish community had identified Argentina as the place where they could fund their nation, but this attempt failed due to pressures of Argentinian native population. The idea of establishing a Jewish state in the biblical Hebrew land of Palestine became feasible as a result of the international scenario. In fact, since the Middle Eastern territory had a huge geostrategic importance for European Great Powers, Theodor Herzl, the leader of the Zionist Organization (founded in 1897), thought that European states, in particular UK, would have favoured Jewish establishment in Palestine as mean to stop Jewish immigration flow toward Great Britain (Safty, 2009: 4-10). In addition, Jewish could have helped British in securing the Suez Canal.

After Jewish obtained the Great Powers’ protection within the Ottoman Empire thanks to capitulation, the Jewish National Fund (1901) started to buy lands in the most fertile area of Palestine where collectivist (moshavim) and communist (kibbutzim) farms were established. Since Zionists were afraid of the competition arising from cheap local Arab labour, they simply prohibited native population’s employment within Jewish farms and factories (Abed, 1998: 8; Gelvin, 2009: 575).

By 1914, Jewish were able to crate in Palestine an independent state within the Ottoman Empire (a state within a state), with its own semi-autarchic economy, their own self-governing institution, a parliament (the Knesset), a military apparatus (Haganah), several political parties, labour unions and an independent educational system (Ben-Ze’ev, 2011: 17). They engaged in a massive Zionist propaganda and they secured British support to their cause through the Declaration of Balfour (1917), which already contained an underlying contradiction:
basically, the realization of the Zionist project - the creation of a Jewish state - could be accomplished only if the conditionality clause, meaning the respect of the rights of the local non-Jewish community, was violated (Safty, 2009: 22; Pappe, 2006: 13).

Therefore, when Britain obtained the Mandate over Palestine, it applied mechanisms and regulations in order to favour Jewish immigration. In particular, they used colonial land policies to foster Jewish acquisition of land through acts of Land Transfers, which basically allowed only to Jews to withhold properties (Stein, 1987: 31-48; Bisharat, 1994: 498). Moreover, even Arab landlords exploited the situation by selling vast portion of land to Jews for speculative purposes and for retaining their social and economic prominence, while circumventing cultivators’ right (Bisharat, 1994: 499; Stein, 1978: 71). For instance, with the Protection of Cultivators Ordinance (POCO) in 1929, Arab owners could rightfully remove tenants from their occupation without giving them neither a “subsistence area” nor a monetary compensation (Stein, 1978: 53). As a consequence, throughout the Mandate period, the state land was slowly alienated and sold to private Jewish owners for speculative purposes (Stein, 1978: 12).

As protests rose among the Arab population in 1929, His Majesty Government appointed different commissions of inquiry in order to understand the roots of Arab resentments (Cohen, 2017: 84). For instance, the Hope-Simpson Report found out that Palestine urgently needed an agrarian reform, since none Arab possessions could be sold without creating an Arab landless class of cultivators and therefore, Jewish immigration should have been limited (Safty, 2009: 103-104; Cohen, 2017: 87).

Nonetheless, the 1929 White Paper was overridden thanks to Zionists pressure (Cohen, 2017: 100) and, by 1935, the size of the Yishuv amounted to 40,000 people (Cohen, 2017: 102), which inhabited the 5.6% of the Palestinian territory. Since Palestinian were afraid that they would have soon become a minority into their own country, nationalist resistance started protesting, against both the Zionist and British presence, by calling for a nation-wide strike and non-payment of taxes, according with the principle “no taxation without representation” (Kayyali, 1978: 187; Stein, 1978: 175).

Arab civil disobedience was exploited by Jewish in order to obtain from UK both weapons and military training. Therefore, the “Great Arab Revolt” was easily suppressed and Palestinian leaders were deported. Moreover, as the international scenario was shaped by the rise of Hitler, the Shoah and the imminence of WWII, the balance of power in Palestine further advantaged Zionists, which aligned with the rising American Superpower in order to put pressure on UK to rapidly increase Jewish immigration quotas, which had been set with the 1939 White Paper (Safty, 2009: 140). In 1942, within the Zionist Conference in New York, Ben-Gurion advanced its maximalist program, which entailed the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in the whole Palestine (Safty, 2007: 135).

