

# The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel

Edited by  
Cary Nelson & Gabriel Noah Brahm

*Preface by Paul Berman*

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# PART V

## A CONCISE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

CARY NELSON, RACHEL S. HARRIS, AND  
KENNETH W. STEIN

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## The History of Israel

*Eretz Yisrael*, the Land of Israel, was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious, and political identity was shaped. Here they lived as a nation and created cultural values of national and universal importance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Diaspora. They never ceased to pray and hope for their return to the homeland where they could restore their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to reestablish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades, they returned en masse. Pioneers, immigrants, and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community with its own economy and culture. Loving peace but knowing how to defend themselves, the Jewish people brought the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, while aspiring toward independent nationhood.

*The opening of the Israeli Declaration of Independence (1948)*

As early as the tenth century BCE, Israelite kings ruled in Canaan, a territory that stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to beyond the western banks of the Jordan River. Archeological evidence confirms biblical accounts of a Temple in Jerusalem, constructed about 960 BCE during

King Solomon's reign. After its destruction in 586 BCE, Jews were exiled to Babylon but returned and rebuilt a second temple in 535 BCE that stood until the Romans razed Jerusalem in 70 CE and expelled Jews from their native land. It is this religious and political legacy that forms Jewish historical claims to a region with which the world has associated the Jewish people since ancient times, and with which they have maintained a spiritual and physical connection, despite centuries of exile, persecution, and domination by foreign powers within the area, and within the countries to which they have been dispersed.

As a minority that kept its own customs and traditions, Jews lived at the favor of local religious and political leaders. At times they would flourish under benevolent rulers, but in a moment, they might find themselves subject to cruel tyranny and excessive taxation, often becoming victims of violence and murder. Casualties of world history, Jews were left with little political agency and few methods of defense when Christian and Muslim society turned against them. The inventory that follows is but a partial account.

For the Christians of Medieval Europe, Jews were the killers of Christ; virulent myths about child kidnapping and blood libel were propagated, triggering violent anti-Jewish riots that led to massacres and expulsion from communities that Jews had for a time been able to consider home. By the end of the Middle Ages, Jews had lived in and been expelled from Carthage, England, France, Spain, Germany, Bavaria, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, the Netherlands, Warsaw, Portugal, Prussia, Lithuania, Bohemia, and Prague, sometimes on multiple occasions, and later from Ukraine, Poland, and Russia. Between the 11th and 19th centuries, Jews were repeatedly massacred; they were expelled more than 30 times from major European cities and states. They lost their property, they were murdered, they were accused of blood libels (kidnapping and murdering Christian children in order to obtain blood for use in preparing Passover matzoh), they experienced forced conversions often at the point of a sword, they were accused of spreading the plague and poisoning wells, and during the crusades they were repeatedly attacked by Christian armies on their way to fight Muslims in the Holy Land. In 1096 more than 5,000 Jews were murdered in Germany. In 1290, King Edward I issued an edict expelling all Jews from England, following 200 years of persecution, including the massacring of 100 Jews in York (1190), when they were burned to death after taking shelter in a tower. Five thousand Jews were killed in France in 1321 after they were accused of prompting lepers to poison wells. Thousands were killed in riots in Germany in 1389. Over 10,000 Jews were massacred in Spain in 1391. Following the wishes of Father Tomas de Torquemada, head of the Spanish Inquisition, 200,000 Jews were expelled from Spain on July 30, 1492, under an edict issued by

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and tens of thousands died in the effort to reach safety while fleeing from Spain. While Jews were tolerated to a greater extent under Muslim rule—as people who shared a holy book and as “dhimmis” (“protected” infidels) were not persecuted for their religious beliefs—they still experienced discrimination, taxation, and at times faced violent prejudice that again led to massacre and expulsion.

The beginning of the Modern period, the end of feudal Europe, and the rise of the nation state opened new opportunities for Jews. While many continued to live a backward, almost medieval existence in parts of Eastern Europe, those in western cities could take advantage of booming industrialization and the rapid development of major European cities. Two clear paths presented themselves for those who sought new opportunities for economic and intellectual growth: assimilation or emancipation. For those who chose assimilation, conversion to Christianity and marriage to a Christian were the most radical choices, but others chose to modernize their dress, habits, and religious practices to be more like the Christians among whom they lived. The development of Reform and later Conservative Judaism were movements designed to shift the lines between the modern world and the ancient religion by finding new interpretations that accorded with the contemporary settings. But Orthodox Judaism would also evolve in this period, with a split forming between the Hassidic sects in Eastern Europe, who embraced spiritual devotion, and the *Mitnagdim* (the “opposers”), who favored intellectual engagement with the text and correct behavior (*derekh erez*—“good manners”). In both cases, orthodoxy was responding to the modern world, either by avoiding it or by engaging with it intellectually.

The Jewish Enlightenment (the *Haskalah*) which developed during the 18th and 19th centuries in keeping with European Enlightenment ideals, frightened the traditional orthodox groups by calling for greater integration into modern secular society. As the map of Europe was rapidly transforming, Jews who had embraced Enlightenment ideals saw an alternative to conversion and the abandonment of Jewish faith, instead identifying a place for Jews within the broader brotherhood of man. This belief in the possibility of Jewish emancipation led to political efforts throughout the 19th century to have Jews included as equal citizens within continental European countries, and particularly in the newly created states emerging from the former Ottoman Empire. In Eastern Europe, these same ideals translated into political activism, and Jews believed that in a new Russian democracy they would be free from the violent prejudices of the past. But for many, the dream that Jews would finally be treated as equals in a new modern Russian republic was shattered with the anti-Semitic violence that erupted in the wake of the failed Russian revolution of 1905.

The combination of Haskalah ideals, the relentless violence against Jews in late nineteenth-century Russia through a series of pogroms, and the increasing manifestations of anti-Semitism in the press of apparently enlightened Western European societies, provided strong impetus for a Jewish national movement—one that believed the only truly safe haven for Jews would come through Jewish self-determination. Thus arose the political movement to establish Jewish sovereignty in the ancestral homeland, a movement we know today as Zionism. This essay offers a compact history of the movement's activities to create what would eventually become the State of Israel, and examines the social, economic, cultural, political, and military challenges that Zionists have faced since the 19th century, and on to the present day.

## Ottoman Palestine and Jewish Settlement— the Old Yishuv

From Roman times, Palestine proved a prime battleground; it lay at the meeting point of Asia, Europe, and Africa, which exposed it to warring empires from Assyria, Egypt, Sassania, and Byzantium during the first millennium of the Common Era. Jerusalem as a result was repeatedly under siege. By the Middle Ages, especially during the crusades, as Christian and Muslim armies raged against each other for hundreds of years, the region was left in ruins. The conflict over Jerusalem as a Christian holy site threatened Islamic rule in the region and led to prolonged violence. The Jews of Palestine who lived in the four holy cities—Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias, and Safed—as well as in such coastal towns as Jaffa, had established self-contained, self-managed communities, but they were nonetheless often caught up in regional warfare.

When Palestine came under Ottoman rule in 1517 the region experienced a period of relative tranquility. Under Suleiman the Magnificent, who ruled from 1520 to 1566, Palestine regenerated and became affluent. The Jews of Palestine, whose numbers had swelled in the 1490s after Jewish expulsions from Spain and Portugal, revived as well. The walls of Jerusalem were repaired (1535–38), as was the remaining Western Wall of the Temple. This time of social and religious tolerance led to a boom in religious academies in Jewish communities and fostered the growth of Kabbalistic writing and thought. The economy was fairly strong and Jews engaged in trades, crafts, and worked as merchants. But during the 17th and 18th centuries a steady decline took place, as Palestine increasingly became a municipal backwater of a declining Ottoman Empire. With little investment, few local resources, and

an impoverished community often racked by plagues and illness, there was little to recommend the area. Moreover, a series of earthquakes in Tiberias and Safed destroyed homes and displaced Jewish communities and led to further overcrowding in the already jam-packed city of Jerusalem. The Jewish community was made up mostly of Sephardic Jews who followed Jewish customs from around the Mediterranean, including Spain. That community, which had lived in the region for hundreds of years, was bolstered by an immigration of roughly 1500 Ashkenazi Jews (Jews from Europe, originally from lands near the Rhine) in 1700. Another 300 Ashkenazi migrated from Europe in the 1770s, picking up other travelers on their routes from Poland and Lithuania. With the exception of these groups, most of the immigrants to Palestine were elderly, making the pilgrimage in order to die in the Holy Land. The Old Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) was now impoverished, with many living in derelict homes and relying on charitable money collected in Europe to maintain themselves.

In 1831, Egypt conquered Palestine in a bid to free itself from Ottoman rule, but in 1840 the Ottomans suppressed the Egyptian uprising and reclaimed their territory. The competing powers left the landscape scarred and further impoverished local communities. Moses Montefiore (1784–1885), a wealthy British Jew who served as Sheriff of London to Queen Victoria, made seven visits to Palestine during his lifetime. Appalled by the barbaric conditions, he built the first Jewish settlement beyond the walls of Jerusalem, using funds from the estate of a New Orleans American Jew, Judah Touro. Mishkenot Sha'ananim, an almshouse built in 1860, could actually be seen from the walls of Jerusalem; that was intended to encourage the new inhabitants to feel safe, but it took a while before they were willing to stay at night, given the marauding bandits and raiding Bedouins roaming the territory beyond the city's gates. With its iconic windmill, this settlement became the first of several built to house the Old Yishuv's Jews; it was swiftly followed by Meah Shearim in 1864, and Nachlaot, a cluster of several neighborhoods that include Mishkenot Yisrael, Ohel Moshe, and Mazkeret Moshe. Numbering approximately 27,000, the religious Jews of the Old Yishuv continued to develop new settlements, not only outside of Jerusalem but also beyond Jaffa and other cities where Jews lived during the 1870s and early 1880s. In many cases, these fledgling communities, such as Petach Tikva (1878), would be augmented by the influx of a new, often secular Jew from Europe—the Zionist pioneers of the First Aliyah (wave of immigration).

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## The Rise of Zionism

The first traces of modern Zionism emerged among British Protestant supporters of Judaism in the first half of the 19th century. After the establishment of a British Consulate in Palestine in 1838, the Church of Scotland commissioned a report on the condition of the Jews; widely disseminated, it was followed by *Memorandum to Protestant Monarchs of Europe for the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine*. Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), in his role as President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, entered into a correspondence with Charles Henry Churchill (1807-1869), then British consul in Damascus in 1841-42; that correspondence produced the first recorded proposal for political Zionism. The British, particularly under Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), imagined a Jewish country that would operate as a British Protectorate, much like Egypt, which accorded with their larger plans for wresting control of the region from the Ottomans. In 1891, American Protestant William Eugene Blackstone (1841-1935) would present U.S. President Harrison with a petition signed by political, business, and religious leaders calling for the return of Palestine to the Jews, echoing a sentiment expressed by the Mormon Church in 1842.

These events, though momentous in their way, were distinct from the grassroots activism taking place among Jews in central and Eastern Europe. In 1834, Rabbi Judah Alkali (1798-1878) of Sarajevo called for Jews to return to the Land of Israel and to establish Jewish organizations to oversee national activities there, including a fund to purchase land for settlement. In 1862, in Prussia, Avi Hirsch Kalischer (1795-1874) published "Seeking Zion" and Moses Hess (1812-1875) published "Rome Jerusalem," both urging Jews to move to the land of Israel, buy property, and settle there. These calls heralded the rise of many small Zionist organizations which began to consider a return to Zion as a political option for Jews. According to Kalischer, "the redemption of Israel, for which we long, is not to be imagined as a sudden miracle . . . [that redemption] will begin by awakening support among the philanthropists and by gaining the consent of the nations to the gathering of some of the scattered of Israel into the Holy Land" (Hertzberg 111). These political murmurings reflected the increasing concern that Jews would never be free of the anti-Semitism that continued to thrive in Europe. As Hess observed, "we shall always remain strangers among the nations." "My nationality," he declared, is "inseparably connected with my ancestral heritage, with the Holy Land." Reflecting on the paradoxes of nationalism, he warned that "anti-national universalism is just as unfruitful as the anti-universalist nationalism of medieval reaction" (Hertzberg 121, 119, 129). When Dr. Yehuda Leib

Pinsker (1821-1891), a Russian physician who founded the Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) movement, published *Auto-Emancipation: A Warning to His Kinsfolk by a Russian Jew*, a pamphlet analyzing anti-Semitism in the wake of a series of pogroms in Russia in 1881, his call for the establishment of a Jewish homeland found an audience receptive to a new solution to European intolerance.

The 1881-1884 wave of pogroms (violent riots aimed at persecuting Jews) that swept across southwestern Russia's "Pale of Settlement," the area where Jews were forced to live, came at the end of a century of anti-Semitic government policies that had isolated Jews. Russia forced Jews into military conscription, often for long periods and from an early age. It controlled all aspects of Jewish dress, education, and the ritual slaughtering of meat; and it demonstrated that Russian Jews could not depend on the protection of the Russian government or police forces in the face of local violence. In response, Jews emigrated West to the New World, including the United States, Canada, and South America, as well as to agricultural projects in North and South America and Palestine, where Jewish benefactors created new opportunities for the destitute refugees, funded by the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) established by Baron Maurice de Hirsch (1831-1896).

### The First Aliyah (1881-1904)

The ancient term for going up to the Temple in Jerusalem, *aliyah* ("ascent"), has come to refer to the Jewish immigration from the Diaspora to the land of Israel. The Jews who migrated to agricultural colonies in the late 19th century are described as the First Aliyah of Zionist immigration. In contradistinction to those Jews who had moved to the Old Yishuv over the centuries, the migration that took place in the wake of the Russian pogroms brought young ideologues to Palestine, and that impulse intensified as persecution increased. The 1903-1906 pogroms were more lethal than those of the 1880s. The 1903 pogrom in Kishinev was publicized in dramatic terms by the international press, including the *New York Times*: "There was a well laid-out plan for the general massacre of Jews on the day following the Orthodox Easter. The mob was led by priests, and the general cry, 'Kill the Jews,' was taken up all over the city. The Jews were taken wholly unaware and were slaughtered like sheep . . . . The scenes of horror attending this massacre are beyond description. Babies were literally torn to pieces" (*NYT*, April 2).

Interested in agricultural endeavors, members of Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) groups and BILU (an acronym based on a verse from the Book of Isaiah 2:5, "House of Jacob, Let us ascend") were supported in their

pioneering endeavors by the Odessa Committee; officially known as “the Society for the Support of Jewish Farmers and Artisans in Syria and Palestine,” this was a charitable organization with roots in Europe and the United States which helped organize immigration to Palestine. With little to no experience of working the land, many enrolled in Mikveh Yisrael, an agricultural school established outside Jaffa in 1870, which equipped the new inhabitants with some of the basic skills they would need to survive. But they remained dependent on the largess of rich benefactors to make the pioneering projects succeed, and Montefiore, Baron Edmond De Rothschild (1845–1934), and Baron Hirsch were key figures in facilitating these dreams. Rothschild would fund settlements and their key needs, from land purchases to well drilling and seed acquisition—often from wealthy Arabs who functioned as absentee landlords. Zionist land purchases from 1880–1914 were concentrated in the coastal plain south of Haifa and in the Jezreel and Jordan valleys, areas largely swampy, uncultivated, and sparsely inhabited. Between 1878 and 1908, Jews purchased about 400,000 dunams, or 100,000 acres. Land purchases often resulted in the dispossession of the tenant farmers, though they received monetary compensation and usually resettled in the immediate environs. Though substantially more land was available for sale, funds were limited and land speculation soon drove up prices significantly.

