

Arab-Israeli conflict: A Historical Perspective

Examining Arab-Israel conflict in a time lens from fall of Ottoman Empire to the accords of 2000

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Abstract: The Arab-Israeli conflict represents one of the most complex and longest-- enduring contradictions in modern times, attached tightly to historical, religious, political, and territorial issues. This thorough historical study intends to consider the conflict from its emerging origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries up to the year 2000. This venture examines key turning points and developments as this work probes into the complexities of the conflict as well as its larger import for the Middle East and the international community. This report deals with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and, at the same time, the rise of Zionism and Arab nationalism that brought Palestine under tension. The Balfour Declaration (1917) and subsequent British Mandate are examined as providing ground for hostility that would break out years later. The founding of the State of Israel in 1948 was immediately followed by the outbreak of the First Arab-Israeli War, which was the basis for a series of armed hostilities, among them, the Suez Crisis (1956), Six Day War (1967), and Yom Kippur War (1973). Each of these conflicts greatly altered borders, populations, and politics. It further studies the formation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, a study of the First Intifada, (1987-1993), and after that, the study focuses on the peace initiatives such as the Oslo Accords, throughout which both hope and disappointment hung as to any lasting settlement to the conflict. The narrative ends at the threshold of the 21st century, giving a reading of the slight trajectory made and the unresolved issues still bedeviling the conflict. In this way, the project aims to understand historically the Arab-Israeli conflict without prejudice and without exclusion into a single public body. It is trying to establish a balanced understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict in terms of narratives, aspirations, and grievances of all parties, through a historical perspective.

Keywords: Arab-Israeli Conflict; Zionism; Arab Nationalism; Ottoman Empire Decline; Balfour Declaration (1917); British Mandate in Palestine; Creation of Israel (1948); Arab-Israeli Wars; Suez Crisis (1956); Six-Day War (1967); Yom Kippur War (1973); Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO); First Intifada (1987–1993); Oslo Accords; Middle East Peace Process

I. INTRODUCTION

The Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the most intractable and complicated disputes in modern history, having a knotty interface between its various religious, political, territorial, and cultural dimensions. Dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it primarily revolves around competing national personalities, territorial claims, and historical grievances between Jews and Arabs concerning Palestine. The evolution of the conflict throughout the 20th century encompasses the struggles of two peoples--Jews in search of a homeland and Arabs claiming a right to self-determination--with the backdrop of changes in world power, colonialism, and the religious significance of the region. Scholarly works such as Chaim Herzog's *The Arab-Israeli Wars* (1982) and Avi Shlaim's *The Iron Wall* (2000) present an important perspective on the historical tensions existing between Jews and Arabs that formed the basis of much of the conflict until the year 2000.

The roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict may be traced to the rise of modern nationalism and the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century. Thus were created Zionism with a political intent to establish a "homeland" for the Jews in Palestine. This movement was the response to centuries of Jewish persecution in Europe. In contrast, the indigenous Arab population of Palestine, having for centuries been an inhabitant of the territory, slowly began forging an identity more inherently national, mostly against growing Jewish immigration and British colonial rule.

After the Turkish defeat in World War I and under the League of Nations mandate, Britain took control of Palestine, thus heightening the tensions between Jews and Arabs. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, implying British support for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine, was seen by the Arabs as a betrayal. Thereafter, the 1930s witnessed outbursts of revolts and conflicts. The interwar period constituted ever-fertilizing grounds for conflict because with the increasing Jewish presence in Palestine, the Arabs and Jews alike began to militarize their responses to the political happenings in their vicinity. This declaration and its ramifications are considered in *A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* by Ian J. Bickerton and Carla L. Klausner (2002), which further illustrates the Arab view on the issue as a betrayal of their own aspirations for self-determination.

The conflict gained urgency after World War II, when the Holocaust brought international support for the establishment of a Jewish state. In 1947, the United Nations proposed a partition plan to divide Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, which was accepted by the Jewish leadership but rejected by the Arab states and Palestinian Arabs. The declaration of Israel in 1948 started the first Arab-Israeli war as surrounding Arab states intervened militarily. 'Israel's victory in this war resulted in the displacement of over 700,000 the Palestinian Arabs brought about a situation where refugees were created and are today still stateless people. From 1948 to 2000 the conflict has periodically been punctuated by war, emergence from it through uneasy truce, and failed attempts at mediation to achieve diplomacy. In this time, important events to note include the 1967 Six-Day War that saw Israel consolidate territories such as the further East of Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and West Bank, and the 1978 peace accords at

Camp David, which led to the peace of Israel and Egypt. Oslo accords in the 1990s '4' brought some commendable hopes towards resolution though final peace remained elusive by the turn of the millennium.

By 2000, the Arab-Israeli conflict faces serious issues, with both sides presently entrenched in position, gave history to violent incidents, and today there is a struggle for recognition of security and justice. Understanding the immediate historical trajectory of this conflict becomes necessary to clearly see current dynamics and challenges in the path of peace within the Middle East.

Keywords: Arab-Israeli Conflict; Zionism; Arab Nationalism; Decline of the Ottoman Empire; World War I; Balfour Declaration; League of Nations; British Mandate for Palestine; World War II; The Holocaust; United Nations; UN Partition Plan for Palestine; Arab-Israeli War of 1948; Palestinian Refugee Crisis; Six-Day War; Camp David Accords; Oslo Accords; Middle East Peace Process

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Anziska, S. (2018). *Preventing Palestine: A political history from Camp David to Oslo*. Princeton University Press.

Seth Anziska provides a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, focusing on the period between the Camp David Accords (1978) and the Oslo Accords (1993). Anziska's central argument is that the Israeli government, particularly under the leadership of Menachem Begin, and the United States, under President Jimmy Carter and later President George H.W. Bush, intentionally prevented the establishment of a Palestinian state. This was achieved through a combination of diplomatic manoeuvring, economic pressure, and strategic planning. The book's *Overemphasis on American-Israeli Relations*: Anziska's narrative focuses primarily on the relationship between the United States and Israel, with relatively little attention paid to other international actors, such as the European Union or the United Nations and *Lack of Palestinian Perspectives*: One of the primary lacunas in Anziska's book is the relative lack of Palestinian perspectives. While the author draws on a range of Israeli and American sources, the voices and experiences of Palestinians are somewhat marginalized. This omission is particularly notable given the book's focus on the prevention of a Palestinian state.

Waxman, D. (2019). *The Israeli-Palestinian conflict: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford University Press.