When WWII ended, Jewish advanced the *meri ivri* (Hebrew revolt) against the British in order to force them leaving. The Zionist leadership promoted mobilization by means of violence, which entailed the use of terror attacks (Ben-Ze’ev, 2011: 171, Cohen, 2006: 236). Since UK had lost its primary role within the international scenario in favour of US and since Great Britain’s economy was suffering from the pound devaluation, HMG
thought that its efforts should be focused not on managing a remote and complicated place like Palestine, but rather on recovering British domestic economy. Therefore, in February 1947, British troops withdrew from Palestine and the question about this region’s future was submitted to the UNSCOP, a Special Committee for Palestine established within the newly born UN (Pappe, 2006: 122).

The partition plan for Palestine was adopted by the General Assembly within the resolution 181, according to which Jewish, which in 1947 inhabited only 5% of the Palestinian territory, obtained the sovereignty over 56% of the land, which included the majority of cultivable areas reports. Instead, the native population was confined within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, while Jerusalem was placed directly under the control of the UN. However, the Partition Plan was not accepted neither by Arabs, for obvious reasons, nor by Jews, whose goal was to create a state in the whole Palestine (Pappe, 2006: 36-37).

As soon as the resolution became known, the Yisuf implemented a plan aimed at redefining the borders of the Partition, in order to secure to Israel at least a contiguous portion of territory, which should have included not only the most remote Jewish settlements, but even some “buffer zones” to further protect Jews from their Palestinian neighbours (Pappe, 2006: 42). The implementation of what would be known as “Plan Dalet” led to the exodus of 75,000 Palestinians (Pappe, 2006: 40), a phenomenon known as “Nakbah” and, with the Declaration of Independence on 14 May 1948, to establishment of the state of Israel, which extended beyond the borders imposed by the UN (Pappe, 2006: 40; Pappe, 2006: 131).

The first Arab-Israeli war, which blew up the very next day of the Declaration, saw the well-trained and well-equipped unified-Israeli commando fighting against the Arab forces from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Palestinian fida’iyyun, all of them united within the Arab Salvation Army and the Arab Legion, which lacked any type of military training (Pappe, 2006: 127-131). Therefore, the outcome of the war was clear since its beginning and Israel exploited its superiority within the war field in order to refuse Palestinians’ repatriation (imposed by the UN with the resolution 194) (Pappe, 2006: 238). In addition, instead of advancing a peace proposal, Israeli leadership only signed an armistice agreement with King Abdullah of Jordan, according to which the respective armies could not pass beyond an agreed border, the so-called “Green Line”. However, the guerrilla continued along the borders until the situation was aggravated by the international Suez Canal crisis, in 1956. Basically, when the Egyptian General Nasser, who ruled the country from 1952, nationalized the British-owned Suez Canal Company, France and UK asked Israel to join the war against Nasser alongside Western forces (Richardson, 1991: 371). The war tactic was carefully planned among the three powers through secret agreements (most importantly, the Sevres Pact): Israel should have launched a vast-scale offensive in the area of the Sinai, then France and Great Britain should have issued a joint demand for the withdrawal of both Jewish and Egyptian troops from the Canal, therefore, as Nasser would have refused to comply with such request, French and British forces would have entered in the Sinai with the excuse of protecting international trade interests in a war between Egypt and Israel (Saleh, 2003: 234).

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143 Text taken from [https://unispal.un.org](https://unispal.un.org)
The IDF troops were able to conquer Sinai and Gaza in only two weeks. However, the Operation Musketeers was blocked by the UN resolution 997, which deemed the forces to leave their posts to the UN peace-keeping forces (Kimmerling, 2003: 55).