The Eastern Europeans built early settlements in Rishon le-Tzion (1882), Rosh Pinna (1882), Zikhron Ya’akov (1882), and Gadera (1884)—agricultural farm holder villages (*moshavot*) that relied on Rothschild’s patronage. Yet the inclement climate, disease, and prohibitive Ottoman taxation soon alienated many of the young Zionists. At the same time, Jewish migrants from Yemen arrived in the country, spurred by the messianic promise of a return to the ancestral homeland; they moved mainly to the cities or worked as laborers on the newly created citrus groves of the subsidized farms. Of the 35,000 Jews who arrived with the First Aliyah, 15,000 would leave or die. By 1903, the Jewish population in Palestine numbered 55,000.

## European Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Zionist Movement

During 1894–95, a scandal erupted in France whose repercussions were to shape the future of the Zionist movement and determine its historical course. Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), a French Jewish artillery captain on the French general staff, was wrongly convicted of treason and sentenced to Devil’s Island. Though the military was relatively open to Jews, Dreyfus had

repeatedly experienced anti-Semitism and, when he reported it, was judged to be "unlikeable," which limited his professional advancement. Evidence identifying the real traitor came to light but was suppressed; when it was leaked to the press, Dreyfus' supporters, including Emile Zola (1840-1902), cried out against the endemic anti-Semitism in the country. Though these efforts led to Dreyfus receiving a pardon in 1899, he was not exonerated until 1906. The trial, and the virulent anti-Semitism which accompanied it, showed that even France, the very incubator for the belief that all men were equal, was subject to unremitting prejudice toward Jews.

Among the crowd of journalists who reported on the event was an assimilated Jew who would become the figurehead for the coalescence of the disparate Zionist groups under a single umbrella. Realizing that Zionism offered the only real political solution for a Jewish people who would forever be considered pariahs within other nations' states, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), convened The First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. His 30,000-word pamphlet *Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage* ("The Jewish State: Proposal of a Modern Solution to the Jewish Question") offered a concrete consideration of Zionist aspirations, and the Congress issued a call to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

With Herzl's guidance, Zionism became an internationally recognized political movement. But among its detractors were "ultra-Orthodox and assimilationists, revolutionaries and capitalists, dreamers and pragmatists" (Shapira 5). Some traditionalists considered Zionism a threatening secular movement seeking to supplant God's role in bringing about the redemption of the Jews. Some assimilated Jews felt Jewish nationalism would threaten their status in the countries in which they lived. "A central aspiration of Zionist ideology was the attainment of honor and respect in place of the shame and contempt that were the hallmarks of Jewish life in the Diaspora, especially in the Czarist Empire" (Morris 21). "No longer abject victims, middlemen, peddlers, protected moneylenders, rootless, soft-skinned intellectuals, the Jews were to change into hardy, no-nonsense farmers, who would take abuse from no one" (Morris 45).

But Palestine was not operating in a vacuum. For the Ottoman Turkish authorities who had been at war with the Russian Empire for two hundred years, the sudden influx of Russian immigrants in the late 19th century appeared as a new tactic for Russian authorities to use in seizing control of the dying empire. But with additional and increasingly violent pogroms erupting (1903-6), the tide of Jewish migration from Russia would continue to burden the concerned Ottoman authorities, and when World War I broke out, with Russia and Turkey on opposing sides, entry permits for Russian Jews were stopped. Taher al-Husseini (1842-1908), the Mufti of Jerusalem,

urged in 1899 that Jews who had recently settled in the area since 1891 be pressed into leaving or be expelled, and he awakened concerns among the authorities that stretched beyond the new inhabitants' Zionist aims, back to their land of origin.

Meanwhile Arabs were also becoming aware of the national aspirations that had rocked the stability of the Ottoman Empire since Greece first sought independence (1821-32). Egypt's attempts to gain sovereignty had failed, but Arab nationalism spread as a movement from Egypt throughout the Levant and Iraq, and raised new fears for the Ottomans. In 1904-1905, Najib Azouri (c. 1873-1916), a Maronite Christian, published two pamphlets denouncing the Ottoman Empire and calling for an independent Arab state from the Euphrates to the Suez Canal. Though his call met with little enthusiasm, the end of the Ottoman Empire in 1922 created new opportunities for Arab nationalists.

## The Second Aliyah, The First World War, and the End of the Ottoman Empire

The Second Aliyah (1904-1914) embraced a new Hebrew ideology that moved beyond the purely agricultural aspirations of their predecessors. Building on the work of Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1858-1922), who had arrived with the First Aliyah and was the guiding spirit behind the revival of the Hebrew language, members of the Second Aliyah rejected Yiddish and the Diasporic languages of their countries of emigration. They embraced the Hebrew language and Hebrew culture, which they saw as powerful manifestations of their connection to the historic homeland. "Converting Hebrew from the language of prayer and sacred texts into the language of Hebrew culture, and beyond that into the language of the street and home, was one of the Zionist movement's most magnificent achievements" (Shapira 57).

Ahad Ha'am (Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg, 1856-1927) had preached cultural Zionism in arguing that Jews should create "a Jewish State" and not just "a State of the Jews." Rather than dreaming that all Jews would migrate to Palestine, cultural Zionism would serve as a rallying cry for Jews everywhere. His ideology offered a powerful alternative to Herzl's political Zionism at a time when few chose the harsh conditions of the pioneer life over the more popular and financially promising option of migration to the United States. But, ultimately, members of the second and Third Aliyah sought to unite both ideals, creating folk music, dances, and Hebrew literature celebrating a Jewish State.

Zionist economic development in the first years of the 20th century continued to focus on agriculture and the building of new communities. In 1907–1908, the Palestine Office, headed by Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), was established in Jaffa to coordinate Zionist activity in Palestine. In 1909, the same year that Tel Aviv was founded as a suburb of Jaffa and lauded as the first Jewish city built in 2000 years, Degania was established—offering a new kind of collective agricultural settlement built on socialist values. This was the *kibbutz*:

From the 1880s until the First World War, Jewish settlement was concentrated almost exclusively in the *moshava*, a traditional kind of colony whose members farmed their land independently. The early *moshavoth* (plural of *moshava*) failed to achieve economic independence and did not develop quickly enough to enable large-scale colonization within a reasonable time. Attempts at reform and experimentation led to the design of the *kibbutz*, or *kvutza* (collective settlements), and the *moshav* (cooperative farming village). (Troen 4)

But these agricultural settlements were often victims of theft and sometimes local violence. In response, *HaShomer* (“the watchman”) was created as a defense system with guards who drew on the customs and dress of local Bedouins, Druze, and Circassians. The Second Aliyah’s focus on using only Jewish laborers and guards led to ongoing conflict with private plantation owners who often preferred the cheaper and more experienced labor of local Arabs. Hiring *Hashomer* led to repeated conflict where “mixed” Arab and Jewish employment occurred. By the end of the first decade, signs of Arab discomfort with the Jewish settlements were increasingly apparent. In 1911, Najib al-Khuri Nassar, who had been a land purchasing agent for the Jewish Colonization Association, published a critique of Jewish ambitions in the region; *al-Sihyuniyaa* (Zionism) was the first Arab book to examine the new forms of Jewish immigration.

On the eve of World War I, the Jewish community in Palestine numbered 85,000, more than half living in Jerusalem, though there were also 45 agricultural settlements whose total population exceeded 12,000. But the war was to have a devastating effect on the Yishuv’s economy, enough in fact to threaten famine. The community only survived with the arrival of money and supplies donated by American Jews and delivered on American warships. Hundreds of Arabs drafted into the Ottoman Turkish army died in battle or from disease, along with thousands more who were non-combatants. After repeatedly appealing to the British to serve in the army in order to liberate Palestine from the Ottomans, 650 Jews were at first recruited into the Zion

Mule Corps and served in the Gallipoli campaign; later five battalions of Jewish volunteers became the Jewish Legion (1917-1921). Around 91 died in action, but among the survivors were future Israeli members of Knesset, prime ministers and presidents, leading thinkers, artists and writers, and several pioneers from the First Aliyah.

On June 4, 1917, Jules Cambon (1845-1935), director general of the French Foreign Ministry, issued a statement declaring that "it would be a deed of justice and reparation to assist, by the protection of the Allied Powers, in the renaissance of the Jewish nationality in that land from which the people of Israel were exiled so many centuries ago." His comments followed from member of Parliament Winston Churchill's claims in 1908 that Jews must have their own homeland in Palestine. On November 2, British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour (1848-1930) issued a Declaration on behalf of the government, with strong concurrence of prime minister Lloyd George (1863-1945), stating that "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." Britain thereby strengthened its own interests, for "by endorsing Zionism, Britain was legitimizing its own presence there as the protector of Jewish self-determination" (Morris 73). The British were also influenced by Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952), a University of Manchester chemist who helped encourage what amounted to a pro-Zionist lobby among British leaders. Weizmann would become president of the Zionist Organization and later the first President of Israel.

The issuing of the Balfour Declaration helped consolidate and solidify Arab nationalism around the rejection of Zionism. From the Arab perspective, the world powers had no right to award territory that was not theirs to give. As a matter of principle, therefore, the promise to the Jews was without validity. The Jews, on the other hand, maintained that they had a historical right to the land of their ancestors, that they were righting a two-thousand-year injustice, and that Palestine already had a Jewish community residing on legally purchased property.

In December 1917, British General Sir Edmund Allenby (1861-1936) entered Jerusalem with his army and ended four centuries of Ottoman rule. Palestine had been left in ruins, with crops destroyed, trees uprooted, and village life economically devastated. Zionist anticipation that British rule would lead to Jewish self-governance met with disappointment when the military administration revealed a distinctly anti-Zionist outlook. Yet the

Zionists continued to invest and in 1918 laid the cornerstone of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem that would open in 1925.

## The British Mandate

On April 18, 1920 the San Remo Convention of the victors in World War I granted Britain a Mandate for Palestine and turned the Balfour Declaration into the official policy of the Entente Powers, thereby granting the Declaration international legal status. Article 4 of the Mandate instrument states: "An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine." Herbert Samuel (1870-1963), whose son had served in the Jewish Legion, became the first of nine High Commissioners overseeing Britain's control of Palestine, a mandate that lasted until Britain's physical withdrawal at midnight May 14, 1948, the same day that Israeli statehood was declared. Samuel catered to both Arab and Jewish/Zionist interests by allowing them to develop separate social and religious institutions. While not following an overt policy of divide and rule, Britain's policies established a framework for the Jewish and Arab communities to achieve autonomy. Yet while the Zionists continued to build state institutions for self-governance, including trade unions, welfare services, hospitals and health care, nurseries, and business and industry, the Arab elite continued to view their future self-determination within the feudal leadership systems of the past. They also saw working through the British to build self-governing institutions as a dangerous endorsement of British authority. The Jewish population in Palestine regularly made substantial contributions to British government revenue: in 1928, while only 17% of the population, the Jewish contribution to British administration coffers was 44% of its total revenue; in 1944/45, when Jews constituted 32% of the total population, they contributed 65% toward British administration revenue (Parliamentary Debates, Commons, November 17, 1930 and Report of the Zionist Executive to the 22nd Zionist Congress, 1946, p 6.).

In 1917, pogroms broke out in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution, killing as many as 60,000 Jews and displacing hundreds of thousands more. In the wake of this terror, thousands of Jews fled. After the hiatus of the war years, the establishment of the British Mandate in Palestine made it possible for Jewish immigration to resume. The Third Aliyah (1919-1923) brought up to 40,000 Jews to Palestine, mainly from Eastern Europe; it was more



successful than earlier waves, with most new settlers staying in Palestine, rather than moving on to more hospitable locales. If the Second Aliyah had brought many Hebrew writers and political activists to Palestine, the Third Aliyah would confirm Tel Aviv as the center of Hebrew letters and cement the leadership of the Yishuv that, over the succeeding decades, would pilot the Jewish settlement to statehood. David Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, Levi Eshkol, Moshe Sharett, H. N. Bialik, Saul Tchernikovsky, Haim Brenner, Natan Alterman, and Rachel Bluwstein were just a few of the major political and cultural figures who moved to Palestine in this socially formative period.

In 1924, new immigration restrictions limited Jewish entry to the U.S. An improving economic situation in Palestine attracted more immigrants to the growing urban centers. An influx of middle class families who founded small businesses and light industry arrived in the Fourth Aliyah (1924-1929). This bourgeois class was interested in leisure and recreation and threatened the earnest pioneering folk culture of the agriculturalists with the establishment of new cinemas, cafés, dance halls, and theatres that served the Jewish immigrants, British forces, and the Arab middle class alike. These new activities soon found a successful, if at times tense, place alongside the more conservative labor-driven Zionist culture. Some 67,000 immigrants arrived during this five-year period, but a sudden downturn in the economy in 1927 forced thousands to leave. For those who stayed, investing in new enterprises heralded a self-managed economy that would become increasingly less dependent on imported foreign goods and materials and eventually lead the community in Palestine to self-sufficiency.

Yet this period of boom was also plagued by increasing Arab hostilities. Jewish authors Hans Cohn and Arthur Ruppin noted candidly in a Berlin newspaper, *Der Jude* (1918-1920), that Zionism would face increasing opposition or enmity from Arabs, but claimed that there was enough room for both peoples in the area. Not all Arabs shared this perspective and in 1919 the King of Greater Syria and of Iraq, Emir Feisal, a leading pan-Arabist, signed an understanding with Chaim Weizmann that sanctioned Jewish immigration to Palestine on condition that Arab tenant farmers' rights were protected, validating religious preference without discrimination and calling on Zionists to assist the "Arab State" in economic development. These gestures did little to quell the bloodshed that would recur periodically throughout the 1920s.

On March 1, 1920, Arab forces attacked three Jewish settlements, including Tel Hai, built by *HaShomer* in the Galilee Panhandle north of Lake Hula. The Galilee Panhandle, an area abandoned by the British, had become a virtual no-man's land lying between the British and the French. The defenders of Tel Hai and the other two settlements, numbering 30-35 at each site, faced several hundred Arabs. Yusef Trumpeldor, a one-armed

veteran of the Russo-Japanese war and Gallipoli who had helped organize the Zion Mule Corps, was mortally wounded in the Tel Hai assault, but the settlement held. Dozens of Arabs died in the assault, but during the night, a relief column reached the settlement. With their ammunition depleted, the settlers burned the settlement and retreated. The battle was thereafter commemorated as a founding story of courage under fire and achieved mythic status in Israeli culture.