Dov Waxman provides a comprehensive and balanced guide to one of the most complex and enduring conflicts in modern history. Waxman delivers an excellent introduction to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, covering its historical background, key issues, and potential solutions. The book lacks *insufficient Attention to Palestinian Perspectives*: Some readers may feel that Waxman's book focuses too much on Israeli perspectives and not enough on Palestinian experiences. A more nuanced exploration of Palestinian voices and perspectives would add depth to the narrative and also lacks *Limited Discussion of International Actors*: Waxman's book primarily focuses on Israeli and Palestinian actors. A more detailed examination of the roles played by international actors, such as the United States, European Union, and United Nations, would provide a more complete picture of the conflict.

Morris, B. (2001). *Righteous victims: A history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881–2001*. Vintage Books.

Benny Morris's "Righteous Victims" is a comprehensive history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from 1881 to 2001. The book provides a balanced account of the complex issues involved, acknowledging the perspectives and experiences of both Israelis and Palestinians. Morris's research is meticulous, drawing on a wide range of primary and secondary sources. The book lacks *Comparative Analysis*: A comparative analysis of other conflicts or peace processes could provide valuable insights into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and potential lessons from other contexts along with had *limited analysis of the Conflict's Impact on Other Groups*: The book primarily focuses on the conflict's impact on Israelis and Palestinians. A more detailed examination of the conflict's impact on other groups, such as Arab citizens of Israel and Palestinian refugees would provide a more complete picture.

Shlaim, A. (2000). *The iron wall: Israel and the Arab world*. W.W. Norton & Company.

The book provides a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics that have shaped the Israeli-Arab conflict, including the role of Zionism, Arab nationalism, and international politics. **Avi Shlaim's** writing style is clear and concise, making the book accessible to a wide range of readers. One notable lacuna in Shlaim's book is the relatively limited discussion of internal Palestinian politics and the role of various Palestinian factions in shaping the conflict. It also *lack sufficient Attention to Economic Factors*: The book could benefit from a more detailed examination of the economic factors that have contributed to the conflict, including the impact of Israeli settlements and the Palestinian economy and *Relative Neglect of Non-State Actors and Transnational Influences*: *The Iron Wall* emphasizes state actors like Israel and Arab states but underplays non-state actors and transnational influences, such as diaspora communities, advocacy groups, and Islamist movements like Hamas and Hezbollah. Global civil society and NGOs are largely overlooked, a notable gap given their growing role post-Oslo.

Rouhana, N. N. (2004). *Group identity and power asymmetry in reconciliation processes: The Israeli-Palestinian case*. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 10(1), 33–52. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327949pac1001_3

In their 2004 article, **Nadim N. Rouhana** explores the role of group identity and power asymmetry in reconciliation processes, with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Published in *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*; this article provides a nuanced analysis of the challenges and complexities involved in reconciliation efforts. The author argues that these factors can significantly impact the success of reconciliation efforts, particularly in conflicts characterized by deep-seated identity issues and power imbalances. Rouhana's analysis suggests that reconciliation processes must take into account the complex interplay between group identity and power asymmetry in order to be successful. One notable *lacuna* in Rouhana's article is the relatively limited discussion of contextual factors that may influence reconciliation processes, such as historical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts.

Usher, G. (2003). *Facing defeat: The Intifada two years on*. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 32(2), 21–40. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2003.32.2.21>

Graham Usher's article, "Facing Defeat: The Intifada Two Years On," published in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* in 2003. This journal provides a critical analysis of the second Intifada, focusing on its trajectory, challenges, and implications. This review examines Usher's key arguments and insights. Usher's article highlights the complexities and challenges faced by the Palestinian resistance movement during the second Intifada. He argues that the Intifada's trajectory was marked by a series of setbacks, including the reoccupation of Palestinian territories, the construction of separation barrier, and the fragmentation of Palestinian society. Key lacunas in Usher's article are *Limited Engagement with Israeli Perspectives*: Usher's article emphasizes Palestinian political fragmentation during the Intifada, aligning with its Palestinian studies focus. However, it underexplores Israeli perspectives, policies, and reactions, like Operation Defensive Shield or Sharon's rise, creating a one-sided narrative that overlooks the conflict's bilateral dynamics and mutual influences and *Underdeveloped Analysis of Non-Fatah Palestinian Factions*: Usher examines the Palestinian Authority's decline and Fatah's struggles but under-analyses Hamas and Islamic Jihad's roles. While noting their influence, he overlooks their strategies, ideologies, and grassroots support, limiting insight into their impact on the Intifada's militarization and Palestinian unity, despite their significant contributions to the uprising.

Keywords: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Historiography; Peace Process Analysis; Camp David Accords; Oslo Accords; U.S. Foreign Policy in Middle East; Israeli Diplomacy; Palestinian Statehood Debate; Menachem Begin; Jimmy Carter; George H. W. Bush; Power Asymmetry; Group Identity; Reconciliation Theory; First Intifada; Second Intifada; Palestinian Liberation Movements; Non-State Actors; Hamas; Hezbollah; Palestine Liberation Organization; International Actors; United Nations; European Union; Conflict Narratives; Comparative Conflict Studies

III. OBJECTIVES

Chapter: 1

To inspect the historical roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and analyse the role of key events and figures in shaping the conflict.

Chapter: 2

To dissect and Monitor military campaigns, key battles, aftermath, armistice, Israel's creation, Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab nationalism, and the Six Day War.

Chapter: 3

To interpret the Yom Kippur War, causes of First Intifada, and catalysts escalating violence during the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

Chapter: 4

To diagnose and comprehend the significance of the Camp David Accords: Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty, Israeli-Palestinian relations, and highlight the roles of Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin in peace efforts.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this Project Paper I have used Secondary methods to collect the data regarding the topic "**Examining Arab-Israel conflict in a time lens from fall of Ottoman Empire to the accords of 2000**".

In Secondary Methodology, I have used *Content analysis methodology* which systematically codes and interprets textual, visual, or audio materials to identify patterns, themes, or biases. Through this method I have Analysed news articles from *Al Jazeera* and *Haaretz* during the Second Intifada to compare portrayals of key events, like Ariel Sharon's Temple Mount visit, coding for themes like "provocation" or "resistance", I have used **Historical analysis methodology** to reconstructs past events, contexts, and causes using secondary sources like books, archives, or diaries which contain narrative and critical approaches to interpret historical processes. I have analysed *Benny Morris's Righteous Victims (2001)* and declassified Israeli military records to scrutinise the escalation of violence during the Second Intifada, focusing on *Operation Defensive Shield (2002)* as a turning point. And the **Bibliometric analysis methodology** that analyses publication patterns, citations, or authorship trends in scholarly literature to map research fields or identify influential works. I have investigated citation networks of Second Intifada-related articles in *Journal of Palestine Studies* to identify key scholars (e.g., Graham Usher, Jeremy Pressman) and dominant themes in the literature from 2000–2005.