During the period between the second and the third Arab-Israeli wars, Palestinian nationalist organized themselves within the Palestinian Liberation Organization, led by Yasser Arafat, and within the Palestinian Liberation Army (Pappe, 2006: 164). As Israeli raids increased, the situation escalated into a proper war in 1967. Within only six days, the Israeli troops crushed the Egyptian army and they advanced until they occupied the whole West Bank and the Golan Heights. However, Israeli acquisitions beyond the Green Line were nullified by the UN resolution 242, which highlighted how any type of land acquisition obtained through the use of force is illegal. Nonetheless, Israel would proceed with the construction of settlements in the conquered territories and to subject the native population to its will.

Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees were experiencing disastrous living conditions within their camps in the neighbour Arab States, and the PLO was able to nationalize the welfare system so to fill the institutional void by reorganizing the organization’s structure along democratic lines, for instance through the institution of an executive committee, a government and a parliament (Pappe, 2006:190-192). Consequently, Palestinian guerrilla activities were improved in their extent and reach, as showed by the attack to the Israeli athletes during the Munich Olympic Games, in 1972.

Meanwhile, Syria and Egypt, which wanted to revert the disastrous effect of the Six-days War, planned to attack Israel during the third most holy day in the Jewish calendar, the Yom Kippur (Saleh, 2003: 239). The attack had to come as a surprise but actually Golda Meir, the Israeli Prime Minister, was informed of the imminence of the war by King Hussein of Jordan, as a sort of revenge for Palestinian armed actions carried out in Jordan before the Black September 1970 (Kimmerling, 2003: nota 17, Parte I). However, Israel was not afraid of entering into war but, quite on the contrary, it was looking for another opportunity to show its military superiority. Instead, against all odds, during the fourth Arab-Israeli war in 1973, the Arab army was far better prepared than before (Pappe, 2006: 207) and the IDF struggled to obtain only a partial victory, as they had to retire from the Sinai in 1978, after the signature of the Camp David Peace Agreement with Egypt (Safty, 2009: 245).

At this point, Israeli efforts would be focused on crushing the PLO leadership, which established in Lebanon after the Black September. With the “Operation Litany” (1978) and the “Operation Peace in Galilee” (1982), and with the collaboration of the Lebanese Maronite militia, Israel launched a massive air raid operation over Lebanon (Kimmerling, 2003: 79), thanks to which the Jewish state succeeded in forcing the expulsion of Palestinian national leadership, which moved to Tunis (Safty, 2009: 216). For this moment on, despite his efforts, the PLO leader Arafat would be unable to solve the conflict through diplomatic means and Palestinians would perceive their leadership as distant and ineffective (Pappe, 2006: 230). Therefore, they would turn their loyalty toward more radical Islamic groups, as Hamas or the Islamic Jihad group (Saleh, 2003: 251).
The spreading of a patriotic and Islamic attitude amongst Palestinians, coupled with the humiliating conditions which they were forced to be subjected by Israeli policies within the Occupied Territories, led to the first Palestinian Intifada, on 8 December 1987. The IDF responded to the mostly peaceful Palestinian demonstrations with the “Iron Fist” policy, which consisted in bone breaking, torture, the use of tear gas and mass arrests (Saleh, 2003: 243; Pappe, 2006: 233-235). The UN strongly condemned Israeli action whereas, in the peak of the Intifada, in 1988, the PLO issued the establishment of the Palestinian state according to the UN resolutions 181 and 242, thus implicitly recognizing Israel.

Arafat diplomatic struggle toward peace would materialize within the 1993 Oslo accords. Within the Oslo framework, the Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and the leader of the PLO agreed on a five-years interim agreement which contained several steps to be peacefully implemented in order to improve the Palestinian-Israeli relationship (Pappe, 2006: 241). In particular, the agreement entailed the gradual transfer of power to the in the Occupied Territories to the PLO as well as the respect of territorial status quo. Nonetheless, Israel advanced in huge settlement building effort within the West Bank and, in order to better secure these confiscated Palestinian territories, each settlement was encircled with an electric fence (Safty, 2009: 243). Therefore, within the Taba agreement (1995), the Palestinian territory was further divided into three zones, one completely under Israeli military and civil control (Jewish settlements in the occupied territories), another one under the PLA responsibility, and a third one, surrounding Jewish settlement, under a joint Palestinian civilian and Israeli military control. Such internal division within the Palestinian territory would be further enforced through the implementation of Israeli permit policies, which were basically aimed at limiting Palestinians’ freedom of movement within their own land (Safty, 2009: 248).