In 1920-21, Arab riots led to assaults on Jewish settlements, towns, and cities. The violence convinced many Jews that their Palestinian existence was precarious, and though the rest of the decade would prove to be relatively peaceful, these attacks led to increasingly separate economic development among Jewish and Arab residents. In turn, this separation would ultimately persuade the British that their mandate to produce self-governing entities would best be achieved through partition and the creation of two separate states. Aware of the need for Jewish self-defense in the face of Arab violence, *HaShomer* was succeeded in 1920 by a more developed defense group, the *Haganah*, which was founded as a civil militia or paramilitary organization.

Arab attacks also led to Vladimir Jabotinsky's creation of the largest right wing political party, *Hatzohar* (The Union of Revisionist Zionists), along with Betar, a youth movement and feeder program for the revisionist political agenda. Jabotinsky had been a war hero of the Jewish Legion; his party would serve as the ideological precursor for today's Herut and Likud right-wing political parties. Taking the view that Jews and Arabs would have to be separated in Palestine, Jabotinsky criticized the Zionist leadership for passivity and lack of aggression in dealing with Britain, and his network of political, military, and youth movements helped enact these views through both violent and non-violent means.

In 1922, in an attempt to suppress the Arab uprising, the British Colonial Office, under Winston Churchill, issued a White Paper seeking to reassure the Arabs they had nothing to fear from Jewish interests. Public opinion had begun to shift toward Arabs, and the Paper declared that the Balfour Declaration "does not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded in Palestine." Britain concluded that Jewish immigration to Palestine should be defined according to the "economic capacity" of the country to absorb newcomers. Zionists sought to broaden the interpretation of this amorphous term, but Arabs in Palestine opposed both the British presence and the idea of a Jewish national home. An Arab boycott of official association with British rule enabled the Zionist leadership to have an enormous influence over the writing of local ordinances and laws. They did so through the Jewish Agency, organized to serve as Zionism's governing authority under

the British Mandate. Only limited funds and the low numbers of immigrants constrained the growth of the Jewish community in Palestine.

Though the 1920s had proved economically and politically constructive for Jews, for Arabs it had been a decade of increasing frustration, and in 1929 Arab violence escalated during a week in August when much of the British leadership was overseas, resulting in the deaths of 133 Jews and 116 Arabs. Arab frustration also reflected the absence of effective Arab leaders and institutions to turn to as a route to change. Learning from the riots in 1920-21, the *Haganah* was able to protect many Jewish residents in places where it had trained groups with weapons. Following the Arab riots, in 1930-31 some *Haganah* officers would found the *Irgun* (a paramilitary group that broke off from the *Haganah* and was called *Haganah Bet* or referred to by its initials as *Etzel* or *IZL*) to achieve a more aggressive, rather than defensive, military posture.

In late August 1929, Oxford students of religion visiting Palestine as part of their summer abroad program soon found themselves drafted as reserve policemen to help the understaffed local British forces maintain the peace. Belatedly, the British appointed a commission of inquiry, headed by Sir Walter Shaw, which recommended curtailing Jewish immigration. From this point on, British policy in Palestine reflected a gradual effort to disengage from the commitments articulated in the Balfour Declaration.

In October 1930, following the findings of a commission of inquiry, the British government issued the Passfield White Paper. Lord Passfield, the anti-Zionist Colonial Secretary Sidney Webb (1859-1947), recommended restricting Jewish immigration and land acquisition counter to the Mandate. After protests, Britain reversed the Passfield conclusions in a public 1931 letter from Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald to Chaim Weizmann, which stated that the British had no intention of limiting Jewish immigration. For the next decade immigration to Palestine and land purchase would reach their peak, and Zionist geographic and demographic growth would create the nucleus for a state.

The immigration quotas imposed by the British following the Passfield White Paper could have had a devastating effect on the attempted migration of Jews during the Fifth Aliyah (1929-1936). The U.S. and Canada had closed their borders to those escaping the rise of Nazism in Europe, allowing only a small trickle to enter. Thus 250,000 immigrants arrived in Palestine in this time period, with more than a quarter coming from Germany and Austria. Most of these immigrants settled in urban areas and contributed significantly to business, medicine, education, literature, and music, though 20% of this Aliyah settled in kibbutzim and moshavim. A further 150,000 acres of land were bought, mostly from Palestinian Arab owners. Over the course of this

decade, the Jewish community was "largely responsible for the industrialization of Palestine." (Smith, 178-179).

The passive response of the old Palestinian leadership, and the rising power of the new Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini (c. 1897-1974), disappointed Arabs who wished to modernize and become self-governing like the Jews. Historically, a few important Arab families had competed for control through the Ottoman and British administrative regimes, providing the area's civil servants, judges, and religious officials, and eventually occupying national leadership positions. In a changing political landscape, these families would establish political parties, starting with the Nashishibi's in 1934, who created the National Defense Party in December and rejected the Balfour Declaration as part of their mandate. Considered less extreme than the more popular Palestine Arab Party formed by the Husseini family the following year, the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) was created under the leadership of the Mufti in 1936; all the Arab political parties were members, and the AHC became the official body for negotiating Arab wants and needs with the British authorities. Among its very first actions, the AHC called for the general strike that initiated the Arab Peasants' Revolt of 1936-39. The strike was called off in October, while Arabs waited a year for the conclusions of a new Commission headed by Lord William Robert Peel (1867-1937), but the Arabs rejected the resulting British proposal that Palestine be partitioned into Jewish and Arab states with an independent zone for Jerusalem. Peel believed a one-state solution would be unworkable and proposed that the Jewish state be established where Zionists had concentrated their population and economic development. The 404-page report included a recommendation for an "exchange of population" between the prospective Jewish and Arab states, transferring 225,000 Arabs and 1,250 Jews so as to establish ethnic/religious majorities in each state. Behind the recommendation was the recognition that Transjordan, Syria, and Iraq had "vast uninhabited areas and required additional inhabitants for their own development" (Morris 140). But as Husseini stated in 1936, "there is no place in Palestine for two races. The Jews left Palestine 2000 years ago. Let them go to other parts of the world, where there are wide vacant places." Believing that Arabs had been betrayed by the British, who had failed to give them complete sovereignty over the region, the AHC stepped up its activities. However, when the Acting British District Commissioner of Galilee was assassinated in Nazareth in 1937, the AHC was immediately outlawed.

The Peasants Revolt of 1936-1939 was directed against both the British and the Jews in Palestine. In 1937, the rebels launched 109 attacks against the British and 143 against Jewish settlements. Late that year Jabotinsky's military wing, the Irgun, which, like his political wing, wished to push the Zionist

leadership to greater resistance against the British, responded with several bombings of Arab crowds and buses. Between the violence of the Irgun and that of the Arabs, some 986 attacks on British targets and 651 on Jewish targets took place in 1938. Deaths included 77 Brits, 255 Jews, and perhaps 1,000 Arabs. Early in the following year, the revolt began to disintegrate. Some armed bands of Arabs crossed the border into Jordan, where the Arab Legion killed or captured them, and there were clashes between rival groups. Most of the Arabs killed during this period died in inter-factional Arab fighting; the majority of the Arab population, which was rural and agricultural, suffered enormous economic setbacks as a result of the violence and Arab terrorist intimidation (Stein 1987, 25-49). If the peasants were condemned to their fate, the Arab elite were less willing to suffer and as many as 30,000 members fled for the duration. The British suppressed the remainder of the revolt by May 1939. On the eve of World War II, Hitler declared Palestine to be "suffering the cruelest maltreatment for the benefit of Jewish interlopers" (Morris 157).

This statement followed from the growing relationship between Arabs and Germans that had developed steadily during the 1930s. After the AHC was outlawed for contributing to escalating regional violence, Hajj Amin al-Husseini was forced to flee Palestine in 1937 to escape an arrest warrant, eventually taking refuge in Lebanon, Iraq, Rome, and, during World War II, Berlin, where he was welcomed by Hitler. Arab alliances with the Germans posed a serious threat for the British during the war. Protecting British interests in Egypt took precedence over managing intergroup tensions in the Palestine Mandate. In an attempt to lessen Arab hostilities, Britain altered its two-year policy of allowing the development of the Jewish national homeland when it issued yet another policy statement, the White Paper of May 17, 1939, putting several restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchases. But the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations rejected this White Paper as a betrayal of the Mandate's terms. Meanwhile, with the demise of the AHC, and no clear leadership, Arab politics would remain paralyzed and fragmented during the war years.

By 1939, the population of Palestine had grown through both births and sixty years of Jewish immigration. Improved life expectancy, better medical facilities, lower infant mortality, clean drinking water, and modernized sanitation led to a demographic boom among Arabs, who now numbered 1,070,000, while Jews made up a third of Palestine's population at 460,000.

## World War II (1939-45)

While most of Europe and North Africa was in armed conflict during the war period, life in many ways continued as normal in Palestine; though geographically strategic, the region was out of the line of fire. The Arab leadership, divided and living mostly in exile, used this time to ingratiate themselves with British officials, often under the direction of al-Husseini, even though he was barred from attending the conferences convened to discuss the Palestine Question. Simultaneously some Arab leaders worked with the Nazis, particularly al-Husseini, who promised Arabs independence when the Germans defeated Britain and even went so far as to recruit Muslims for the Waffen-SS to hasten this end. "As of late 1943, [al-Husseini] became increasingly linked to the S.S. and attempts to prevent deals to exchange Jews from the German-occupied Central European countries for lorries and other material resources" (Sela 66).

Zionists focused on bringing Jews to Palestine, legally when possible and illegally when immigration quotas were so limited that it was impossible to gain access by other means. In prewar Palestine (1934-1939), 50,000 Jews had entered illegally, but during the war Britain adopted a brutal policy of capturing and deporting Jewish immigrants. During 1939, the Haganah formed a small offshoot to smuggle Jews out of Europe, but these efforts were increasingly restricted as the war spread. In Palestine, the Haganah developed the Palmach, an elite military strike force with a subdivision, the Palyam, responsible for preparing potential Jewish refugees in areas of crisis to emigrate, arranging for their transport and initial settlement in Palestine.

As early as 1941, the West received news of large-scale Jewish killings by the Nazis. In 1942, the Polish government in exile in London reported that 700,000 Polish Jews had already been murdered by the Germans and, in December of that year, the allies formally announced that Hitler had embarked on the mass murder of Jews. But immigration quotas to Palestine held, and, with most international borders closed to Jews, the progress of the "final solution" through which Jews would be rounded up and sent to camps "in the East" for extermination continued unabated. In 1943, amidst mass extermination of Jews, representatives of the U.S. and Great Britain concluded a meeting in Bermuda where the issue of the disastrous European Jewish condition was debated, but neither country was willing to open its doors to Jewish refugee settlement.

Jews were vulnerable not only in Europe. As a 1941 anti-Semitic outburst in Baghdad showed, when 200 Jews were killed and homes and businesses destroyed, Jews could have no security within other nations. Using

the partition plan as a template, Ben Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency, used the war years to build support among American Jews and the Zionists for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. But in Palestine Zionists were less patient and military activities continued. In 1944, five years after the war had started, Menachem Begin (1913-1992) assumed command of the Irgun; concluding that Germany's defeat was imminent, the group returned to the earlier priority of driving the British from Palestine. The Irgun began attacking British targets, activities which the Haganah and Palmach opposed. But by war's end, the Haganah would side with the Irgun to launch the Hebrew Rebellion Movement and attack British targets. In that effort, the Irgun followed the same policy as LHI, a paramilitary group that had split with the Irgun in 1940 so as to begin assaults on British targets then. LHI (or Lehi) was also known as the Stern Gang, after its founder Abraham Stern (1907-1942). Simultaneously, the Haganah stepped up its illegal immigration activities, assisting nearly 71,000 Jews to settle in Palestine between August 1945 and May 1948. Mostly war refugees and Holocaust survivors, many of these Jews were now trapped in internment camps in Germany and Eastern Europe, where they continued to face mass murder by the local populations. In response to the illegal immigrations, the British began a campaign to destroy Haganah ships in European harbors, and from 1946 on forcibly detained the passengers of ships they intercepted in holding camps in Cyprus. Famously, passengers of the *Exodus* were returned to a British-controlled area of Germany and then removed to displaced persons camps, making the Jewish refugees return to the source of their persecution. Despite U.S. president Harry Truman's (1884-1972) support for increased Jewish immigration, which became public knowledge in 1945, international borders remained closed to Jews, and Arabs rejected proposals for a single binational state that would be jointly governed by Arabs and Jews.

In 1944, after repeated pressure from the more moderate Jewish leaders who wished to support the British in their fight against the axis powers, Churchill established the Jewish Brigade. Some 25,000 to 28,000 Palestinian Jews volunteered to serve in the British army, and the Jewish Brigade with its distinctive blue-and-white flag saw action in Italy. After the war, this military training would help Jewish immigration activities, and later would furnish military leaders in the battle for Israel's independence in 1948.

After repeated attempts by Britain to find a compromise for the two warring factions, the British proposed the Morrison-Grady (or Provincial Autonomy) Plan for a binational state in 1946. It was the product of an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry tasked with studying the problem. The twelve Committee members toured the Middle East in February-March 1946. Documents were submitted from both sides, a three-volume

survey (*The Problem of Palestine*) from the Arabs and a 1,000-page report (*The Jewish Case Before the ACC of Inquiry on Palestine*) from the Jewish Agency. The Committee also toured Displaced Persons centers, especially in Poland, where over 1,000 Jews had been murdered since the war's end. The refugees in the DP centers made it clear they wanted to live in Palestine. In May 1946 the Committee recommended that immigration be increased but rejected partition. Both Arabs and Jews rejected the report, and Truman announced U.S. support for the partition of Palestine into two states, thereby further undermining a one-state (binational) solution. By then, Britain concluded it could no longer manage the situation in Palestine. In May 1946, Transjordan, previously part of the British Mandate, was recognized as an independent sovereign kingdom, constituting 75% of the territory for which Britain was responsible. The following year, in the wake of devastating losses to British military and administrative personnel when the King David Hotel was blown up by Irgun forces—killing 91 people, including Britons, Arabs, and Jews, and destroying the southern wing of the hotel, where the British administration was based—Britain turned over the Palestine problem to the United Nations.