Chapter 1: Historical roots of the conflict

Phase 1: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (1st Century BCE to Pre-20th Century CE)

1.1 Historical Background: Ancient History

Palestine has a land that has a very rich history and its complexity, some thousand years old. Therefore, it is relevant to recognize the religious and historic significance of the land to Jews, Christians, and Muslims to understand the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The land is crucial to Jews from a religious standpoint because it had ancient Israelite kingdoms in it, Jerusalem being the location of the First and Second Temple, critical symbols in the Jewish faith. This association with the land can be traced back to biblical times, with the establishment of the kingdom of Israel in approximately 1000 BCE by King David. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Jews were exiled from their land due to the immense consequences of the diaspora, signifying an eventual rupture of Israelites with their ancestral land.

For Muslims, also, the land has vast religious significance. Al-Quds in Arabic means Jerusalem, the site of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam. It is here that Muslims believe Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven during the Night Journey. Control of the region by Islam was established after the Arab conquest in the 7th century, while the area remained under Muslim rule for most of the ensuing centuries.

Although the Jewish connection to this land predates Islam itself, Muslims have retained political control of Palestine from the 7th century right up to the early 20th century. The land is intertwined with the Arab identity and the Palestinians' history of continuous presence in the area for over a millennium.

1.1.1 Ottoman Empire's Rule (1517–1917)

Starting from 1517, Palestine formed part of a larger Ottoman Empire; and in those decades, the region was a haven for peace, with various religious communities living under Ottoman protection. The Empire was multinational and multi-ethnic, and while some amount of religious tension existed, a national conflict between Arabs and Jews was at that time not yet defined.

However, towards the end of the 19th century, two major events began to challenge the relative calm that had been the norm. Zionism arose as the Jews' efforts to return to their historic homeland in Palestine and was engendered in part by a rising tide of European anti-Semitism. The second process was that of the rise of Arab nationalism, born on the brink of independence from Ottoman rule. Increased Arab nationalism created a development involving opposing nationalist movements: the self-determination of Arabs and the demand for a national homeland by Jews in Palestine.

1.1.2 The Decline of the Ottoman Empire (Early 1900s)

The decline of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century was a watershed period for Palestine, whereby the area passed from over 400 years of association with a vast multi-ethnic empire to becoming the hub of geopolitical tensions. This shift in governance, national identity, and foreign interest dramatically changed the nature of Palestine and set the stage for the Arab-Israeli conflict.

By the early 1900s, the Ottoman Empire seemed to be declining because of instability caused by the internal and external factors such as the military defeats and the rise of nationalist movements in the vast territories. The Empire's weakening grip upon Palestine made it fertile ground for external pressures from European powers, especially the British, French, and Russians. The result was that Palestine—heavily influenced by the emergence of global powers—was recognized as an important place of interest, situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The consequences of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire were deep-seated in the social and political formations of Palestine. In the Ottoman period, Palestine was not independent but rather a small province in a larger empire. While some autonomy was permitted by the Ottomans to local leaders, the entire region remained under centralized authority. By the end of the Ottoman period, the population of Palestine was mainly Arab, with a large Jewish minority living in largely urban centres of Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safed.

Nonetheless, when the Ottomans began to decline, Zionism was on the rise in Europe, and initial steps were being taken for the development of a Jewish national movement aimed at creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Phase 2: The Rise of Zionism and Arab Nationalism (Late 19th Century CE – Early 20th century CE)

1.2 Zionist Movement

The movement of Zionism emerged sometime in the late 19th century. This was aimed at creating a homeland for Jews in Palestine, an area believed to be the ancestral home of the Jews. Its origins, development, and eventual impact on the Middle East and global politics have many factors and courses of actions as well as very long-range consequences. It is through such elements that one understands how Zionism created the modern Israeli state and influenced the present Arab-Israeli conflict.

1.2.1 Factors behind the Zionist Movement

Various historical and contemporary factors contributed to the emergence of the Zionist movement, the overwhelming of which were the long history of anti-Semitism and persecution that the Jews underwent in Europe. Throughout the later part of the nineteenth century, ethnic- and nationalistic-type ideologies were rising across Europe, and the Jews, many of whom lived on the fringes of societal acceptance, were no exception. Events such as the Dreyfus affair in France (1894), where a Jew was falsely accused of treason, and widespread pogroms in Eastern Europe, especially in Russia, fuelled the desire for a place of refuge for Jews everywhere. The Jewish world needed salvation, and Herzl laid the prerequisite intellectual foundation for Zionism. This Austrian-Hungarian journalist entered the scene with full force at the turn of the century, witnessing with anguish the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, forging credence in the notion of a nation-state to secure the future of his people, and setting about to promote the idea with all the vigour and intensity implored by pressing urgency. In 1896, Herzl published a pamphlet titled *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State). In it, he expressed that the Jews must establish a sovereign homeland in Palestine, at that moment part of the Ottoman Empire. Herzl's ideas were supported by the then-dominant trend of nationalism in Europe. He argued that the Jews deserved to be on the historical agenda of all nations, and as such deserved the right to self-determination. Most importantly, he argued that Palestine was the natural locale for this homeland due to its historical and religious importance to Jews.

The historical and religious connection of the Jews with the land certainly played an important role in this plan for establishing the Jewish state. The yearning for the return to Zion (Jerusalem) has constituted a major theme in Jewish religious thinking throughout the centuries. The longing for a return to the land of Israel was deeply embedded in Jewish culture, prayers, and aspirations; however, it was Herzl's political and pragmatic approach that turned this long-standing religious ideal into a concrete political movement.

1.2.2 Courses of the Zionist Movement

The Zionist movement emerged in phases from its origin to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. In its early stages, Zionism was aimed at raising awareness and gaining international support for a Jewish homeland. The 1897 First Zionist Congress convened by Herzl in Basel, Switzerland marked the formal initiation of political Zionism. At this congress, the Zionists

agreed upon the objective of creating a Jewish state in Palestine, along with the establishment of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) to pursue that aim.

The early Zionist efforts were focused on garnering support from the Ottoman Empire, which ruled Palestine at the time, and also sought support by European powers. It later heralded by a major step in November 1917 with the provision of the Balfour Declaration by the British government during the World War. This voice expressed the British endowment for the establishment of "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. It was a direct offshoot of Zionist lobbying efforts, under the leadership of Chaim Weizmann, a leading Zionist and scientist. Balfour Declaration indeed provided international endorsement for the Zionist movement, but it promised to safeguard "civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine", which later created controversy.