This fragile peace broke down in 2000, when Ariel Sharon did its famous provocative walk over the Temple Mount, which signed the beginning of the Second Intifada (Safty, 2009: 252). This time, Israeli repression was even more violent, and it led to the eruption of the Israeli Iron Wall, which encircles Jewish posts within the OT, basically defining new borders that greatly deviates from the 1967 ones (Safty, 2009: 263). Then the Gaza war completely nullified all previous attempt to come to a peace through diplomatic negotiations.

Once I have analysed the Arab-Israeli conflict from a pure historical point of view, chapter III contained a specific examination of Israeli policies toward Palestinians from 1948 till more recent times. For the sake of clarity, this timeline has been divided into four periods, according to the different strategies Israel has deployed for the management of people within the Palestinian territories.

The first stage (1948-1967) groups all those policies Israeli followed in order to steal more and more territory to Palestinians so to create a contiguous and completely de-Arabized Jewish state in virtually the whole Palestine. Such efforts materialized within the “Plan C” and the more famous “Plan D”. While “Plan C” consisted mainly in exploiting the former British posts in order to carry out a first penetration within the Arab

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land (Pappe, 2006: 129), “Plan D” was an offensive operation which aimed at the complete ethnic cleansing of the Jewish land from the Arab presence (Kimmerling, 2003: 27). In order to reach this goal, Israeli troops used strategies such as psychological blitz, encirclements, inspections, potential destruction of hostile villages, consequent expulsion of the inhabitants -named “transfer”, summary executions, mass arrest, and even their extermination (Khalidi, 1988: 7; Pappe, 2006: 234).

By the end of the war, Israel managed to acquire 20,000 km$^2$ of territory (6,000 km$^2$ more compared to what was established in the UN’s resolution 181) and to purge out the majority of Arab citizens, realizing an ethnic cleansing. In particular, already by the end of 1948, “IDF razed some 400 Palestinian villages, expelling or forcing the flight of some 750,000 Palestinians”, completely turning Palestinian rural and urban landscape into a Jewish one as well as deporting a consistent number of Palestinians into labour camps, where they were forced to do any job that could have empowered Israeli economy (Graham, 2005: 29; Pappe, 2006: 234). Until 1953, Israeli troops carried out massive expulsion of Palestinian people, villages’ depopulation and land expropriation in order to further expand Israeli territories through the establishment of exclusively Jewish settlement within the former Palestinian land. What Palestinians calls “Nakbah” was simply an Independence war for Israelis, which still today consider these territories as “liberated” ones.

In order to keep the new confiscated territories under exclusive and perpetual Jewish ownership, Israeli Knesset passed various laws which basically labelled the expropriated Palestinian lands as an abandoned property therefore, its ownership passed directly in the hand of the Israeli state, which could sold the land to private or public Jewish owners as well as directly to the Jewish National Fund (Pappe, 2006: 159; Tovy, 2014: 29-30). In addition, successive Israeli legislation basically forbade to sell or lease Jewish-owned land to non-Jews (Pappe, 2006: 253). As a result, 92% of the country’s land was under Jewish ownership, conversely Palestinians had lost 4 million dunums of their motherland (Pappe, 2006: 160).

Then, the Law of Return and the universal conscription generated two different social outcomes (Bachi, 1950: 82): on one side, the need to homogenize Israeli multi-ethnic population, mainly Arab Jews, under a common Zionist ideology, led to the creation of a proper Israeli narrative, culture and language (Pappe, 2006: 168-177); on the other side, as the Jewish upper-class wanted to differentiate themselves from the newcomers, they engaged in several unofficial military operations in order to conquer further territories to donate to their state (Kimmerling, 2003: 52).