In response, the UN General Assembly established the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to study the matter and make recommendations. The Arabs were hostile and demanded a state that would expel the illegal immigrants and grant no political rights to the remaining Jews. In 1947, Azzam Pasha (1893-1976), the head of the Arab League, told three Jewish Agency representatives that "the Arab world is not in a compromising mood. You won't get anything by peaceful means or compromise. You can perhaps get something, but only by force of arms. We shall try to defeat you. I'm not sure we'll succeed, but we will try. The Arab world regards you as invaders. It may be that we shall lose Palestine. But it's too late to talk of peaceful solutions" (Horowitz 232-235). Jews, by contrast, welcomed UNSCOP and led the delegations on impressive tours of energetic settlements. In comparison, the Arab villages seemed backward, and the Arab leadership and local economic development offered little to recommend itself to governance of the entire remaining area of the Mandate. A majority of eight of the eleven UNSCOP members endorsed a September 1, 1947, report recommending partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, with an economic union and independent regime for the Jerusalem/Bethlehem areas. But the Arab states were unwilling to compromise with a Jewish state. The local Arab leadership in Palestine was more open to avenues for compromise, willing to cooperate and even work with the Zionists, though the Mufti, in exile, adamantly opposed Zionism and Jews. Local collaborations with Jews occurred in many ways: Palestinians provided key information to Zionists



about Arab strengths, aided in the acquisition of military supplies, sold land to the Zionists, and cooperated on commerce and trade (Cohen 259-268).

On November 29, 1947, the UN adopted a Partition Resolution sanctioning the creation of a Jewish state. The Soviets supported it, briefly reversing their long-standing anti-Zionism with the goal of diminishing British influence in the region. Pressure from Jewish Agency lobbyists at the United Nations significantly contributed to the vote for partition; American Jews thus helped keep the U.S. aboard. The voting at the UN was broadcast live on radio worldwide. Listeners were tense in Palestine, as the UN charter required a two-thirds majority for passage. Thirty-three nations voted yes, thirteen voted no, and ten (including Britain) abstained:

What appeared to the Jews as a divine miracle, a sign that a global system of justice existed, was perceived by the Arabs as a flagrant wrong, a miscarriage of justice and an act of coercion. They were being called upon to consent to the partitioning of a country that only 30 years earlier had been considered Arab, and to the establishment of a Jewish state in it. To them recognition of the Jews' national rights in Palestine was insufferable, and the only possible response was armed resistance (Shapira 156).

### 1947-1949—Two Nations at War

Even before the British had withdrawn from Palestine, Jewish and Arab forces were at war. The local Palestinian Arab militia was supported by a military coalition of neighboring Arab states, though never with sufficient arms. While the Arab countries were united in their determination to push the Jews out of Palestine, they largely distrusted one another. The one Arab nation with a clear goal was Jordan; it aimed to annex the West Bank. The character of postwar settlements suggests that the Arab countries overall viewed Palestine either as a possible extension of a pan-Arab nation that included Syria and Jordan, or as an opportunity to add to their own sovereign territory. Nothing suggests they aimed to create an independent Arab nation for Palestinians. In time, however, the Arab states would adopt the Palestinian cause because they realized it would help them to secure both domestic and regional legitimacy. In the final resolution to the war, Israel set up an independent state, while Egypt, Jordan, and Syria annexed different portions of Palestine. The Arab armies had acted separately, without overall coordination, and in 1949 the UN armistice agreements were negotiated separately as well, primarily by the U.S.-provided mediator, Ralph Bunche (1903-1971). Egypt signed first, followed by Jordan. The agreements created new boundaries that came to be

known as the Green Line, but they amounted to armistice lines, rather than recognized borders. The state of war between the Arab states and Israel continued, with Arab attacks on Jewish citizens persisting after the war was over.

When floods of Arab refugees arrived in these countries, only Jordan would offer the Palestinians citizenship, while in Gaza (held by Egypt) and Greater Syria (including modern day Lebanon) the migrants were held in refugee camps and granted neither civil rights nor nationality. Palestinian refugees were trapped in a cycle of poverty and suffering, with little reason to imagine a viable future for themselves. Although World War II in Europe produced population transfers numbering in the millions, the Arab states uniquely refused to absorb the Palestinian refugees. Instead, a myth was promoted by the Arab governments that all the displaced and exiled Palestinians would return home once Israel was destroyed, thereby perpetuating the refugee problem and making permanent peace with Israel politically impossible. Those Arabs who remained within the newly formed state of Israel were held under martial law, and were often viewed as a fifth column by successive Israeli governments, but in 1966 they were granted full citizenship, receiving equal treatment under the law. Many have acquired college degrees and become accomplished professionals.

Between 583,000–609,000 Palestinians left their homes (Karsh 264–267). This migration is known to Palestinians as the Nakba (“catastrophe”) and formed a central narrative in the creation of Palestinian national identity. Exactly why so many Palestinians fled remains a subject of continuing debate in the scholarly literature, partly because there are competing preferences for uniform, simplified narratives both within and outside the scholarly community. In truth there seem to be multiple causes. The urban Arab elite left early on; the departure of upper-class Arabs, along with professionals and the intelligentsia, delivered an unspoken message that others should leave as well. Some villages were forced out, though the reasons were often strategic. Other villages fled in fear, responding to stories of real, exaggerated, or fabricated violence. An Arab strategy of encouraging Palestinian women and children to leave Israel so men would be free to fight predictably backfired when men left with their families. In the cities, “conflicting economic interests, political differences, and social and interdenominational schisms diminished the appetite for fighting, generated successive waves of evacuees, and prevented national cooperation. There was no sense of an overarching mutual interest or shared destiny” (Karsh 240).

One pivotal event that triggered Palestinian flight was the April 9, 1948, massacre at Deir Yassin, a Jerusalem area Arab village. Fighters from the Irgun and the Stern Gang entered the village to clear it—with Haganah approval—ostensibly as part of an effort to secure the Western approaches to Jerusalem.

When they encountered unexpected armed resistance, they reacted brutally, killing about 107 men, women, and children, partly by blowing up houses. Several captured men were then executed. All parties to the conflict then overstated the number of deaths—the Irgun to sow fear and demonstrate their prowess, the Arabs to rally support for the invasion. Arab propagandists also fabricated and broadcast stories of widespread rape as part of the massacre. While the stories did build support for the invasion, they also drove thousands of Palestinians to flee. The furor raised also led to an Arab massacre carried out for revenge. On April 13, hundreds of Arab militiamen attacked a largely unarmed convoy that was taking students, faculty, doctors, and nurses to the Hadassah Hospital at the Hebrew University campus. After the few defenders ran out of ammunition, the Arabs moved carefully to the line of buses, wet them with gasoline, and set them alight. All told, 78 Jews died, many burnt alive, most of them students and medical personnel.

Given that a roughly equivalent number of Jews fled Arab countries, gave up all their property, and came to Israel, the Israeli government argued that a population transfer had taken place. “Throughout history, problems created by similar population movements had been solved not by repatriation and the creation of large hostile and disruptive national minorities, but by resettlement in the countries chosen by the refugees in the hour of decision” (Sela 78).

As war loomed, there was little confidence in the world that Israel could prevail. In February, the U.S. State Department sought to have the U.S. government rescind its support for partitioning Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. Policy Planning Staff member George Kennan (1904–2005) told Secretary of State George Marshall (1880–1959) that a Jewish state would offend Arab interests and hurt U.S.–Arab relations. He feared that the Zionists would be overwhelmed in a war with the Arabs, forcing the Americans to send troops to defend the Jews, in turn causing the Soviets to dispatch troops to the Middle East, which would put Washington and Moscow in armed confrontation. The U.S. tried but failed to have UN trusteeship established for Palestine’s future in hopes of preventing the Jewish state from emerging. Among the groups rallying to Israel’s support that year was the National Lawyers Guild, reflecting American progressive support for partition. The Guild resolved that the U.S. State Department “permit American volunteers to go to the aid of those who are defending and complying with the dictates of the UN in the enforcement of the Partition Plan,” and called upon the UN Security Council to “equip the Haganah,” “defend the Jewish State,” and “prevent Arab infiltration of men and arms into Palestine for the purpose of creating strife and the defeat of the Partition Plan.”

In April 1948 the Zionist Executive established a People's Council to serve as an embryonic parliament and a People's Administration to function as an embryonic government, and on Friday, May 14, David Ben Gurion (1886-1973), soon to be Israel's first Prime Minister, gathered the People's Council in Tel Aviv and read the Declaration of Independence, establishing the State of Israel. One of the first acts of the new Israeli government was to revoke the immigration and land purchase restrictions imposed by the May 1939 British White Paper.

At that point in 1948, the first phase of the war, an internal civil war between the Yishuv and the Palestinian Arab community, essentially ended. Israel now faced a conventional war with the surrounding Arab nations and Palestinian irregulars. Each Arab country had its own agenda. The fall of Haifa to the Israelis, for example, deprived Iraq of what, at the time, was its primary access to oil terminals and refineries with a seaport. Arab armies invaded across every land border. The Arab Legion moved from Transjordan toward Jerusalem. Two columns of Egyptian troops crossed into the Sinai from the south. In June, a UN-brokered truce went into effect for a month. After fighting resumed, the Israeli Defense Forces were better organized. Syrian forces in the north disintegrated under fire, and the Israelis destroyed the southern arm of the Egyptian army.

By the summer of 1948, the U.S. State Department had come to accept Israel as a reality, yet the celebration in Israel was short lived as riots broke out in many Arab capitals against Jewish citizens who had lived there for centuries. Jews were forced to flee Arab countries for Israel, leaving homes, property, businesses, and synagogues. Between 1948 and 1951, Israel accepted 700,000 new immigrants, doubling the Jewish population. Many of these Jews from Middle Eastern and North African countries arrived stripped of their worldly possessions. Their numbers were approximately equivalent to the number of Palestinians displaced by the 1948 war. After the war, the Israeli government slowly expropriated much of the land in Israel previously owned by Arabs who had fled or been expelled, often to help settle the new immigrants. To decrease the feasibility of a large-scale Palestinian return, they also bulldozed abandoned villages and gave Jewish immigrants access to abandoned Arab homes in city neighborhoods.

The war cost 6,000 Jewish lives, 1% of the Jewish population in Palestine, and many more were injured. But Jews had held onto enough land to establish a state, viewing this War of Independence as a battle for survival. Under the partition plan, the Jews were to receive 14,900 square kilometers, the Arabs 11,700. As a result of the war, Israel's territory grew by 37%, to 20,770 sq. km. Egypt and Jordan occupied Gaza and the West Bank respectively, a total of 5,500 sq. km., until the 1967 war. The war also heightened inter-Arab

divisions and produced internal upheavals in Arab countries. The comprehensive failure of the Arab armies, in company with earlier predictions of victory, triggered ultra-nationalist sentiment in several Arab states.

## The Making of a Jewish State

The State-building years reveal concerted efforts to unify and assimilate the new Jewish immigrants into the established Zionist ideologies and apparatus. In 1949, the first Knesset was elected and Israel was admitted into the United Nations. After unifying the disparate paramilitary forces in Palestine under the banner of the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) in June, the Knesset passed a national service law stipulating that men and women fit to serve (with some exceptions) were required to be available for military service at age 18, though national service was available as an option for some. After the regular period of enlistment, soldiers remain active in the reserves for 20 to 30 years. With the army largely demobilized after the 1948 war, Israel faced the need to create a force that could defend the country in the event of renewed attacks. Unable to maintain a standing army of the size necessary to meet wartime challenges, Israel adopted a model based on the Swiss military: 30% of the army is kept on active duty, with the remainder held in reserve in civilian life, subject to rapid mobilization when needed. A skilled intelligence service also became a requirement, so that impending attacks could be predicted and, where possible, prevented:

It was the establishment of a military system where almost every citizen—male and female—was a trained soldier and a reservist, that transformed these disparate groups of people—the Israeli-born *Sabra*, the Orthodox Jew from New York, the scientist from London, the silversmith from Yemen, the lawyer from Egypt, and the small shopkeeper from Morocco—from individuals into a society and one nation under arms. And above all, what kept this Israeli organism together and helped rally Israelis around the flag and their leadership, was a deep sense of external danger” (Bregman 295-96).

In 1950, the Law of Return was adopted, guaranteeing Jews worldwide the right to immigrate to Israel, codifying a benefit announced in the Declaration of Independence and an immigration practice that had become a necessity both for Jews facing persecution and for the new country’s demographic requirements. The following year, Israel adopted a national development plan that departed from its

established ideology and practice of investing in agricultural and communitarian settlements . . . . The plan assumed that the majority of Israel's population, approximately 80%, would live in towns and cities. Its adoption signified that the initial Zionist dream of renaissance in a physio-craic utopia of Jewish peasants had been supplanted by a vision of a modern, urban, technologically advanced society modeled on Western Europe and Japan. In large measure, the face of Israel at the beginning of the twenty-first century has been determined by this plan (Troen 167).

### Austerity and Disease: The Problems of Creating a New State

Following the State's establishment and the influx of immigrants, the new country faced starvation. With exports funding less than a third of the country's necessary imports, Israel was in short supply of food, raw materials for industry, clothes, shoes, and the necessary foreign funds to purchase these goods. Credit at international banks had expired and still new citizens poured into the country. In a coordinated measure to ensure that the population would have necessary supplies, rationing was instituted from 1949-1959. Limiting citizens to 1600 calories a day, in line with British models of rationing (though more was available for the elderly, sick, children, and pregnant women), put pressure on the post-war veterans, as well as both long-time and newly arrived immigrants. Though the program experienced widespread political support, in time the population would begin to push against the restrictions, which for many dated back to 1939 and the shortages of WWII. A thriving black market developed which officials worked hard to suppress but were unable to eradicate.

The arrival of many new immigrants who had often suffered hardship and malnutrition on their journeys also brought such diseases as typhus, tuberculosis, and leprosy, along with scabies, ringworm, and lice; and a polio epidemic broke out which devastated the country's children. Medical efforts for these conditions, which were exacerbated by poor housing and malnutrition, included disinfection by DDT powder, scalp radiation, and isolation. The association of disease with the immigrants from North African and Arab countries, the population that came to be known as *Mizrachim* (Orientals) reinforced the European immigrants' and descendants' prejudice and racism. That they too had experienced disinfection and medical treatment when they arrived or in the detention camps in Europe seemed to play little part in gaining sympathy for the latest Aliyah. Moreover, many of the new arrivals

were confined in temporary camps (*ma'abarot*), at first made of tents and later corrugated metal huts that further heightened their association with dirt, squalor, and degradation. By 1956, the Jewish population of Israel had tripled and poverty, overcrowding, and illness had become priorities for a government desperate to establish new housing, schools, and industry to help settle the new immigrants.

When Israel signed a controversial reparations agreement with West Germany in September 1952, known as the Shilumin Agreement, the economic survival of the country depended on this new source of foreign currency. Over the decade it played a large role in securing Israel's economic stability and ending rationing. In the immediate post-independence years, however, contributions from and bond sales to world Jewry were the single largest source of foreign capital:

In the course of Israel's first decade, then, only one-twelfth of the nation's foreign currency expenditures were paid through 'earned' income. The rest derived from American, German, and other overseas sources. During the 1950s, world Jewry covered 59 percent of the balance of payments deficit, the United States government 12 percent, and West Germany 29 percent. Quite literally, these funds sustained Israel's economy, gave the nation breathing room in the unprecedented task of tripling, feeding, housing, and employing its population and defending its borders. (Sachar 426)

Experiencing multiple economic and social hardships on the home front, the new Israeli government also had to contend with ongoing bloodshed. In the mid-1950s, Arabs infiltrating through the porous borders with Egypt and Jordan continued to kill Israeli civilians. Israel responded by carrying out reprisals against villages suspected of harboring and assisting the terrorists. The aim was not only to convince villages not to harbor terrorists but also to get the Arab countries to police their own borders, but the attacks and reprisals continued. In 1953, Arab women and children were killed in Kibya when houses were blown up by the Israeli military. In 1954, Arab terrorists attacked a bus on the Arava road. Eleven Israelis were killed, three living to report what had happened. In 1955, fighting along the Gaza Strip border intensified, creating mounting pressure with Egypt, with the IDF claiming 180 incidents in four months. These tensions were exacerbated by Israeli concerns over armaments. Having signed a deal with Czechoslovakia, Egypt effectively achieved a military advantage over Israel, but in 1956 Israel was finally able to purchase French aircraft and tanks, thereby rebalancing their military power.