Post World War I, the League of Nations conferred to Britain the mandate of governing Palestine mandating increases in Jewish immigration to the area. For that period, these Zionist settlers would work to put in place the future Jewish state's infrastructure: agricultural settlements (kibbutzim), cities, and institutions like the Jewish National Fund (JNF) for acquiring land. However, it sparked increasing rifts with the Arab population of the rising Jewish presence, which they feared would displace them one day.

The period between World War I and World War II saw escalating tensions and conflicts between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. The Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 was a reaction against Jewish immigration and British colonial policies. With the increasing momentum of dissent, the various Zionist leaders were busy seeking another political and military solution to the "Jewish question" in Palestine, with the highly contentious idea of seeking collaboration or cooperation with British authorities.

The Holocaust became the greatest impetus for Zionism during World War II because it paved the way for the acute need of a "refuge" for the Jewish population. After the end of the conflict, Zionists would deploy their strength to build everyone's support for establishing a state for Jews. The British had had enough of the war and were being bombed with increasing acts of violence against them, mostly by Jewish armed groups such as the Irgun and the Haganah, from wanting to pull out of Palestine and leaving the future of the region entirely to the UN.

In 1947, the UN offered a partition plan which sought to divide Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. The Zionist leadership accepted the resolution, but the Arab leadership rejected it, hence triggering the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 soon after the declaration of the independence of the State of Israel.

1.2.3 Results of the Zionist Movement

The Zionist endeavour's ultimate fruit was Israel's establishment in 1948, thus touching and satisfying the dream of a Jewish homeland. But in the same breath, its establishment took place at a very high price. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs were displaced during the war of 1948, giving birth to a refugee crisis which stands out as one of the most crucial features of the current Arab-Israeli conflict. Solidifying its existence, the war instead deepened the rift between Jews and Arabs in the area.

Zionism has also played an important role in transforming the lives of world Jewry. It succeeded in creating a national consciousness among Jews all over the world concerning which Jews could be secure, and in bringing together Jewish communities united to build the only central Jewish state in modern history. The economic and military growth of Israel has turned it into a regional power and now serves as a centre of Jewish culture, innovation, and political power.

1.2.4 Impacts of the Zionist Movement

The repercussions of Zionism have been enormous and far-reaching. It provided for the establishment of a safe homeland for Jews, who had suffered persecution for millennia, reaching its climax with the horrors of the Holocaust. Its negative side is manifested in the dispossession and displacement of the Palestinian Arab population, culminating in a long and bitter conflict that persists to the present. Thus, Zionism lies at the very core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, shaping Middle Eastern politics and global diplomacy.

The Zionist movement also contributed to the wider recognition of nationalism in the 20th century. While partially advocating for the self-determination of the Jewish people, it became a worthy example for other national liberation movements across the globe. It raises nonetheless, difficult questions concerning the rights of indigenous populations and the complex dynamics relating to colonization, migration, and territorial claims.

In closing, the Zionist movement has affected the world profoundly and forever. It has successfully established the State of Israel, but its native land has been a source of tension and conflict in the Middle East. The legacy of Zionism still courses through global geopolitics and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains an intractable, arduous problem of contemporary history.

1.3 Arab Nationalism

Simultaneously to the rise of Zionism, Arab nationalism began to take root in the Arab world, provoked in part by the Ottoman Empire's loosening grip over the region. At the start of the 20th century, a flurry of calls from intellectuals and political activists swept the Arab world, demanding Arab unity and independence. The notion of a single Arab nation, freed from Ottoman and European imperial hold, became central to Arab political movements.

Arab Nationalism-the political philosophy of the world, primarily in the 19th and 20th centuries, energizing the opinion for the uniting and independence of the Arab nations-had come to form a powerful movement. It aimed to lump the Arab-speaking people across the Middle East and Northern Africa under one identity marked off by a common history, culture, and language. The evolution story of Arab Nationalism has been very interestingly caught up with various historical, social, and political factors and along different paths that finally transformed the political space of the Arab world. The impact has been both transformational and complex, leaving enduring legacies within the region.

1.3.1 Factors behind the Rise of Arab Nationalism

Several external and internal factors inspired the emergence of Arab nationalism and the political consciousness of the Arab world. With the decline of the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled much of the Arab world for hundreds of years, a major force appeared, giving rise to nationalist sentiment in the Arab world. As the Ottoman Empire steadily declined through the 19th century, it was becoming increasingly difficult for it to hold sway over its territories, giving rise to movements of regional

autonomy and independence. This period marked the beginning of an awakening among the Arab elite regarding their future lying outside the Ottoman sphere.

The processes of colonialism among Arabs also contributed significantly to engendering nationalist sentiments. Being governed by foreign hands generated stinging resentment among the Arab populace: notably, by French and British hands. The Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire between Britain and France, horrified Arabs who had been promised independence in exchange for supporting the war against the Ottomans. Just the sheer thought of foreign powers attempting to carve up their lands without any regard for Arab sovereignty was enough to evoke a coordinated longing for national self-determination in the Arab world.

The far-reaching intellect heard in the past movements, especially the *Nahda* (Arab Renaissance) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, offered important assistance to Arab nationalism. Intellectuals and writers in the Arab world began emphasizing the importance of Arab identity, the Arabic language, and the common history of the Arabs. *Michele Aflaq*, a Lebanese individual, and *Taha Hussein*, an Egyptian intellectual, were examples of leaders of Arab pride and unity. These men shaped the Arab political landscape by establishing the Ba'ath Party.

1.3.2 Courses of Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism went through several stages, with complicated layers of both intellectual and political movements influencing its development. In the early phases of Arab nationalism, largely intellectual-cultural movements were put forward whereby Arab thinkers and writers revived the idea of a common Arab identity. This idea of Arab unity was shaped through writings that compared the historical and cultural bonds among Arab peoples and contrasted them against their common experience of undergoing colonial subjugation.

In the 20th century, Arab nationalism started finding its politics in a more tangible form. The most important juncture came after World War I, when the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of European colonial mandates in Arab lands would sow the seeds of nationalist movements. The Great Arab Revolt of 1916, under Sharif Hussein bin Ali of Mecca, aimed at liberating the Arabian Peninsula from Ottoman rule and establishing an Arab state. Although the revolt failed in the political objectives it had set up, it kindled the first sparks toward independence and served as a harbinger of nationalist uprisings to come. During the interwar period, political organizations arose in the anti-colonial struggle for Arab independence. In Egypt, the *Wafd Party* was a principal figure in the field of nationalist politics, agitating for Egyptian independence from British domination. On the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula, nationalist movements were gaining speed, mostly in opposition to colonial power and local collaborationists.