The return to militarism and the hawkish Israeli policies were the primary causes which led to the Israeli offensive campaign in 1956, as Ben-Gurion wanted to show Zionists’ military accomplishments insofar. It resulted in a deep radicalization of both Jewish and Palestinian societies (Pappe, 2006: 162). In fact, while in Palestine there was the rise of political Islam, in Israel we assisted to the rise of the Gush Emunim, a movement formed by the first generation of Jewish settlers, whose ideal mainly consisted in the creation of a Jewish utopian society under the Jewish supreme laws and the rabbis’ judgements (Kimmerling, 2003: 38).

The second stage (1967-87) has been called by Israel itself “Enlightened Occupation”. By basically ignoring the UN resolution 242, Israel considered the areas it had acquired during the six-days war as an extension of
the Israeli territory (Sher, 2011: 1), thus disregarding all the international regulations related on how the occupying power has to manage the occupied population.

The main dilemma faced by Israeli leadership at that time was how to further expropriate Palestinian land without annexing it, thus without having to deal with Palestinian people (Kimmerling, 2003: 19). The Israeli Labour Party government (1967-77) advanced the so-called “Allon Plan”, which basically consisted in transferring Palestinian people civil responsibility to the Jordanian government, while Israel would have kept the military control over the same territory (Safty, 2009: 240; Kimmerling, 2003: 21). However, such plan was never realized as it was never accepted by king Hussein (Pappe, 2006: 209).

Then, the Likud Party government (1977-84), led by Begin and with the support of the Gush Emunim, promoted the “Greater Israel” Plan, which was basically aimed at re-establishing the biblical greatness of Israel by furthering the construction of settlements, which would have served even as outposts to capture ulterior territories, and by annexing to Israel both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as the Golan Heights and the territories beyond the Jordan River (Pappe, 2006: 210). Nonetheless, annexation was never realized, since it would have irreparably transformed Israel into a de facto binational state in which, given the high levels of Arab growth rate, Jewish could easily and rapidly become a minority (Kimmerling, 2003: 20; Prior, 1999: 30). Rather, the demographic problem was meant to be solved through the Judaization of Palestine and by means of ethnic cleansing.

During the period labelled as “enlightened occupation”, Palestinian management was carried out by means of martial law, curfew, ghettoization, demolition of houses and unjustified executions and detentions as well as the complete elimination of any form of dissent mainly through the expulsion/deportation of Palestinian nationalist leaders, especially during the first months of occupation (Kimmerling, 2003: 60). Moreover, through the implementation of a policy known as “partial integration policy”, Israel was basically able to create such level of economic, political and social dependence of the OT upon Israel, that every possibility of creating an independent Palestinian sovereignty would have been completely nullified (Graham, 2005: 30).

First of all, Israel derogated all the previous laws in force within the OT and substituted them with Israeli military decrees having the force of law, thanks to which Israel was able to enact law over Palestinians as it pleased (Gordon, 2008: 27). Moreover, a complex system of ethnic pass was applied within the OT, as basically Israeli Secret Services could decide over Palestinians’ freedom of movement by giving or not giving them the needed ID, which served for travelling between Israeli and Palestinian territory (Graham, 2005: 29-38; Pappe, 2006: 201).

Secondly, economic dependence was achieved through the implementation of the “core-periphery” model, which was established through two different processes: domination and integration. In order to achieve domination, Israel shaped a “quasi-Custom Union” with the OT, which was designed to maintain the control over Palestinian natural resources and to further protect Israeli producers and workers (Arnon, 2007: 4-5; Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 93-103). Then, integration was realized by the construction of new infrastructures which would
have favoured Israeli imports toward the OT as well as the integration of the Palestinian cheap labour force within the Israeli industrial apparatus (Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 93; Kimmerling, 2003: 17).