Tensions in the region escalated, partly framed by the cold war, as Egypt allied with Russia, potentially jeopardizing British, French, and American economic and political interests. All this exploded in 1956 after Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970) nationalized the Suez Canal. The response proved to be the first and only war Israel fought in collaboration with its allies, but the allied attack designed to "protect" the international waterway was a catastrophe for France and Britain, who lost the canal and their public standing as world powers. Israel, the only party to gain significantly from the Sinai Campaign, took the entire Sinai Peninsula, until it was occupied the following year by a UN international force charged with preventing another war between Egypt and Israel. The conquest had proved Israel's strength to the world.

Nasser had become a hero for Arab nationalists, a unifying symbol of the Arab determination to throw off the yoke of foreign oppression. For Israel's neighboring Arab countries, this served as a rallying cry, which increased wartime strains along the border with Jordan. Israel imposed a curfew on Arab-Israeli border villages, but on the first evening (October 29, 1956), before villagers were aware of the new rule, a group returning home after curfew were shot. "Of the battalion's eight platoon commanders, seven made sure that the inhabitants were allowed to return safely to their homes, but one obeyed the order to the letter, and that evening in Kafr Kassem forty-seven men, women, and children were killed" (Shapira 198). In response to this massacre, eleven Israeli officers and men were tried and eight were convicted. Their sentences were commuted, but a legal precedent was set in Israel making it unacceptable to follow an illegal order.

## The 1960s and the Ghosts of the Past

In 1953, Yad Vashem was established as Israel's official memorial for the commemoration of the Holocaust through education, research, documentation, and remembrance. But while the Holocaust was commemorated publicly, in reality the difficulties of the 1950s obscured the survivors' suffering; they were encouraged to adopt the national ethos and forget the past. Little historical material or literary fiction was written about the Holocaust, survivors were marginal characters in the nascent film industry, and psychological services were minimal. This changed in 1960 when Mossad agents in Argentina captured Adolph Eichmann (1906-1962) and brought him back to Israel to stand trial. Though he would be found guilty and sentenced to be hanged (Israel's only death sentence), the significance of his trial extended far beyond the discussion of his complicity. Rather, it opened the way for public



conversations about survivor suffering, the Zionist leadership's activities during the Holocaust, and the treatment of survivors in postwar Israel.

During the late 1950s, Palestinians began to mobilize clandestinely, though no clear political leadership emerged. Believing in the larger goal of Arab nationalism, Palestinians placed their hope in the Arab nations. In 1959, Fatah, a Palestinian paramilitary and political group, was founded with the aim of winning its demands through terrorist acts and, in 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded in Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem. In 1967, following the Six Day War, Israel's defeat of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan resulted in the end of Arab nationalism for Palestinians and made them finally understand that they could only depend upon themselves for political liberation. Along with Fatah and the PLO, the creation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in 1967 and the breakaway Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) in 1969 produced the first groups to coordinate armed struggle for Palestinian interests. PLO activities from Jordan included a series of raids on Israel, which culminated in a school bus hitting a mine, and resulted in a reprisal attack by the IDF, The Battle of Karameh (1968). Surprisingly, the Jordanian army fought alongside the PLO, turning what was meant to be a small operation into a full-scale battle, but the events were to raise concerns for the Jordanians. The Palestinians were essentially a "state within a state" that was beginning to threaten Jordanian sovereignty and, by the end of the 1960s, King Hussein had instigated the forceful suppression of PLO activities. The Palestinian Arabs, who were "accustomed to vigorous, volatile political activity and factionalism, fermented conflict in the Kingdom. While many of them were prominent in public positions at all levels, many others were active in opposition as agitators" (Sela 673). In two costly battles (September 1970 and July 1971), the Palestinian guerrilla groups were routed by the Jordanian forces.

After these defeats, the PLO leadership fled to Lebanon, where again Palestinians were isolated. It was during this period that the different Palestinian groups engaged in recruitment campaigns within the refugee camps, efforts which were strengthened by high-profile Palestinian airline hijackings and broad spectrum terrorist activities. These included the 1972 murder of eleven Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games by the Black September group and the 1976 hijacking of an Air France plane with over 200 passengers and crew who were held hostage in Entebbe until rescued dramatically by the IDF. The 1972 attack at Tel Aviv's international airport left 26 people dead, many of them Christian pilgrims from Puerto Rico. The terrorists were 3 Japanese gunmen recruited by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine from the Japanese Red Army. They arrived on an Air France flight, carrying violin cases containing assault rifles. In May 1974 a PFLP assault

team wearing IDF uniforms crossed the border from Lebanon and took 115 hostages at the Netiv Meir Elementary School in Ma'lot in Israel's Western Galilee region. When an elite Israeli force stormed the building, the terrorists used machine guns and grenades to kill 22 high school students who were staying in the building overnight. These actions led the world media to delegitimize Palestinian claims and discredit the PLO, but they nevertheless put the Palestinian situation on the world political agenda. The Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), growing out of mutual Christian-Muslim hatred, offered Palestinians the opportunity to shoot rockets into Northern Israel in the late 1970s. In response the IDF invaded the south of Lebanon, ultimately forcing the PLO leadership to relocate to Tunis in 1982, but leaving the more radical Hezbollah (backed by Iran) to take its place in Lebanon.

The Six Day War, which proved a catalyst for Palestinian political mobilization, took place from June 5 to 10, 1967. When the Soviets erroneously informed Syria and Egypt that Israel was amassing troops for an attack in the north, Nasser demanded that the UN withdraw from Gaza, Sinai, and the Straits of Tiran. The UN complied and Nasser blocked the Straits, preventing Israel's access through the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba, a major trade route. It amounted to an act of war. The public rhetoric that followed—which included calls on Nasser to drive the Jews out of Israel and PLO chairman Ahmed Shukeri's (1908-1980) boast that “no Jew whatsoever will survive” in the event of war—evoked memories of the Holocaust for Israelis. When Jordan's King Hussein then flew to Egypt to sign a mutual defense pact, Israel reacted to the threat implied in the military alliance and launched a preemptive strike. Within three hours, the IDF had destroyed the entire Egyptian air force on the ground. The felling of Syrian and Jordanian air forces followed swiftly. Over land, IDF forces reached the banks of the Suez Canal and reclaimed the Sinai Peninsula, chasing out the Egyptian army. Though Israel had hoped to avoid conflict with Jordan, Jordanian shelling of West Jerusalem and the Ramat David air base led Israel to respond, eventually taking East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which had been under Jordanian control since 1948. Israel also occupied the Golan Heights, taking this strategic military site from Syria, while capturing the Gaza strip from Egypt.

But with these new territories came a million Palestinians. Unlike the Arab citizens within Israel who had received full and equal rights, Palestinian residents in these new territories would be governed under martial law and Israel would become an occupying power. The early dream of a Greater Israel—a Jewish state occupying all of Palestine—had long lain dormant, but now it rose again to play a significant role in the Israeli polity for the first time since independence.

## High Culture at the Center and Territorial Expansion at the Margins

After the 1967 war two Israels seemed to emerge. In the country's center the population was becoming increasingly affluent. Israeli literature of the period ridicules a new decadent class that had radically rejected the pioneering ethos at the heart of the country's foundation. But this transformation also signified the normalization of the country and its recovery after the period of austerity.

In 1964, the Batsheva Dance Company, based in Tel Aviv, was founded by Martha Graham (1894-1991) and Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild (1914-1999) and rapidly established itself to international acclaim. In 1965, the Israel Museum, Israel's national art and archeology museum, was founded, based in part on the collection from the Bezalel art school in Jerusalem opened by Boris Schatz in 1906. In 1966, S. Y. (Shmuel Yosef) Agnon (1888-1970) won the Nobel Prize for literature, sharing it with poet Nelly Sachs. Born in what is now the Ukraine, Agnon had settled permanently in Palestine in 1924. His fiction and poetry embodies the cultural conflicts between tradition and modernity, which characterized the development of Zionist literary and artistic culture.

Tel Aviv café culture, restaurants, hotels, dance venues, and shops reflected a buoyant society, and international tourism flourished. Along with economic liberation came sexual liberation, and though conventional Israeli society continued to be characterized as old-fashioned and traditionalist, post-war euphoria revealed significant social changes in Tel Aviv and its nearby cities. The arrival of French artists and Italian cinema, the introduction of rock music, and the rise of a new youth culture signaled the casting off of the old conservatism.

One of the notable Tel Aviv developments was the growth of a vibrant gay community. Israel inherited anti-sodomy rules from the British Mandate period, but the Israeli Supreme Court ruled in 1963 that they should not be enforced against consenting adults acting in private. The age of consent in Israel for both heterosexuals and homosexuals is 16. The ban was formally repealed by the Knesset in 1988. Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation was prohibited in 1992. Although Israel today has not yet approved same-sex marriages being performed in country, despite national support for doing so, it has long honored those performed elsewhere. Meanwhile, the Civil Service Commission extends spousal benefits and pensions to partners of gay employees. Gays can serve openly in the Israeli military.

The vibrant coastal culture, however, did not extend everywhere. In the country's periphery, a different story was unfolding. Many of the new

immigrants were being housed in development towns outside main population centers and often in the newly conquered territories. These projects, which were frequently built around a single industry upon which the area would depend, offered new hope for the refugees, but by the 1980s it had become clear that the social and economic limitations of these neighborhoods had created an uneducated and impoverished underclass of Mizrahi Jews, often held hostage by appalling working conditions and low factory wages. Inspired by the American Black protest movements of the 1960s, Mizrachim created their own Black Panther movement (1971) to protest the social injustices and discrimination that faced them. The issues they raised were sidelined by the Yom Kippur War, leading the Mizrahi Jews to mobilize and making them a significant political force in the 1977 elections.

The territories taken by Israel in 1967 offered political challenges but also economic advantages, particularly for a country with limited territory and increasing numbers of immigrants. Despite secret talks in which the Israeli government offered to return parts of its land in exchange for peace and recognition, at a summit in Khartoum the Arab States publicly refused to recognize Israel or to negotiate. In an attempt to resolve problems acquired with the occupation of the West Bank, Israeli Minister of Labor Yigal Alon (1918-1980) presented a strategic plan which included a partition in which Israel would retain control over the Jordan River areas to protect Israel from Jordanian (and Palestinian) incursions, and the more populated hill areas and a corridor that included Jericho would be under Jordanian control. Though Jordanians rejected the plan, Israelis saw opportunities in moving to settle this newly acquired land. While the government planned to settle Jews in deserted agricultural landscapes, in 1968, for the first time, Jewish settlers defied the Israeli government and occupied space in Hebron in the heart of the Arab population. The government's decision to allow them to stay—despite a 1967 opinion by Theodor Meron (1930-), legal counsel to the Israeli foreign ministry, that civilian settlement in the administered territories would violate the Fourth Geneva Convention—proved a watershed moment. Settlement policy became increasingly more aggressive under Menachem Begin's Likud government after his election in 1977. By July 2012 Israeli Interior Ministry figures would acknowledge 350,150 Jewish settlers living in 121 officially recognized West Bank settlements, along with 300,000 living in East Jerusalem. The international community broadly condemned the settlements as illegal, and the Palestinians have regularly declared them an impediment to peace negotiations, lodging protests at the addition of any housing units whether in existing settlements or new locations. Some of the settlements constitute farming communities or frontier villages, while others amount to city neighborhoods or suburbs reflecting normal urban expansion. The

largest of the settlements—Ariel, Beitar Illit, Ma'ale Adumin, and Mod'in Illit—constitute cities in their own right. The first disengagement of settlers occurred in 1982 when eighteen Jewish settlements were disbanded in the Sinai Peninsula, including Yamit, upon the return of territory to Egypt. But more significantly, the 2006 disengagement from Gaza, which included a much larger Jewish population, occurred at the instigation of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, a notorious right-wing hawk who had previously supported the settlement movement. This withdrawal, which had none of the quid pro quo advantages that the Egyptian deal had included, revealed that the government recognized the cost of defending the settlers was ultimately too high a price for the country to pay. Moreover, the disengagement from Gaza demonstrated that Israel had come to accept the principle of Palestinian sovereignty.

## Arab Violence and the End of the Old Ways

Despite the resounding defeat of the Arab countries during the 1967 war, hostilities continued, culminating in the 1969-1970 War of Attrition, an escalating series of border clashes with Egypt. The IDF reduced cities along the Suez Canal to rubble and Egyptian refugees flooded into Cairo. U.S. interventions set in place a ceasefire when in 1970 Nasser died suddenly, to be succeeded by Anwar Sadat (1918-1981).

In 1973, The Yom Kippur War (the October War) took place from October 6-24. The conduct of the war was initially shaped by the failure of Israeli intelligence to recognize the extent of Egypt's humiliation in the 1967 war, the political pressure for revenge and the reacquisition of lost territory it created, and the ongoing violence that followed. Thus they failed to pay attention to the heavy buildup of Egyptian troops along the Suez Canal, the massing of Syrian troops at the border, and even disregarded a September 25 warning from King Hussein to Prime Minister Golda Meir (1898-1978) that a coordinated Egyptian-Syrian attack was forthcoming. Meir had become Prime Minister in 1969 upon the sudden death of Levi Eshkol (1895-1969). Complacency about the condition of the Egyptian army, given their easy thrashing in 1967, lessened the motivation of the intelligence services to react and made it possible to accept the idea that Egyptian troop buildups were merely evidence of military exercises. Israel also felt, incorrectly, that its defensive Bar-Lev line on the Suez Canal could not be breached by Egypt. In consequence, the Israeli air force took heavy losses from SAM missiles, while Russian anti-tank missiles destroyed a number of Israeli tanks on the Egyptian front. In the first two days of the attack, top Israeli officials believed the entire

country could be lost. The Israelis counterattacked in the Golan Heights on October 11 and within days advanced toward Damascus. Meanwhile, U.S. President Richard Nixon (1913-1994) agreed to an emergency airlift of military equipment to Israel, beginning October 14. That same day the Egyptian army launched a disastrous assault that cost it 250 tanks, compared to an Israeli loss of 20. Soon the IDF crossed the canal and encircled Egypt's Third Army. What began as a rout of Israeli forces ended in a major victory for them, but 2,500 Israeli soldiers died, the highest toll since the 1948 war. Combined Egyptian and Syrian combat deaths approached 15,000, and the two countries had lost 1800 tanks and 400 aircraft. But Israel's confidence was shaken by its intelligence failures and lack of preparation. Then, too, the recent introduction of television in 1969 meant that the Yom Kippur war was the first war to be televised and to appear in people's homes. The sight of bound and blindfolded soldiers being led across the screen reinforced the Israeli public's sense of existential threat.