The period after World War II saw the zenith of Arab nationalism, namely draped in the charisma of leaders such as Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. In Nasser's view, pan-Arabism was for the unification of all Arab countries into one political and economic entity. In 1958, Egypt and Syria claimed to unite under the banner of a short-lived union, *the United Arab Republic* (UAR), with the lofty aim of establishing a great Arab state. Nasser's concepts of Arab unity, anti-imperialism, and social justice rang from the hearts of the Arabs, particularly in the countries that had lived through colonialism.

Nevertheless, such aspirations found several obstacles on their path. Against Nasser's best efforts, the political fragmentation of the Arab world and diverging national interests and petty local rivalries dampened the realization of Arab unity. The death of Nasser in 1970 heralded the heyday of pan-Arabism, although Arab nationalism continued to be a potent force in the regional politics.

1.3.3 Results of Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism immediately gave rise to a wave of independence movements throughout the Arab world during the middle part of the 20th century. Many countries in the Arab world gained independence from European colonial powers, like Egypt in 1952, Tunisia in 1956, and Algeria in 1962, among many others. The spread of Arab nationalism also led to the birth of political parties that would further blow the trumpet of Arab identity and unity like the Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq, and the Arab Nationalist Movement.

However, notwithstanding the initial successes, the goal of achieving political unity across the Arab world remained unattainable. Many countries had championed nationalist ideologies; however, that diversity, which distinguished various Arab nations with differing economic, political, and social systems, proved insurmountable. The Arab League, which would be formed in 1945 and targeted at being the regional organization for the purpose of promoting unity and cooperation among Arab states, ended up failing in the way of political integration.

It even made matters worse on the authoritarianism rise in these states such as Nasser's Egypt and later Saddam Hussein's Iraq, complicating the political state. While they professed Arab nationalism rhetoric, the regimes were predominantly direct rule governments suppressing political dissent and stifling real democratic aspirations.

1.3.4 Impacts of Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism left a profound and lasting impact on the political, social, and cultural fabric of the Arab world. Politically, it contributed to the emergence of new nation-states and the end of colonialism in the region. The anti-colonial struggle gave rise to a new generation of Arab leaders who viewed their roles as champions of Arab identity and sovereignty.

However, the limitations of Arab nationalism also became apparent over time. The failure to achieve political unity led to the fragmentation of the Arab world into separate, often competing, states. The persistence of political, ethnic, and sectarian divisions has hindered the realization of a unified Arab identity and vision. Additionally, the failure of pan-Arabism left a vacuum that was sometimes filled by more radical ideologies, such as Islamist movements and jihadist organizations.

Culturally, Arab nationalism played a key role in fostering a sense of shared identity among Arab peoples, emphasizing the importance of the Arabic language, literature, and heritage. However, this emphasis on Arab unity sometimes overshadowed the region's ethnic and religious diversity, contributing to tensions between Arab and non-Arab populations, such as Kurds and Berbers, and between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Arab nationalism was a significant force in the 20th century, shaping the political and cultural landscape of the Arab world. While it contributed to the independence of Arab nations and the development of a shared Arab identity, it also faced significant challenges in achieving political unity. The legacy of Arab nationalism continues to influence the region's politics, as Arab states continue to grapple with issues of identity, governance, and regional cooperation.

The revolt, supported by the British, was intended to create an independent Arab state, but British promises to Hussein regarding Arab independence were undermined by secret agreements with France (the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916), which divided the Ottoman territories between British and French control.

Phase 3: The Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate (1917–1947)

1.4 The Balfour Declaration (1917)

Another significant event during this period was the Balfour Declaration of 1917 in which the British government expressed its support for the creation of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. The declaration was viewed as a victory for the Zionists, as it was the first time that a world power had publicly endorsed the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

1.4.1 Foundation of the Declaration

- **The date was the 2nd November of 1917:** The Balfour Declaration was a declaration by British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued during World War I.
- **Issued by:** It was issued by British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour.
- **Addressee:** The declaration was addressed to Lord Rothschild, a prominent leader of the British Jewish community.
- **Content:** It expressed British support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.
- **Political Context:** It was issued during World War I, at a time when Britain was seeking international support for the war effort.
- **Purpose:** The British hoped that supporting the Zionist cause would gain favor with Jewish populations, particularly in the United States and Russia.
- **Zionist Advocacy:** The declaration supported the Zionist movement, which sought to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
- **British Interests:** Britain had strategic interests in securing influence over Palestine and the broader Middle East after the war.
- **Importance of Palestine:** This area was also viewed as important for its geographical and religious significance for Jew and Arabs alike.
- **Contradiction with Arab Promise:** The declaration contradicted earlier promises of British leaders to Arab leaders, such as the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence (1915-1916), which promised Arab independence.

1.4.2 Objectives of the Declaration

- **Support for Zionism:** The British wanted to assist in the establishment of a national homeland in Palestine for Jews; hence, they aligned with the Zionist designs.
- **To Gain Jewish Support:** By the declaration, the intention was to gather support from Jewish communities for the British side in the war, particularly in the U.S. and Russia.
- **Control of the Middle East:** Britain wanted to secure its influence in the Middle East, particularly in view of the anticipated collapse of the Ottoman Empire.
- **Diplomatic Leverage:** The British wanted improved diplomatic relations with the Jewish leaders, mainly with Chaim Weizmann.
- **To Undermine Ottoman Rule:** Britain thought that encouraging Jewish settlement would weaken the Ottoman Empire's hold over Palestine.
- **To Soften Allies:** The declaration sought to justify Britain's friendships with allies, especially Russia, which had a significant Jewish population.
- **As a Solution to European Anti-Semitism:** The declaration was also perceived to be a way of providently addressing the "Jewish Question" in Europe.
- **Support for Post-War Settlement:** Britain seeks to influence post-war arrangements in the Middle East, including partitioning Ottoman territories.
- **Strategic Buffer:** Britain expects that Jewish presence in Palestine would become a strategic buffer against other powers in the region.
- **Protect British Interests:** Britain wants to protect its economic and political interests in the region through support for Zionism.

1.4.3 Course of the Declaration

- **British Mandate:** After WWI, Britain was given the mandate to rule Palestine, and the Balfour Declaration became part of British politics.
- **Jewish Immigration:** This declaration stimulated Jewish immigration to Palestine, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, leading to frayed relations.
- **Arab Rejection:** The Palestinian Arabs taking in a larger Arab community have rejected the declaration as one for which they had been sold by Britain with false promises of independence to the Arabs.
- **Arab Rebellion:** The declaration was one of the causes of the revolt which erupted in 1936-1939 among Arabs in Palestine.
- **British Attempts to Balance Interests:** Britain tried to strike a balance between Zionist and Arab interests—a largely futile exercise.