Although workers’ integration generated a general increase in Palestinian standards of living and a rapid economic growth, OT economic prosperity depended ultimately on workers’ remittances, therefore, on Israel (Gordon, 2008: 66-74; Pappe, 2006: 232). Consequently, even if Palestinians experienced a rise in their individual purchasing power, it was coupled with a general stagnation of Palestinian economy, particularly caused by those trade practices and structural weaknesses Israel realized in order to make the OT economy developing in complementarity and not in competition with the Israeli one (Sufyan, 2007: 124-125: Abu-Ayyash, 1976: 96). In fact, Palestinian industry had to be oriented exclusively toward the satisfaction of Israeli demand.

Last but not least, Israel strictly managed Palestinian educational system, as it used censorship in order to eliminate any reference to a shared Palestinian past in a way that could have erased Palestinian particularity and prevented the development of a common Palestinian national narrative (Gordon, 2008: 57-59). Therefore, Israel favoured new form of identifications, as religion or hamula membership, by buying local elite’s co-optation through a careful distribution of favours (Gordon, 2006: 95). Nonetheless, Palestinian national movement grew in its importance, as it was able to fill the institutional void left by Israeli occupation by reducing the gap between people’s needs and the actual services that the Israeli civil administration was able to provide (Gordon, 2008: 92-94).

The third stage (1987-2000), called “Internal Closure”, starts to be enacted as a direct result of the First Intifada. When this first exclusively Palestinian reaction broke out, in 1987, Israel responded with a violent repression of Palestinian peaceful protests and by applying a strict “entry-permit” policy in Palestine which, through a system of magnetic identity identification, basically denied individual freedom of movement to a person because of its personal background (Gordon, 2008: 161). Then, after the Gulf War, a blanket ban was imposed on Palestinian mobility (Hass, 2002: 7; Graham, 2005: 31).

Nonetheless, since Israeli economy was worsening because of the situation within the OT, the Labour leadership advanced a strategy in order to normalize the occupation once again (Gordon, 2008: 167-170). Basically, Rabin exploited Israeli superior bargaining power within the international scenario in order to conduce new peace negotiations with the PLO leadership along Israeli lines (Pappe, 2006: 243). In fact, the 1993 Oslo Accord only fostered Israeli occupation through a strategy of “outsourcing”, by which Jewish leadership transferred the responsibility of Palestinian people to the PA, although Israel continued to indirectly and remotely control the majority of the occupied land without the burden of managing its people, by limiting PA authority to a formal executive body which could only enact Israeli will (Gordon, 2008: 169; Pappe, 2006: 244).

Moreover, Israel managed to use Palestinian police as an instrument to foster the control over OT population without deploying its own forces (Kimmerling, 2003: 104). In fact, OT police forces worked in cooperation with the Israeli one in order to secure Israel from terrorist attacks, as prescribed within the Wye River
Memorandum (1998) (Gordon, 2008: 190). Therefore, PA authority was further delegitimized in the eyes of Palestinians (Gordon, 2008: 192).

Meanwhile, more and more Jewish settlements were built within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip territory, as a mean to further expand Jewish territorial reach in view of the Taba negotiations. As a result of this strategy, while Israel managed to secure the territorial contiguity of its dominions within the West Bank, Palestinian territory was basically jeopardized and sub-divided into three major separated enclaves and Palestinians started being subjected to a more stricter system of checkpoints and permits, which completely denied them to freely go to work or to school (Kimmerling, 2003: 103; Hass, 2002: 9; Graham, 2005: 31).

Then, internal closure was finalized with the fourth phase, the “demographic Wall” one. Ariel Sharon provocative walk over the Temple Mount in 2000 marked the beginning of a second stage in Palestinians uprisings (Shlaim, 2014: 1,914). Both the IDF and the Palestinian resistance used much more violent means: in fact, as nationalist started using suicide bombing as a mean to counterbalance Israeli military superiority, Israel had a further pretext for invading the West Bank and drive out Palestinian leadership (Gordon, 2008: 198-201).

From this moment on, Israel would not be interested in managing Palestinian people, as happened in the period between 1967 and 1987, nor in giving this responsibility to the PA, as happened between 1987 and 2000 (Gordon, 2008: 199-200), but rather Sharon would opt for implementing the so-called “ingathering policy”, meaning the takeover of as much as land as possible, with few Palestinians as possible (Pappe, 2006: 251).