The Yom Kippur war shook confidence in the government. In the 1960s and 1970s, the citizenry was also rocked by a series of public scandals, including the revelation of Leah Rabin's illegal bank account in the US and Moshe Dayan's sexual escapades and personal possession of national archeological treasures. Political infighting in the Labor party and the demographic rise of the Mizrahi voting bloc then combined to put an end to 30 years of Labor dominance of Israeli political institutions. In the spectacular election of 1977, in an upset Haim Yavin spontaneously called a *ma'apach* ("political revolution"), Begin and the right-wing Likud party came to power. The election permanently changed the landscape of Israeli politics. On the other hand, the early Arab victories in 1973 had made it possible for Sadat to contemplate an alternative to war as a way of solving Egypt's conflict with Israel.

In November 1977, Anwar Sadat flew to Israel and spoke before the Israeli Knesset. His visit revealed the ongoing secret international efforts to lead Israel and Egypt into an agreement offering principles for managing the autonomy of the Palestinians and negotiating a peace treaty between the two warring countries. In 1979, Sadat and Begin signed an agreement at the White House following the Camp David Accords (1978), a series of meetings between Egypt and Israel facilitated by U.S. President Jimmy Carter. Sadat and Begin shared the Nobel Peace Prize that year. Though Israel withdrew from the Sinai, returning the territory to Egypt and dismantling eighteen settlements in the process, the Arab nation was barred from the Arab League for ten years for signing the peace agreement. That was part of an effort to persuade other Arab countries not to make similar agreements. In 1981 Sadat was assassinated during an annual Egyptian victory parade.

## Lebanon from Litani (1978) to Withdrawal (2006)

In 1978, in response to terrorist attacks, Israel first crossed the Litani River into Southern Lebanon to drive out the Palestinians shooting at Northern Israel. In March 1978, a Fatah raiding party hijacked an Israeli bus and 32 Israelis died. Though the Israelis pushed the Palestinians back from the border, they invaded again in 1982, after responding to requests for aid and military training from the Lebanese Maronite Phalange Party headed by Bashir Gemayel (1947-1982). Begin was moved by the Maronite appeal, for in his mind the Lebanese civil war was a battle between Muslims and Christians. "For millennia the Christian world had oppressed and killed the Jews. Now a Christian community was appealing to the Jews for succor— after Europe, particularly France, had turned its back. Begin was not one to resist the opportunity of showing the world how his people, in their magnanimity and humanity, would help and protect the Christians of Lebanon from Muslim 'genocide' as Europe and the United States had failed to do for the Jews" (Morris 404-5).

As Muslim Syrian forces advanced into Lebanon, Gemayel responded by sending his own fighters into Syrian dominated territory in 1981, but his militia was overextended and Syrians launched an artillery barrage that killed hundreds of Christian civilians. In a curious alliance, the IDF had become partners with the Maronite Lebanese, if only to protect Israel's northern borders from Palestinian violence. Their air attacks on Palestinian-controlled Lebanese towns reached as far as Beirut, where they destroyed PLO buildings and killed several hundred people. Israel believed that by eliminating the PLO and restoring Christian dominance to Lebanon, they would be able to negotiate a peace treaty with the new government. Their aims tallied with Gemayel's own desires for Christian political rule, though he was not as comfortable admitting his association with Israel publicly as he had been in receiving aid. Despite a slowdown in Palestinian provocations by the end of 1981 and into the spring of 1982, Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon (1928-2014), who would serve as Prime Minister from 2001 to 2006, pressed for the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. When the Israeli ambassador to London, Shlomo Argov (1929-2003), was shot in the head and badly wounded, Sharon had the provocation he needed, and despite PLO condemnation of the assassination attempt (and their denials of involvement in its orchestration), Israel bombed several PLO targets in retaliation, and the Israeli cabinet agreed to a limited invasion of Lebanon. Sharon, with more expansionist ideas, manipulated and misled the cabinet to give piecemeal approval for further steps; they finally agreed to put the IDF into armed conflict with the Syrian forces in Lebanon. After a two-month siege of the city, the IDF entered West Beirut.

Ongoing skirmishes between the PLO and the IDF on the ground and the brutality of urban guerilla warfare left innocent victims in the line of fire. The local PLO militias dug in to fight, using the refugee camps as shelter. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed, and though the IDF sought not to fire on civilians, only a heavy bombing campaign forced the PLO to evacuate. Though the Lebanese Army refused to empty the refugee camps, the Phalangists agreed to take on the job. On the evening of September 16, 1982, Phalangist men moved into the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps with Israeli approval, presumably also believing they had the IDF's tacit approval for what they were about to do. Two days earlier, Gemayal, already elected president, had been assassinated. Eager for revenge, the Phalangists moved from house to house, killing whole families. The Phalangists were out of sight of the Israelis, who were stationed beyond the walls of the camp, and the Israelis thus did not see what was happening or intervene, ultimately failing in their responsibility to care for the residents' safety.

Yet the Israeli military leadership, under Sharon's authority, certainly had ample reason to be wary of the Phalangists' intentions. After the brutality of the bombings, the massacres "sparked a conflagration among the Israeli public. The possibility that the IDF was even indirectly responsible because it stood aside and did not intervene . . . subverted the army's image as moral in the eyes of civilians and soldiers alike" (Shapira 384). "Intellectuals, media figures, and writers felt that 'their' country was disappearing and being replaced by a country that was not theirs" (Shapira 387). The war was the first time Israel had gone beyond gestures of self-defense to invade another country; accordingly, the government lost public support for the war. Officers signed a letter of protest that became a powerful symbol for Israel's early peace movement, and hundreds of thousands of civilians demonstrated in Tel Aviv against the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camp atrocities, demanding an Israeli commission of inquiry be formed. Begin resisted at first but was compelled to concede and finally resigned in 1983.

Having forcibly expelled the PLO, whose leaders now fled to Tunis, Israel withdrew to a slim borderland buffer zone policed by the Southern Lebanon Army (SLA) where Israel also maintained a military presence of its own. Meanwhile, however, the PLO had been replaced by Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed Palestinian terror group that would use the next twenty years to wage guerilla warfare against the SLA and IDF. In 1996, after constant low-level conflict, Israel and Hezbollah signed a ceasefire treaty agreeing to forgo attacks on civilians. But Israeli soldiers continued to remain targets and Hezbollah adopted a policy of killing or kidnapping them and releasing them in exchange for Palestinian political prisoners held in Israel. Israel continued to fund the SLA, but in 2000 the Southern Lebanese Army collapsed under



an onslaught from Hezbollah and from concern the Israelis might abandon the SLA as part of a peace agreement with Syria.

After becoming Prime Minister in 1999, Ehud Barak sought to fulfill a campaign promise to withdraw all troops in Lebanon, but a hope that this might be part of an agreement with Syria faded. Then, in elections, the political wing of the terrorist organization won all the Parliamentary seats allotted for Southern Lebanon. An Israeli withdrawal might have eliminated Hezbollah's legitimacy as a force opposing an occupying power, but it could also have destroyed the SLA. In 2004, the UN called for a dismantling of militia groups and a withdrawal from Lebanon by foreign powers. Syria withdrew in 2005, but Hezbollah refused to lay down its weapons and continued attacking Israeli targets. Tensions in the area led to constant accusations of terror actions by both Hezbollah and Israel, and though Israel had expressed a desire to sign peace accords with Lebanon, the possibility now seemed unlikely. When word of Barak's plans to withdraw leaked, SLA forces began to desert, leaving Israeli troops dangerously exposed in many places. On May 24, 2006, the IDF completed a withdrawal and Israel ended an eighteen-year presence in Lebanon.

Assisted by Iranian and North Korean instructors, Hezbollah thereafter began building an elaborate system of concealed bunkers connected by tunnels throughout what had been the security zone. The bunkers were stocked with sufficient supplies and weapons to survive a siege. Rocket launchers were established underground and mounted on lifts that could raise them into firing position. In July 2006, Hezbollah attacked a patrol on Israel's side of the border. Israel responded with air strikes. Hezbollah then began an aggressive campaign of rocket launches into Israel. An extensive air campaign proved effective in eliminating Hezbollah's medium- and long-range missiles, but had little effect on its 10,000 to 16,000 short-range missiles with a range of 18 to 28 km that could be fired from mobile launchers. From July 12 until August 14, when a ceasefire went into effect, over 4,000 rockets struck Israel, killing and wounding ordinary citizens and substantially disrupting daily life. Just before the UN-brokered ceasefire went into effect, Israel sent in ground troops, but the bunker system, like that used by the North Vietnamese, proved resilient. "Hezbollah had embraced a new doctrine, transforming itself from a predominantly guerilla force into a formidable quasi-conventional army . . . . A semi-military organization of a few thousand people, carrying relatively primitive weapons, was able to survive against what was regarded as the strongest army in the Middle East" (Bregman 292). This, the second Lebanon War, displaced a million people in Lebanon and half a million in Northern Israel. The UN finally brokered a ceasefire and since then there have been only limited outbreaks of violence.

## The World's Conscience, Economic Growth, and Popular Culture

While Begin was charged with the disasters of the first Lebanon war, the same principle behind the desire to help Maronite Christians was at play when he offered asylum to 300 Vietnamese refugees (“boat people”) in 1977–1979. Recalling the world’s failure to offer safe haven for Jews during the Holocaust—and citing the example of the *St. Louis* which sailed to Cuba where the passengers were unable to disembark and were finally returned to Hamburg where most died in concentration camps—Begin articulated what had become a fundamental belief about Israel’s responsibility to help those in need. In 1958, Israel had adopted an official humanitarian aid agenda as a principal element of the country’s international cooperation program. These efforts began formally following Golda Meir’s first visit to Africa and the establishment of MASHAV, the Foreign Ministry’s Center for International Cooperation, which provides technical training and shares technology with countries striving to alleviate global problems of hunger, disease, and poverty. Over the years, Israel extended humanitarian aid and assistance to more than 140 countries, whether or not they maintained diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. The countries helped included Japan, the Philippines, Haiti, Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Turkey, and Kosovo. Israel responded to such humanitarian disasters as war, famine, earthquakes, and typhoons. Along with providing medical supplies, disaster relief, and support staff during the 1970s, this agenda was expanded to granting safe haven to refugees; along with the Vietnamese, Israel took in foreign nationals from Bosnia, Kosovo, and more recently Darfur.

Yet this pattern also led to condemnation of the government’s treatment of African asylum seekers in South Tel Aviv in the 2010s who entered the country illegally through the border between Israel and Egypt. An influx of thousands of refugees from Eritrea and Sudan during the mid-2000s put pressure on local services, but the government failed to coordinate a plan that would give refugees access to work permits, resources, and the opportunity to integrate into society. That created a climate of despair that erupted into violence and local riots in 2012 and 2013. That violence led right-wing Israelis to protest the presence of the Africans as “infiltrators,” so labeled because they had crossed the border illegally.

This history of rescuing Jewish refugees, including those from Africa, is part of the founding myths of the State of Israel. Though immigration slowed compared to the massive waves of the 1950s and early 1960s, Israel

continued its efforts to save persecuted Jews, wherever they were in the world. Following the 1967 war, the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Israel and embarked on a policy of renewed discrimination against and persecution of Jews. This treatment, coupled with a sense of pride in the Zionist victories, encouraged many Russian Jews to request visas to leave the USSR. But most were denied on the grounds that, if during their lives they had possessed information vital to Soviet national security, they could not be allowed to leave the country. Known as the "refusnikim," those who were denied continued their struggle to immigrate to Israel, which resulted in a peak 1969–1973 immigration of around 165,000, while approximately another 100,000 would emigrate to the US, Germany, and Australia in the following years. Those who were religiously motivated or impelled by Zionism typically went to Israel; others with larger economic motivations often chose other destinations.

But the window of opportunity for leaving the USSR soon closed, and almost no Jews were able to leave for the following two decades. The sudden and rapid collapse of the USSR in the 1990s, however, led to open borders, and almost a million Russian Jews arrived in 1989–2006. Around one quarter were not Jewish according to Orthodox interpretations of Jewish law, but they were eligible to immigrate to Israel under the rules of the Law of Return, which recognizes patrilineal descent or marriage to a Jew. For many, their high level of education and Ashkenazi background made it easy to integrate into Israeli society, and today they are considered to share a standard of living with native born-Israelis. But the immigration also brought significant cultural changes, including the public presence of Hebrew-speaking Christians, the public celebration of Christmas, and the desire for a wide array of Russian and non-kosher food items. These preferences put Russians into conflict with religious Jews, but the Russian tendency towards right-wing politics has in many ways protected them from the wrath that other immigrant groups have experienced.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian immigration, which occurred mainly through Operation Moses (1984) and Operation Solomon (1991), rescued many Jews from Sudanese refugee camps to which Ethiopians in the North of the country had fled. These operations were considerably more challenging, equally so when it came to settling these refugees in Israel. The color of their skin, the primitive conditions of their homeland, their low education levels, and the diseases rampant among them evoked the issues that had characterized Mizrahi immigrations in the 1950s and 1960s. Around 121,000 descendants of the Beta Israel, as the Ethiopian Jews are known, now live throughout the country, and while many have integrated, many still face discrimination, poverty, and limited opportunities for advancement. In recent years, Israel

has seen large migrations from Latin America and France, where rising anti-Semitism has motivated many to seek shelter in Israel.

The multi-cultural history of Israel, characterizing both its Jewish and non-Jewish populations, was thrown into stark relief following the first Intifada when use of the Palestinian labor force was discontinued. For the first time, Israel invited large numbers of foreign workers from China, the Philippines, Poland, Thailand, and Romania. Though the government was resistant at first, afraid of bringing in large numbers of foreign workers who might settle in the country and undercut the Jewish majority, the economic pressure from the booming Israeli economy demanded a new labor force.

The Russian Aliyah, with its high educational levels, doubled the number of engineers and doctors in Israel, an influx of talent that helped fuel a high tech revolution that dramatically changed the character of the Israeli economy and the nature of its exports. Though Israel had been involved in industry and agriculture since the early years, the restriction of supplies during the Second World War led to increased production, as local manufacturers had to fill supply orders that had previously been imported. The post-war economy benefited from this industry, but Israel's lack of foreign cash reserves, massive immigration, and high level of imports left the economy struggling. By the 1960s the economy had stabilized and reflected strong internal growth, and Israel's international efforts helped produce new market relations, including with developing post-Independence states in Africa and East Asia.