- **Increased Tensions:** The declaration has widened the gulf between Arabs and Jews in Palestine and has led to frequent outbreaks of violence.
- **White Paper of 1939:** Britain published the White Paper which was only an attempt to contain Jewish immigration but would fail in a way to contain the tension between Arabs and Jews.
- **Jewish Agency Influence:** Under David Ben-Gurion, the Jewish Agency played an active role in facilitation of Jewish immigration and settlement.
- **UN Partition Plan, 1957:** The legacy of this declaration has had an impact on the 1947 partition plan of the UN intended to partition Palestine into a separate Jewish and Arab state.
- **Continued Diplomatic Efforts:** Such issues within the limits of Balfour Declaration are the roots of on-going international diplomatic efforts including the peace process and negotiations between Israel and Palestine. Creation of Israel in 1948 immediately following the pulling out of British forces.

1.4.4 Results of the Declaration

- **Creation of Israel:** The Balfour Declaration was the harbinger for the formation of the State of Israel in 1948.
- **Palestinian Displacement:** Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were uprooted during the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, hence creating conditions for a refugee crisis.
- **Arab-Israeli Conflict:** It heralded the beginning of the unending Arab-Israel conflict, which still determines the politics of the region.
- **International Legitimacy for Zionism:** The Balfour Declaration provided legitimacy for the Zionist movement and its demand for a Jewish homeland.
- **Increased Jewish Settlement:** The declaration witnessed a rapid increase in Jewish settlements in Palestine, particularly during the British mandate.
- **Violence and Resistance:** The declaration was a contributing factor in an escalation of violence between Jews and Arabs leading to countless uprisings and revolts.
- **Post-War British Withdrawal:** The tension spurred by the declaration saw Britain's withdrawal from Palestine in 1948.
- **Disputed Territories:** The aftershock of the declaration triggered series of disputes regarding land and sovereignty, in particular, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- **Arab-Israeli Wars:** The declaration indirectly led to subsequent wars of Arab states against Israel, including the 1948 war and the 1967 Six-Day War.

1.5 The British Mandate (1920–1948)

British Mandate is the term used to characterize the period from 1920 to 1948 during which Britain ruled Palestine under the authority of the League of Nations. The British Mandate was established after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I and the resulting divisions of Ottoman territory; Britain was asked to rule Palestine and prepare the territory for eventual self-rule. However, the period was characterized by great tensions between the Jewish and Arab populations and also between the British authorities and these groups.

1.5.1 Context of the Historic Background

- **Collapse of Ottoman Rule:** The Ottoman Empire, the power which had from centuries past controlled Palestine, disintegrated after World War I. The remnants of the power were controlled by the Allied Powers, Britain included.
- **Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916):** A secret arrangement between the governments of Britain and France for the partition of Ottoman territory within the Middle East. Thus, incoming-mundane-problems are internationalized with Palestine.
- **San Remo Conference (1920):** The San Remo Conference of 1920 was concerned briefly with the war's aftermath and the division of Ottoman lands, with Palestine being assigned to Britain as a mandate from the League of Nations.

1.5.2 Terms of the British Mandate

- **League of Nations Mandate:** In 1922, the League of Nations officially granted Britain the mandate over Palestine. The mandate imposed the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people," while considering safeguarding the civil and religious rights of the Arab population.
- **Balfour Declaration (1917):** The Balfour Declaration, inter alia, endorsed a Jewish homeland in Palestine, which became salient in British policy concerning that territory.
- **Dual Commitment:** Britain had a duty to fulfil its contradictory promises to the Arabs (for their independence after the war) and to the Jews (for the establishment of a Jewish homeland).

1.5.3 Jewish Immigration and Arab Response

- **Jewish Immigration:** The British authorities facilitated Jewish immigration into Palestine after World War I. This was encouraged by the Zionist movement, seeking to establish a Jewish homeland.
- In contrast, the Arab Palestinians were opposed to the influx of Jewish immigrants, mostly in fear of losing their land and political independent.
- **Tensions and Violence:** With the rise in Jewish immigration, tensions arose with Arabs, leading to riots and clashes: the riots of 1920 and 1929 in Palestine.

1.5.4 British Policies and Responses

- **The White Papers:**
The 1930 Pass-field White Paper: It stated that the British government, in light of Arab grievances, sought to limit Jewish immigration and land purchases. The Zionists defended their interests in opposition to this policy and claimed it was a betrayal of their cause.
The 1939 White Paper: It was published during an atmosphere of rising unrest and radically curtailed Jewish immigration into Palestine, particularly in light of the escalating Nazi persecution of Jews in Europe. Such legislation was condemned by the Zionists and led to increased activity by underground Jewish militant organizations.

- **British Dilemma:** Within the conflicted situation in Palestine, the British Found themselves acting to enforce international obligations to one side while trying to ensure order. This proved increasingly difficult.

1.5.5 Arab Revolt (1936-1939)

- **Arab Uprising:** In 1936, the Arab population in Palestine launched a revolt against British rule and Jewish immigration. The revolt lasted until 1939 and was a direct response to the perceived favouritism shown by the British towards the Zionists.
- **British Military Response:** Britain's military response resulted in thousands of Arab casualties and the destruction of villages. The revolt ended in 1939, but the growing tides of conflict and friction were evident in the area.
- **Impact on British Policy:** The 1939 White Paper that restricted Jewish immigration was a consequence of the revolt, but it was also an indication of the growing problems Britain faced in keeping Palestine under control.

1.5.6 The Rise of Jewish Armed Resistance

- **Underground Groups:** In retaliation for British restrictions placed on Jewish immigration, several militant Jewish groups abounded, from the early 1930s on- the Irgun and Lehi (the Stern Gang) most prominently among them. They attacked British forces as well as Arab targets.
- **Zionist Resistance:** The mainstream Zionist leadership led by the Jewish Agency usually however would have to contend with these underground groups and their use of violence to attain their goals.
- **End of British Rule:** Escalating resistance from both Arab and Jewish groups, coupled with a rapidly deteriorating capacity on the part of the British to administer Palestine, finally resulted in Great Britain's decision to withdraw.

1.5.7 Impact of World War II

- **The Holocaust and Jewish Immigration:** The violent events of the Holocaust during World War II even more intensified the pressure for establishing the Jewish state. A majority of European Jews sought refuge in Palestine, notwithstanding British restrictions.
- **Post-War Tensions:** With the influx of Jewish refugees after the war, tensions with the Arab population grew, and Britain was becoming unable to handle the situation.