Such strategy was realized through the Israeli unilateral imposition of its borders, achieved through construction of an Israeli border fence which largely deviates from the 1967 borders, since its routes runs entirely within the Arab land (Gordon, 2008: 212). Moreover, such “Iron Wall” creates a system of “banstustans” as a mean to both solve the “native problem”, since it would have secured the maintenance of a Jewish majority population within the Israeli borders, as well as forced Palestinian transfer toward Eastern big Palestinian cities, thus further expanding Israeli territory. In addition, as Palestinian land was divided into different cantons which were not connected between each other, the Iron wall is meant to further prevent Palestinians from establishing a united independent state (Graham, 2005: 35).

This policy has been deepened through the deployment of a violent Israeli repression apparatus within the West Bank, which is justified by security means, and a total disengagement from Gaza, in which today Palestinian are subjected to live in unhuman conditions, as they are frequently subjected to air raids or blockades.

In conclusion, Israeli Iron Wall seems to be only the latest and most evident manifestation of an occupational regime which has its roots in 1967 and that has improved its managing strategies throughout the years in order to annex as much as Palestinian land as possible with less Arabs as possible and to fully exploit Palestinian resources. So, during various decades, Israeli policies towards the occupied territories have been turned into more and more segregating ones, practically by making more and more severe the restrictions for mobility
and, consequentially, making harder every attempt of contact between Israelis and Palestinians, excluded the
violent ones, and dividing Palestinians from Palestinians.

The very last paragraph of my thesis attempts to analyse the Israeli regime in order to try to classify it according
to the dichotomy democracy/autocracy. In particular, we found that the regime cannot be defined as being
properly democratic, since it retains some characteristics which deviates from the liberal democratic standards.
First of all, Kimmerling notice how Israeli society is becoming more and more fascist, since it has experienced
a general reduction in the freedom of expression, realized by means of censorship and repression of dissents.
Moreover, the perception of the other has been radicalized since the security problem has always been
presented as the most pressing problem, to the extent that it has become a sort civil religion, named
“securatism”, and that Israeli politics has been deeply militarized (Kimmerling, 2003: 11-13; Amar-Dahl,
2017: 189).

Therefore, the analysis shifted toward an examination of the Israeli two-tier legal system, as its citizens are
basically divided into different class along ethnic lines, according to which rights and privileges are granted
(Yiftachel, 1999: 375).

Such ethno-class stratification is the direct result of Israeli Judaization process. In fact, the two main Israeli
sub-classes, namely Askenazim and Mizrahim, have been created throughout all the period of Israeli territorial
expansion, as Askenazim were placed within Israeli upper-class society and inside the Green Line, while
Mizrahim community has been initially marginalized through its placement in the geographic and economic
periphery of Israel (Yiftachel, 2006: 35). Consequently, in Israel the notion of “demos” is not an identifiable
reality, since it does not cover the Israeli population as a whole, but rather it entails only a precise category of
people inside and outside proper Israeli boundaries (the ethnic majority and its diasporas so, Jews from all
over the world), while indigenous people are basically excluded from the political and cultural realms, as they
are treated as second class citizens (Yiftachel, 2000: 730).

Furthermore, Israeli legal system is not based on a written Constitution, but rather on several Basic Laws,
which can be anyway amended by a supermajority within the Knesset, and on Halacha, the Jewish religious
laws deriving from the Torah, which must function as a model to respect (Baldin, 2005: 102).