Israel's defense industry also became an important player, serving as a large employer and a strategic national enterprise, making up around 10% of weapons manufacturing in the world. The defense industry originated in the need to have a secure internal source of weapons and only later became a source of export income. In 1982, the *New York Times* reported that Israel had become a major source of arms sales to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Such sales to Central and South American countries, from Somoza's Nicaragua to Pinochet's Chile, dated to the 1970s and served not only to boost Israel's economy but also to support US foreign policy commitments. Israel has also sold arms to the US, Europe, and India. By 2012, Israel had become the world's 11th largest arms exporter.

On October 11, 1961, Israel joined other nations in voting to censure the South African Foreign Minister, Eric Louw (1890-1968), for a speech defending apartheid delivered to the UN General Assembly. Two years later, Israel recalled its ambassador to SA. Like many Western nations at the time, however, Israel combined public condemnations with confidential relations. After Israel's October 1973 war, however, when most African countries publicly severed their relations with the Jewish state, Israel's commercial and military ties to SA increased, partly, at least as Israel asserted, because it was

worried about the status of South African Jews and partly because it felt itself too vulnerable and isolated to refuse potential arms and other trade deals. Thereafter Israel, along with France, became major sources of arms for the South African Defense Force, though other nations, including Britain and Saudi Arabia, sold arms to Pretoria as well. In the 1970s Israel and South Africa became partners in construction projects in both countries, and in some efforts in joint nuclear weapons testing and development. By 1987, Israel was the only developed nation maintaining strategic relations with the apartheid regime; that year Israel announced it would approve no new military agreements with SA. That embargo was lifted in 1991, after the US lifted its own sanctions.

Despite the strength of certain industries, such as arms manufacturing and diamond processing—the latter dating from 1937 when refugees expert in diamond cutting and polishing arrived from the Netherlands—after the 1970s the economy began to choke and by 1984 inflation was at 450%. Fearing that the entire system would collapse, the government in 1985 developed a revised economic plan that restructured by introducing financial prudence and market-oriented reforms; the revised plan paved the way to the economic boom of the 1990s. In the past few years, there has been an unprecedented influx of foreign capital as Israel has become a hub for technology and real estate investment; it serves as a net lender on international credit markets. Israel withstood the worldwide crash of the 2000s, partly because of its conservative banking industry, which left it less open to the risks that toppled other nations. It also maintained low unemployment during that period, further complicating the presence of illegal and undocumented foreign workers and asylum-seekers, though they have proved a necessary part of the modern Israeli economy. These macroeconomic developments have moved Israeli society from the collectivist ideology of the 1950s to one committed to private enterprise and free markets. Though the standard of living has risen significantly, Israel has paid a social and political price for its economic success. From “one of the world’s more egalitarian societies in the 1960s, Israel turned into one of the least egalitarian in the 1990s. The two main pockets of poverty were the ultra-Orthodox, whose ‘society of learners’ members did not enter the labor market, and the Arabs, who were subject to social and security restrictions on their integration into the Israeli economy” (Shapira 451). It is these inequities which led to social protest movements in 2012, when tent activists took over Rothschild Boulevard, a main thoroughfare in Tel Aviv, calling on the government to provide low income housing and undo the cuts to social welfare programs which remained a necessary part of life for low income families across the ethnic and religious spectrum.

Many of the nation's young writers and culture-makers could be found speaking out in support of the tent protestors. This commingling of culture and politics has long been a hallmark of Zionist history, and demonstrated the cultural capital that writers, filmmakers, and visual artists have in Israeli society. These artists also gained an increasingly significant international reputation, as Israeli literature was translated into numerous languages and Israeli films and Israeli artists were exhibited throughout the world, often winning important awards, prizes, and recognition. While these artists, including dancers and theatre companies, serve as cultural ambassadors for the country, they also operate as a critical, often left-wing, anti-government voice within the country. Though in Israel's early years, culture had been dominated by the white, male, labor elite, today it encompasses Israel's rich multiculturalism and ethnic diversity.

### The Intifadas, The Peace Process, and Palestinian State Building

In December 1987, a grassroots Arab uprising that began with a campaign of civil resistance, including strikes and commercial shutdowns, grew into stone throwing, hurling Molotov cocktails, and assaults with knives—the weapons of an unarmed popular insurrection. Known as the Intifada (“shaking off” in Arabic) this insurgency began as a reaction to Israeli control of Gaza and the West Bank, the persistent and ongoing state of economic deprivation for Palestinians in refugee camps, and the widespread use of Israeli checkpoints at roads and bridges, limiting access to Israel for Palestinians from the occupied territories. While the PLO had done much to raise the public profile of Palestinians, the organization had done little in a practical sense to improve the lives of Palestinians within the West Bank and Gaza. Alienated from these impoverished communities, the PLO would have little impact: in the opening months of the Intifada.

Yet the explosion of anger also turned inward, and many of the Palestinian deaths during the Intifada were caused by intra-ethnic violence, as widespread executions of alleged Israeli collaborators took place. By the end of 1992, approximately 1,800 Palestinians had died during the Intifada, about 800 of those being at the hands of other Palestinians. The Israeli army responded to the uprising with a large show of military strength, but the images of young stone throwers operating against tanks severely damaged Israel's public image and did little to quell the uprising, and even less to mitigate the economic damage caused by a series of strikes called by Palestinian

organizations. The Intifada forced the IDF into a policing role for which it was not trained. And the IDF's tactical decisions were sometimes counter-productive. Thus, for example, the decision to close down West Bank and Gaza schools and universities during the 1987-1988 school year simply sent unsupervised students into the streets.

Along with increasing public media support and rising international attention for the Palestinian cause, the Intifada enhanced Palestinian self-esteem and demonstrated that Palestinians were no longer relying upon help from other Arab countries for their own survival; they would negotiate for their own political future. As the PLO worked to direct events, its status as the Palestinians' political representative increased. Yet the single most significant result of the Intifada was no doubt King Hussein's July 31, 1988, announcement that Jordan was relinquishing all claims to the West Bank and instead honoring a Palestinian State. That legitimated a Palestinian place at the table in the peace negotiations of the 1990s. The Intifada lasted at least until 1991, though some historians date its end to 1993 and the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords. It also had serious repercussions for Israel, including the loss to its public image internationally and the intensification of powerful internal criticism. The loss of public support for past expansionist policies pushed the country toward revising its legal position on administering the territories and made it increasingly willing to trade land for peace.

Though Yasser Arafat (1929-2004) ambitiously declared Palestinian independence and a virtual Palestinian state as early as 1988, his refusal to renounce terrorism against Israel abruptly ended US efforts to open a dialogue with the PLO leadership. Moreover, the Intifada had opened the way for other political groups including Hamas, the Palestinian wing of the militant Muslim Brotherhood who dominated Gaza. Notoriously anti-Semitic, Hamas proclaimed its plans for an Islamic State free of both Jews and Christians, vilifying Jews in its charter which cited the infamous anti-Semitic forgery "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" as evidence of a Zionist plot of world domination. Advocating Jihad against Zionism and refusing any negotiation or recognition of Israel, Hamas took a position more extreme than that of the PLO, which by the 1990s had come to see political maneuvering as a more effective strategy for nation building than terrorism.

But the Palestinian cause was sidelined in the winter of 1990-1991 when Saddam Hussein invaded and annexed Kuwait, and allied forces responded with Operation Desert Storm, which resulted in the Gulf War. Asked by the U.S. to stand down, Israel waited while Tel Aviv and northern Israel were shelled by Iraqi scud missiles. International sympathy returned for the besieged Jewish state. Meanwhile, the Palestinians unwisely threw their support behind the show of Iraqi Arab militarism and lost some of the ground

they had worked so hard to gain. The regional conflict soon silenced quieter struggles at home. Meanwhile, at the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference Israel for the first time engaged in direct, face-to-face negotiations with all of its immediate neighbors and their political rulers, also launching a multilateral process that brought Israeli diplomats into contact with representatives of Arab states from North Africa and the Persian Gulf. Though these interactions would lead nowhere, the increasingly stable relationship between Israel and Jordan would be formally recognized through the signing of a peace treaty in 1994.

The growth of the peace movement in Israel and the changing political temperature heralded promise for an era of reconciliation and security. In recognition, the Knesset in 1993 repealed a law banning Israeli-PLO contacts, thereby enabling potential agreements between Israelis and Palestinians to be signed. On September 9, the PLO and Israel mutually recognized each other, and on September 13, the Oslo Peace Accords were signed in Washington by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995) and Arafat, with American President Bill Clinton as witness. The Oslo Accords, or the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP), provided for Palestinian self-rule. Following months of negotiations, initially between nongovernmental parties, an agreement was signed that gave Palestinians control over most of Gaza and of the West Bank city of Jericho, and set a timetable for negotiations to enable further transfer of authority.

Though both the Israeli and Palestinian public broadly supported these efforts, both also possessed a strong rejectionist minority. On Israel's right, resistance to the peace process would become increasingly vocal and, with the subsequent death of the Oslo process, dominate Israel's political landscape in the twenty-first century. In the early 1990s, the Palestinians who rejected the accords noted that East Jerusalem remained under Israeli control, that the settlements remained in place, and that Palestinians had gained authority over only a tiny portion of the West Bank. These Palestinians also rejected the PLO's secular apparatus. Hamas and Islamic Jihad opted to undermine the process with terrorist attacks. At first, Israel maintained its determination to continue with the process, and the IDF withdrew from Jericho and most of Gaza in 1994. By mid-May, Arafat had arrived in Gaza and declared Gaza City the capital of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the political body that served as an embryonic government for a future independent Palestine.

In response, on October 19, 1994, a Hamas suicide bomber killed 21 and wounded 23 on a bus in Tel Aviv. This would be part of a wave of suicide bombings—including a Palestinian Islamic Jihad attack by two suicide bombers on January 22, 1995, that killed 21 soldiers at a crossroads bus stop in central Israel—that would terrorize Israel over the coming decade and erode



public support for the peace process among the Israeli public. Nevertheless, in an attempt to resist the pressures of a minority, in 1995, the two sides signed the "Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip," which provided for the election of an 82-person Palestinian Council and a head (Ra'is) of an Executive Committee. The West Bank was divided into three categories of territory. Area A, which includes West Bank cities, was evacuated by the Israelis, with the Palestinian Authority responsible for security and policing. Area B, including most Arab towns and villages, would be controlled by the PA, which would be responsible for civil authority and normal policing, while Israel would retain ultimate responsibility for security. Area C, encompassing unpopulated territory and Israeli military outposts as well as Jewish settlements, would be shared, with the PA overseeing health, education, and other public services for Arabs and Israel doing the same for Jews. Israel would also control security and public order. Later that year, the IDF withdrew from Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqila, Ramallah, and Tulkarm.

Hopeful for the positive outcomes that the new autonomy would provide, Palestinians were eager about the future, but Arafat, a successful wartime leader, lacked the skills needed to be an effective nation builder. The anticipated economic benefits that self-determination was supposed to provide never materialized, as the Palestinian Authority was compromised by bribes and political corruption. The Legislative Council and Presidential elections in the West Bank and Gaza, as prescribed in the Oslo Accords, proved hollow, as Arafat, once elected president, ignored the will of the Legislative Council and operated by fiat and tribal allegiances. The democracy that Israelis enjoyed failed to become a reality for Palestinians, while the Palestinian economic situation deteriorated as travel between the different zones and cities, with their delays and checkpoints, proved burdensome, time consuming, and humiliating. Moreover, the Intifada eliminated work in Israel for many of the Palestinians in the West Bank; they were replaced by a foreign labor force, further limiting their economic opportunities.

Despite the terrorist bombs during the 1990s, in 2000 Prime Minister Ehud Barak (1942-) moved forward with final stage negotiations. Arafat, Clinton, and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (1937-) met with Barak at Camp David to pursue a definitive peace treaty. Israel offered to divide Jerusalem, giving the PA sovereignty over most of the East Jerusalem neighborhoods, and to cede 84-90% of the West Bank overall. With Barak having taken office after defeating the incumbent Benjamin Netanyahu (1949-) in 1999 on a peace platform, the potential for success seemed high. But Arafat, attempting to seize on this apparent goodwill, held firm to a demand for PA control of all of the Old City and the entirety of Temple

Mount. Moreover, he insisted on a Palestinian Right of Return, which would offer all Palestinians who left, and all of their descendants, the right to live in Israel. For Israel, acceding to such a request would be a demographic, political, cultural, religious, and financial disaster, not only burdening Israel with the potential immigration of millions of new citizens, but also transforming the makeup of the country, already with a population of one million Arabs, into an Arab country with a Jewish minority. With such a move, Israel would become an Arab country, and the only country where Jews have a sovereign right of national self-expression would disappear overnight. In a symbolic gesture Barak offered to accept several thousand Palestinian refugees, but this was rejected by Arafat as well. In a final attempt to resolve the disputes, Barak offered Arafat 90-95% of the West Bank and expressed his willingness to place the Temple Mount under UN control. Arafat rejected all offers, but in the West Bank, the Arab press claimed that it was Barak who refused to compromise.

Arafat thus rejected not only the best offer Israel had ever made, but also quite possibly the best offer the Palestinians will ever receive. "Some argue that his years at the Palestinian Authority demonstrated to Arafat that what awaited him at the end of the road was a relatively small, poor state burdened with economic and social problems, and that he preferred the romanticism of the struggle rather than the dejecting routine of being president of the Palestinian state. So long as there was no peace, he was a national hero, a media figure at whose door the world's luminaries came calling" (Shapira 445-46). Many observers consider the Second Intifada the substantive Palestinian response. It may reflect a conclusion, based on Hezbollah's success in Lebanon, that a dispersed low-tech policy of violence can defeat a sophisticated modern army.

With Palestinians frustrated and no nearer to independence, the second Intifada erupted in 2000 in the wake of Camp David's failure. It was named for the Al-Aqsa mosque where the first violent uprising broke out in response to an ill-timed and ill-conceived visit by Ariel Sharon. Unlike the First Intifada, which was directed at the Israeli military, this second Intifada targeted Israeli civilians within Israel. Restaurants, markets, shops, and buses were targeted in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Israel faced an onslaught of suicide bombers; Jews, Arabs, Christians, and tourists alike were caught up in the violence. On May 25, 2001, two Palestinians drove a car full of dynamite into a bus in the coastal town of Hadera, killing 4 plus themselves and wounding 63. On June 1, a suicide bomber detonated his bomb at the Dolphinarium, a popular seaside Tel Aviv discotheque, killing 21 and wounding more than 80, most of them teenagers. That August, targeting the summer vacation crowds, a Palestinian teenager blew himself up in a Jerusalem pizzeria, killing 6 children

and 13 adults and injuring 90 others. Three days later a Haifa café was the target, this time with 20 casualties. On the November 29 anniversary of the UN Partition Resolution, a Palestinian detonated his suicide vest on a bus traveling from Netania to Tel Aviv, killing four and injuring nine. That attack turned out to be a combined Fatah/Islamic Jihad operation. On December 1, powerful bombs in Jerusalem's main pedestrian mall killed 11 and wounded 180. Twelve hours afterwards, a suicide bombing on a Haifa bus took 16 lives and injured 45 more. The following March, 25-year-old Muhammad Abd al-Basset Oudeh, a Hamas recruit, videotaped his plan, donned a wig and dressed as a woman, then walked into the dining room of the Park Hotel in the seaside town of Netanya. The explosion he triggered killed 29 and wounded 150. A June 18 Jerusalem bus bombing, one of 47 bombings that year, killed 19. On July 31, a Hamas-organized blast in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem cafeteria killed nine, four American students among them, and injured approximately 100. Between September 29, 2000, and June 4, 2003, 820 Israelis were killed and nearly 5,000 wounded. Two thirds of the dead were civilians. That said, although the many suicide attacks in Israel proper are the hallmark of the Second Intifada, a large number of other attacks, like randomly shooting into crowds, took place in the occupied territories.