1.5.8 United Nations Partition Plan (1947)

- **The British, after their withdrawal,** had referred the issue of Palestine to the UN not being in a position to solve the problem. The issue here mainly was that in 1947, exhausted by the conflict and unable to find a solution to it, Britain placed the issue of Palestine before the newly formed United Nations.
- **Partition Plan:** Recommendation to the UN for the partition plan under which Palestine was to be separated into independent Jewish and Arab states, and Jerusalem itself to be placed under international rule.
- **Arab Rejection:** The partition plan was accepted by the Jewish leadership while the Arab states and Palestinian leaders turned it down as inequitable and an affront to their rights.

1.5.9 The End of the British Mandate and the Creation of Israel

- **Withdrawal of the British:** On May 14, 1948, the British withdrew from Palestine under a declaration, leaving a vacuum of power which was to give an immediate declaration to the establishment of the State of Israel by the Jewish leadership.
- **Witnessed by the Arab-Israeli War:** The proclamation of Statehood for Israel happened first; then came the Arab countries invading Palestine giving rise to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.
- **Armistice and Division of Territory:** It was 1949 by the end of the war armistice agreements were entered into, and with the division of Palestine into areas under Israeli control and those controlled by Arabs, with the help of two areas (West Bank and Gaza Strip).

1.6 The League of Nations Mandate for Palestine (1920)

After World War I, the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine was a legal document signifying the eventual administrative control over Palestine by Britain. It formally provided a British role in administering the region as per the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The main purpose of the mandate was the promise to implement the Balfour Declaration (1917) in establishing a Jewish national home while safeguarding Arab rights. The period of the mandate lasted till 1948 and Israel's declaration of independence, after which the British withdrew.

1.6.1 Important Features

- **Jewish National Home:** Established for the Settlement and Admission of Jews into Palestine
- **Protection of Arab Rights:** Admittedly, protection against civil and religious rights for non-Jewish communities should be provided.
- **British Administration:** It was the responsibility of Britain to supervise and organize the governing of the people and order.
- **Jewish-Arab Tensions:** The mandate only added to the already simmering tension between the Jewish and Arab populations.
- **Supervision:** Managed by the League of Nations, although the overruling powers were retained by Britain.

Phase 4: World War II: Jews Holocaust (1941-1945), United Nations Partition Plan (1947)

1.7 The Jewish Holocaust

The Holocaust is actually that dark page of history where millions died under the terror of Nazi Germany. It is said that six million Jews were murdered in Europe around 1941-1945. The Nazis were headed by Adolf Hitler, whose main aim was the 'Final

Solution' or extermination of Jews throughout Europe. Jews were stripped of their rights and put into ghettos awaiting mass deportation, which led to concentration and extermination camps such as Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Sobibor.

The methods of extermination varied: mass shootings, gassing, forced labour starvation, and through barbarous experiments in medicine. Also targeted in the Holocaust were the Romani, the disabled, the Slavs, political dissidents, and several others judged "undesirable." Though some did resist, the organization raged on until, in 1945, Allied troops liberated the notorious concentration camps and revealed the full horror of Nazi crimes.

Among the long-term effects of the Holocaust, one can count the impetus that it gave to the human rights movement globally, the Nuremberg Trials, and the increasing support for the establishment of Israel in 1948 as a haven for survivors.

Today, it remains one of the darkest chapters of history and serves to remind that hatred, either in the name of race or totalitarianism, can bring the entire human civilization to the brink of destruction. It is now about keeping the memory of those who fell victim to these horrors alive by education and memorials across the globe.

1.7.1 The Jewish Immigration Surge

With the surge in migrations, the globe had its demographic patterns drastically altered. This immigration primarily affected Palestine (later to be called Israel) and the Western nations. Six million Jews were murdered, and many of the survivors found themselves displaced. The scenario in the post-war years was that of a desperate hunt for refuge. The majority of these Holocaust survivors-the Displaced Persons (DPs)-were housed in DP camps across Europe under Allied supervision during that time, usually in miserable conditions.

Although the 1939 White Paper imposed limitations on immigration for Palestine, thousands of Jews sought to illegally migrate through the aforementioned Aliyah Bet, often being intercepted and sent to internment camps such as those in Cyprus. Preparatory events leading up to the founding of Israel included the British departure from Palestine, in 1947, and the United Nations Proposal for Partition. Accordingly, upon the founding of Israel, the Law of Return (1950) was instituted, allowing Jews anywhere in the world the right to settle there.

Between 1948 and 1951, over 650,000 Jewish immigrants came to Israel, thus almost doubling it. Most came from Europe, devastated by the Holocaust, while others escaped growing anti-Semitism in the Arab countries. Some political implications of the massive immigration are the basis for the development of Israel and the regional tensions that followed over the years and have contributed to the conflicts with the Arab countries. The mass immigration becomes one of the most important events in Jewish and Israeli history.

1.8 United Nations Partition Plan (1947)

The *United Nations Resolution 181 of 1947* and proposed the partition of Palestine under British mandate into Jewish and Arab states with the condition of international control for Jerusalem. The proposal was meant to answer growing tensions between Jews and Arabs and the refugee crisis in the wake of the Holocaust. It was drafted by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine and recommended a two-state solution.

In the proposal, Jews were allotted 56% of the land, and Arabs 43%, when, in fact, the Arab population was larger. The area of Jerusalem and Bethlehem was designated as an international zone administered by the UN. The plan was accepted by Jewish leaders, who saw this as a way to statehood; the Arab side rejected it as they opposed any division of Palestine.

The plan was approved on *29 November 1947* by the General Assembly of the United Nations with 33 votes for, 13 against, and 10 abstentions. A wave of violence between Jews and Arabs broke out after the vote. Following Britain's refusal to extend the mandate over Palestine, Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948, opening up the arena for war with the Arab states, also termed the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. While the plan was never realized, it served as a foundation for the birth of Israel and framed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

1.8.1 Important features UNP Plans

- **Two-State Solution** – Proposed separate Jewish and Arab states.
- **Land Allocation** – Jews received 56% and Arabs 43% of Palestine.
- **Jerusalem as an International City** – Governed by the UN due to religious significance.
- **Jewish Acceptance, Arab Rejection** – Jews agreed, Arabs opposed the partition.
- **UN General Assembly Approval** – Passed on November 29, 1947 (Resolution 181).
- **British Withdrawal** – Britain left Palestine in 1948, ending its mandate.
- **Outbreak of War** – Arab nations invaded after Israel's independence, leading to conflict.
- **Foundation for Future Conflict** – Plan's rejection fuelled on-going tensions.

Table 1: Demographic and Territorial Distribution under UN Resolution 181 (1947). Data synthesized from UNSCOP records and historical analyses.