The Basic Laws defines Israel as a “Jewish and democratic state”, a statement that reflects the underlying
tensions between secular and religious instances within Israeli society (Baldin, 2005: 94). The Jewishness of
the state has been further strengthened by several laws passed within the Knesset, such as the Law of Return
(1950) or the Nationality Law (1952), which grants Israeli citizenship to all Jews settled within Israel, while
denying the same right to Palestinians born within the Israeli borders (Yiftachel 1999: 370), or even the more
recent “Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law”146 (2003) which basically denies to Israeli-Palestinians the right
to reunite with their families which live in the West Bank (Peled, 2007: 604).

extracted from https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/citizenship_law.htm

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Moreover, the role of religion has become more and more central in shaping Israeli regime, as for instance even non-Jews in Israel are forced to observe Jewish holidays, otherwise they will be legally sanctioned, and religious courts still retain exclusive jurisdiction over all matters concerning family law (Shafir & Peled, 1998: 413; Smootha, 2002: 485).

In order to justify the existing unequal reality, the regime is supported by the ideological apparatus of Zionism which links Jewish superiority and the rightfulness of its territorial possessions in Palestine to the Jewish biblical past (Yiftachel, 1999: 368). Moreover, the democratic façade of the regime is preserved within Israeli political arena through the use of selective participation, by which Arab-Israelis’ opposition is integrated within the Knesset but it is always excluded from the government by the implementation of a “convention ad excludendum” mechanism (Ghanem, 1998: 431-433).

All the enlisted policies and practices enforce the tyranny of Ashkenazim Jewish majority in Israel, as they prevent Palestinians from achieving social mobility through political and legal means. The discrimination measures carried out against Palestinians are justified by security purposes as well as by a strong ideological apparatus which has been developed according to the Zionist narrative by which Jewish are the rightful and exclusive owners of Israel, whose territory comprehends all the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Therefore, we can state that Israel cannot be defined as a democracy, since it lacks some crucial democratic elements, namely the protection of minority rights, equality among citizens, the independence of the state from the religious apparatus as well as from the military one, moreover, it lacks clear territorial boundaries, which is one of the condition sine qua non to be considered a state.

Recently, in 2017, the ESCWA has launched a report on Israeli policies toward Palestinian people and the question of apartheid. In fact, Israeli regime has developed a system of racial discrimination which can be identified as “Apartheid”, since it is a regime aimed at dividing the population along ethnic lines and at preserving one group’s racial domination. In the case of Israel, Jewish racial domination is preserved by annexing, occupying and fragmenting Palestinian people. In addition, we have analysed how the Israeli regime is effectively aimed at modifying the demographic composition of a territory, by subjecting a particular ethnicity to inhuman living conditions as well as to property expropriation and how Israeli policies have forced Palestinian to live segregated within enclaves and to renounce to all their claims over their homeland by means of law.

Throughout the years, both the Palestinian and the Israeli society have developed their identity according to a cultural and social system which has been called by Bar-Tal as “ethos of conflict”. It is defined as a “a cluster of shared social beliefs that provide a unique, general and dominant orientation to a society [...] an ethos evolves as a result of continuing experiences of the society, and its beliefs lend meaning to societal life. The ethos, moreover, connects the society’s present and its future goals and aspirations”\(^\text{147}\).

Thus, these two societies, especially the second generations, which raised in a conflict situation, experienced nothing but the culture of war, which has been spread into each single aspect of everyday life, such as media, books, newspapers, public debates, films, ceremonies, and rituals. The culture of war has become hegemonic and it is used as an ideological framework to justify actions that would normally be labelled as immoral, such as Palestinian terrorist attacks or Israeli raids against Arab civilians or the very apartheid regime enacted within Israel.

Since their identity have been developed in opposition to one another, the persistence of this biased ideological narrative is one fundamental reason that prevents Israelis and Palestinians from being integrated into a single bi-national society. Therefore, when we are addressing the issue regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its resolution, we cannot leave outside from our consideration the societal structure which has been specifically established to perpetrate the conflict and the resulting polarized and radicalized views held by both societies. Consequently, reconciliation entails not only more honest political efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace negotiation framework but even a radical change within the Israeli and the Palestinian societies, implemented through an educational and cultural bottom-up process able to unveil the protracted historical biased view, according to which Israelis and Palestinians are necessarily historical enemies. However, such efforts cannot overlook the recognition and implementation of Palestinians’ right to self-determination, a right they have been deprived for too long now.
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