In a particularly disturbing harbinger of future strife, Palestinian Israeli citizens staged demonstrations throughout northern Israel in solidarity with the occupied West Bank from October 1 to 9. The demonstrations moved to civil disobedience, then turned violent. Hundreds of Jews rioted in response. The Israeli police trying to quell the escalating riots faced gunfire and Molotov cocktails. In the course of the week, the police shot and killed twelve Israeli Arabs. "Although the struggle was broadly directed by Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat and his associates, the actual operations were carried out by members of the Palestinian security forces and of the many other organizations that had formed in the territories. Attacks were planned and prepared without co-ordination or centralized control, and the relation of individual terrorists to their nominal groups was often vague to the point of being arbitrary" (Herzog 428). Though Israel was hesitant to carry out military operations in the areas for which the PA was responsible, and in which many of the terrorists and agitators were sheltering, the international political climate changed after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, and Israel mounted retaliatory attacks.

In April 2002, a battle took place in the Jenin refugee camp. It was estimated to be the source of at least 28 suicide attacks, so neutralizing the threat from the area became a military priority for the IDF. Since Jenin was heavily fortified with booby-traps and snipers were positioned throughout, the Israeli army was reluctant to enter the area and was forced to reject

air bombardment for fear of causing civilian casualties. So the IDF entered on foot, conducting house-to-house searches through the narrow alleys. When 13 Israeli reservists were trapped in an ambush and killed, the army was forced to change tactics in order to preserve lives and began bulldozing houses to flatten access routes and clear the way. In total, 23 Israelis and 52 Palestinians died, but news reports photographed bodies and made much of the event, accusing the Israelis of conducting a massacre. "These scenes of death and destruction had a strong effect on Palestinians, galvanizing many of the younger generation to join the ranks of the militants ready to fight the Israelis" (Bregman 242).

Though President George W. Bush called for the establishment of a Palestinian state, reinforcing Clinton's commitment, it was unclear how such an endeavor could proceed. The following year UN Resolution 1397 was the first Security Council Resolution calling for a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and in 2003 the Quartet (the US, European Union, UN, and Russia) proposed a performance-based, goal-driven road-map for a negotiated Palestinian-Israeli agreement.

But as the violence continued, persistently terrorizing the whole Israeli population, Israel began building a security fence to reduce the infiltration of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza into Israel. In July and August of 2003, the first continuous segment of Israel's security fence was constructed. Most of the fence consists of multi-layered wire, but about 10% is constructed as a concrete wall (in areas where civilians might be vulnerable, for instance, from gunfire). It is one of many border fences in the world, some of the others constructed for security reasons as well, but this one is politically implicated in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and proves endlessly controversial. It has helped reduce suicide bombings by 80 to 90%, but its administration causes hardships to Palestinians who must regularly negotiate the checkpoints controlling passage through the wall. Moreover, the location of parts of the fence has provoked accusations that Israel is annexing Palestinian land. As we went to press with this book, at the end of May, 2014, Israel intercepted yet another suicide bomber with explosives strapped to his torso at a checkpoint just south of Nablus in the northern part of the West Bank.

The hostility and conflict of the mid-2000s suggested that all hope for peace had disappeared, while Yasser Arafat was besieged. He was pursued by Israel for orchestrating the violent attacks on Israelis, while losing popularity with many of his own citizens for what amounted to the increased corruption of the economy and national politics. In 2004, Arafat died, and the Intifada began to lose some of its energy; though it had at least one decisive long term effect on Israel—the substantial weakening of the Israeli left.

## Violence and Extremism—The Israeli Right and Religious Settler Politics

When the first religiously-driven Jewish settlers established themselves in Hebron, it was with a deep sense of homecoming. They believed they were reversing a Diaspora that had exiled them from where they belonged. Possessing a messianic sense of destiny, “they return to Hebron like Abraham, reside in Tekoah like the prophet Amos, and live in Beit Horon where the Maccabees have fought” (Feige 49). “The Bible is omnipresent in the settlers’ world; many of their villages have biblical names, as do their children” (Feige 48). They were fulfilling a divine promise. “In other words, the connection between the people and the land is metahistorical; it precedes history and constitutes it” (Feige 43). Accordingly, they felt any compromise with the Palestinians or withdrawal from the occupied territories constituted a severe religious transgression. Even today, many settlers view their actions as realizing the true meaning of the State of Israel.

When the settlers noticed Palestinians at all, they thought of them fundamentally as Arabs, not as Palestinians, and thus as part of that larger people, not a group meriting their own independent homeland. “Like the pioneers, the settlers went to live on a dangerous frontier to fulfill their ideas of a better society. Both groups of settlers regarded themselves as avant-garde, hoping that others would follow once they ‘saw the light’ or realized the success of the colonization project” (Feige 54). Like some early Zionists they also embodied the Orientalist assumption that the local Arabs would benefit economically and culturally from their arrival and thus should welcome it. The more religiously-driven settlers tend to view Israelis in the coastal plain who criticize them as weak and fearful of non-Jewish opinion.

The ideologically oriented settlements tend to be physically isolated, located farthest from the Green Line and surrounded by Palestinians. The settlers living close to the 1967 borders are more likely to have come for good jobs, better and more affordable housing, and other economic benefits, rather than out of religious conviction. They are also therefore likely to be living on the Israeli side of the wall. The religious settlers are very much aware that this physical barrier puts them on the wrong side of what seems to be a de facto national border. The majority of Israelis, moreover, do not identify with the religious settlers’ sense of mission. Palestinians and their allies criticize the wall unsparingly, but it actually offers the potential for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from 90% or more of the West Bank, effectively establishing a Palestinian state.

The fate the isolated religious settlers face, therefore, may be decisive. Most problematically of all, the Palestinians see themselves as inheriting hundreds of years of history in the land. Yet “the area ceded to the Palestinian Authority was chopped up into a bizarre archipelago to accommodate the needs of the settlers” (Feige 35). Though some Palestinians have gained economic opportunities through the occupation, others find their lives disrupted intolerably. Paradoxically, however, the Palestinian project of disrupting the settlers’ daily lives had the effect of hardening their hearts, rather than persuading them to leave. “As the ability to go shopping or take a bus became a declared act of bravery and a national achievement, the banality of normal life became consecrated” (Feige 259). Meanwhile, the extremist elements among the settlers have their own history of violence. Members of a “Jewish Underground” attempted to assassinate several mayors of Arab towns and were planning to bomb the Dome of the Rock until the plot was uncovered and they were arrested in 1984.

On February 25, 1994, Baruch Goldstein (1956–1994), a Jewish doctor from the settlement community of Kiryat Arba, entered nearby Hebron’s Ibrahimya Mosque during morning prayers and massacred 29 Muslim worshippers and wounded dozens of others. The survivors proceeded to beat him to death. In the riots that followed, the IDF killed about 30 Arabs and injured hundreds. Goldstein was born in New York and immigrated to Israel in 1983. He was a member of the racist and extremist Jewish Defense League. As a physician, he was also among the first to minister to settler victims of violence, and that may have helped drive him insane.

In 1995, fringe groups on the Israeli far right ramped up zealous, extremist agitation in response to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s (1922–1995) peace initiative, describing him as a traitor and calling for his death. The extremist incitement to violence produced results. On November 4, Rabin was assassinated by Yigal Amir, a 27-year-old law student at Israel’s religious university, Bar-Ilan. The assassination took place at a peace rally designed to show support for Rabin. Amir was a graduate of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox schools and yeshivas. After his arrest, he declared that he aimed to derail the peace process. For many right-wing supporters who had opposed the peace movement, seeing it as a betrayal of Zionist values, these actions had gone too far, and many worked to distance themselves from this extremism, including rabbis who saw that their comments against the government had spilled over from political protest to violence and even treason.

But the failure of the peace negotiations in 2000 and the outbreak of the second Intifada, with its constant suicide bombs, also persuaded many Israelis that the peace camp had decisively failed. That led to Israelis choosing a right-wing government which they thought would be better able

to suppress the constant daily violence. In 2001, Ariel Sharon was elected Prime Minister. The Palestinians regarded his election as the equivalent of a declaration of war.

### The latest chapter in the Arab–Israeli conflict, 2005–2014

In 2005, several factors seemed to bring significant change to the political landscape. With Arafat's death, the election of Mahmoud Abbas as chairman of the PLO in 2005, and the sudden stroke that left Sharon in a coma until he died nine years later, the traditional positions on the conflict could be rethought. In one of his final acts in office, Sharon had ordered a unilateral withdrawal (and evacuation) from the Gaza Strip and the removal of its 21 civilian settlements. A movement in support of the settlements sprang up through the country, but despite the government's worst fears of a Jewish civil war, the disengagement was ultimately peaceful and conducted ahead of schedule. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza was intended to facilitate the PA's sovereignty as part of the Oslo Accords, but almost immediately—in what began with a Hamas victory in parliamentary elections and evolved into armed conflict after Fatah refused to cede control of the government—Hamas routed Fatah militarily and assumed political power in Gaza and thus divided the Palestinian community into separate ideological as well as geographic entities. Great animosity has permeated the PLO/PA relationship with Hamas and its leadership. For Hamas, the secular nature of the PA and the extensive financial and political corruption that characterized Arafat's nation-building years have cast doubt on the PA's capacity to govern and promoted the assumption that they betrayed the Palestinians by agreeing to a peace process. For the PA and Fatah, the largest party within the confederated multi-party PLO, Hamas' political and religious extremism, their refusal to recognize Israel and renounce terrorism, and their isolation by the international community have so far made them a political liability for Palestinians in their attempts to create an independent state. Whether anything real or long lasting will come of the alliance they announced in 2014 remains to be seen.

In 2008, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead, which lasted from December 27, 2008, to January 18, 2009. This return to Gaza in a military operation was intended to stop the rocket and mortar launches from Gaza to Israel (over 1500 were fired at the Israeli city Sderot in an eight month period from mid-2007 to February 2008, for example) and end weapons smuggling

into Gaza. Aerial bombardment of weapons caches, police stations, and political and administrative buildings took place in Gaza, Khan Yunis, and Rafah, all densely populated cities, followed by a ground campaign. After having accomplished its mission, Israel declared a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew its forces. The international Boycott, Sanctions, and Divestment movement would embrace and promote hyperbolic characterizations of Operation Cast Lead as genocidal. Yet the rocket attacks had turned Israeli towns within range into environments of unremitting stress. Every public setting, even bus stops, were hardened against rockets and air raid shelters were added to every apartment, a necessity given that some communities had only seconds' warning of an attack. Those strategies severely curtailed civilian deaths in Israel, but not the grave psychological trauma of living under bombardment, a price particularly unsettling to see children pay. Nonetheless, when Israel entered Gaza, BDS could play up the disparity between Israeli and Palestinian military power and death rates to garner international support.

In 2009, on a visit to Egypt, the recently elected President Barack Obama affirmed the strong bonds of the US-Israeli relationship but criticized Israel for continuing to build settlements that served as an impediment to peace. In June the same year, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a historic speech where he offered a five-point plan for a negotiated agreement with the Palestinians that included the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state on condition that Israel would be recognized as a "Jewish state."

The Palestinian leadership rejected his terms. With no changes in the status quo, and Hamas continuing to fire rockets into Southern Israel, the IDF launched Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012) with the killing of Ahmed Jabari (1960-2012), chief of the Gaza military wing of Hamas. Just days before, 100 rockets had been launched into Israel. During the operation, nearly 1,500 more rockets fell. Egypt mediated a ceasefire, announced a week after the operation began. Afterwards, Human Rights Watch accused both sides of violating the rules of war. In December, maintaining its bravura in the face of IDF attacks, Hamas leader Khaled Mishal (1956-) called for Israel's elimination.

Despite intensive efforts during 2013 and 2014 by President Obama and the US government to lead Israelis and Palestinians into an agreement, little progress has been made between the PA and Israel. Moreover, Hamas was left out of these negotiations, as were the other Arab countries who continue to maintain populations of Palestinian refugees with few rights and opportunities. Ultimately, any real solution will need to reflect a regional consensus that recognizes Israel's legitimate security concerns and accom-



modates the Palestinian drive for self-determination, but limits it to the West Bank and Gaza.

Another major outbreak of violence occurred in summer 2014. Three West Bank Israeli teenagers were kidnapped and summarily executed. Extremists kidnapped a Palestinian boy in revenge and burned him alive. Seeing an opportunity to retake center stage and extract concessions, a diplomatically marginalized Hamas launched a massive rocket assault from Gaza, extending as far as Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion Airport. Israel launched Operation Protective Edge in response, in the course of which over 30 deep underground Hamas assault tunnels reaching into Israel itself were discovered. Two thousand Gazans died amidst extensive aerial and artillery bombardment, and Israel lost more of its soldiers in combat than it had in years.

Looking back over all of Israel's history from the vantage point of 2014, the series of short wars and discrete military actions amount, in effect, to one long war that has sometimes paused but never really stopped. The number of belligerent states, combined with paramilitary or terrorist organizations, means that no one nation seems able to prevent the region slipping into war repeatedly. For Israel itself, with the most powerful military and non-oil dependent economy in the Middle East, the risks of terrorism and of Iran's obtaining nuclear weapons loom large. Hamas and Hezbollah are insurgent groups who openly seek Israel's destruction. Israeli governments to date have not been willing to risk temporary or permanent withdrawal from the West Bank over concern for security, and the possibility that a West Bank Palestinian state would be similar to the Hamas-dominated Gaza Strip that makes a true peace process impossible. For now, Israelis seem more willing to accept responsibility and criticism for retaining control over the West Bank than to confront a potentially radical new Palestinian state. Yet the demographic challenge posed by large numbers of Palestinians under Israeli control is equally real. And the restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank are incompatible with Israeli democracy. As it has since the end of the June 1967 war, the overarching premise of Arab-Israeli negotiations remains: under what conditions and over what period of time will Israel relinquish territories won in the 1967 war and what will Israel receive in terms of a treaty or promise of non-war in return for territorial concessions? ■

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Note: Some topics—like the 1982 war in Lebanon and the Second Intifada—are given more space because they remain current subjects of controversy. Our thanks to Asaf Romirowsky, Martin Shichtman, Randy Deshazo, and Ken Stern for their comments on earlier drafts.

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