Territory Allocation	Proposed Land Share	Total Population	Arab Population	Jewish Population	Land Ownership
Jewish State	~55.0% - 56.47%	~905,000	407,000 (45%)	~498,000 (55%)	< 7.0%
Arab State	~42.0% - 43.0%	~735,000	725,000 (99%)	10,000 (1%)	Majority
International Zone	~1.0% - 2.0%	205,000	105,000 (51%)	100,000 (49%)	N/A

As illustrated in *Table 1*, despite owning less than 7 percent of the land and comprising only one-third of the total population, the Jewish state was allocated approximately 55 percent of historic Palestine, including the most fertile coastal and agricultural regions. The Palestinian Arabs, who constituted a massive majority and had resided on the land for centuries, viewed the partition as a catastrophic violation of their right to self-determination and a transparent extension of Western imperialism. Consequently, Arab leaders rejected the proposal. Conversely, the mainstream Zionist leadership accepted the plan as an essential legal and territorial foothold, though historical records indicate a strategic intent to eventually expand the state's borders beyond the UN demarcations.

1.8.2 Plan Dalet and the Architecture of Expulsion

When the United Nations passed Resolution 181 in late 1947, recommending the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, tensions that had simmered for decades erupted into open civil war. The Zionist leadership, anticipating the imminent withdrawal of British forces and the declaration of Israeli statehood, shifted from a defensive stance to a strategy of territorial expansion. On March 10, 1948, David Ben-Gurion and his inner circle of military planners approved Plan Dalet (Plan D)—a turning point in the conflict.

Far from being a vague set of military guidelines, declassified archives reveal Plan Dalet as a systematic framework for expulsion. It instructed brigade commanders to seize Arab towns and villages, particularly those outside the UN-designated borders of the Jewish state. The orders were explicit: besiege villages, bombard them, burn homes, demolish structures, and mine the ruins to prevent return. Resistance was to be met with wholesale expulsion of the population beyond the new state's borders.

This precision was made possible by the Village Files project (1940–1947), a massive intelligence effort in which Zionist militias catalogued topographical maps, demographic details, and lists of individuals for every Arab village. In effect, Plan Dalet was the operationalization of years of meticulous preparation, turning intelligence into a blueprint for ethnic cleansing.

1.8.3 The Deir Yassin Massacre

The brutality of Plan Dalet was most starkly illustrated at Deir Yassin, a Palestinian village west of Jerusalem. Despite having negotiated a non-aggression pact with nearby Jewish settlements, the village was attacked on April 9, 1948, by the Irgun and Lehi militias—groups led by future Israeli prime ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. Supported by mortar fire from the mainstream Haganah, the assault left over 100 Palestinian civilians dead, most of them women, children, and the elderly.

Eyewitness accounts and UN reports describe scenes of horrific violence: victims stripped, photographed, executed, and subjected to rape and mutilation. The massacre was not only an atrocity in itself but also a deliberate act of psychological warfare. Zionist forces broadcast exaggerated accounts of the killings across Palestine, warning other Arab communities that they would suffer the same fate if they did not flee.

The impact was immediate and devastating. Fear spread like wildfire, prompting mass flight from villages across the region. *Deir Yassin* became a symbol of terror, a catalyst for the *Nakba*—the mass displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in 1948.

Chapter 2: Declaration of Independence, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and Its Aftermath

Phase 5: The Creation of the State of Israel (1948) & Aftermath

2.1 Declaration of Independence in 1948

On May 14, 1948, as British forces withdrew and the British Mandate ended, head of the Jewish Agency David Ben-Gurion proclaimed Israel's Declaration of Independence in Tel Aviv, heralding the birth of the Jewish State.

The declaration affirmed the historical bond of the Jewish people with the land of Israel, citing biblical ties, continuous Jewish presence, and Zionist efforts aimed at re-establishing a national home. Among its referenced landmarks for statehood were the Balfour Declaration (1917) and the UN Partition Plan (1947).

This document assures respect for equal rights of all citizens, without distinction as to race, creed, or sex, and calls for peace with neighbouring Arab states. Arab states rejected Israel's existence and invaded on the very next day; this event marked the beginning of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

While marking the beginning of war immediately, Zionism's independence became perhaps the most significant moment in Jewish history, giving a refuge for Holocaust survivors and all those fleeing persecution around the world. This declaration was the basis for Israel: its symbol of sovereignty and democracy, and an ode to its unending quest for security and peace.

2.1.1 The Declaration Ceremony

- As British rule ended, Ben-Gurion read the declaration at the Tel Aviv Museum (now Independence Hall). The document emphasized:
- The historical and biblical connection of the Jewish people to the land.
- The legal and moral right to statehood, reinforced by the UN decision.
- A promise to ensure equality, democracy, and peace with all inhabitants, regardless of religion or ethnicity.

2.2 The First Arab-Israeli War (1948-1949)

The First Arab-Israeli War or the War of Independence was the war fought between Israel and a coalition of Arab states in 1948. It was fought between the State of Israel and Arab countries and was also referred to as *Nakba* (meaning "catastrophe" in Arabic). It began on the 15th of May, 1948; the day after Israel declared independence and carried on until March 1949.

2.2.1 Background

It came as an effect from the old problem between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. It became aggravated by the United Nations Partition Plan (1947) that recommends separate Jewish and Arabic states—this created confrontation. Although the Jews accepted

the partitioning plan, the Arab states and the Palestinians felt the plan was unjust to divide Palestine. With the exit of British rule, fighting started when the other Arab countries came in to obstruct the establishment of a Jewish state.

2.2.2 The Key Players and Early Combat

The main combatant countries, just to name a few, were Israel and five Arab countries: Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. These Arab armies were initially outnumbered and equipped with much more than the Israelis. But the unified Israeli forces motivated towards high spirits did better by receiving help from various Jewish paramilitary component groups like Haganah, Irgun, and Lehi already active in the region.

2.2.3 Course of the War

The warfare happened in several theatres:

- In the first weeks of the war, Israeli troops made a defensive fight against Arab invasion.
- Mid-1948 Israel gained momentum and captured important regions including parts of West Jerusalem and large tracts of land designated to the Jewish state by the UN.
- After several months, several ceasefires were negotiated by the United Nations. Then, under the leadership of Yigal Allon and Moshe Dayan, the Israeli army defeated the wars.

2.2.4 Result and Aftermath

The war ended in 1949, and with the signing of a series of armistice agreements, Israel added to its territories beyond the UN Partition Plan. About 750,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled, thus creating a refugee crisis that has remained central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The war nurtured the burgeoning Israeli state but was also deepened in the Arab-Israeli conflict, leading to future wars and continued tensions.

2.3 The 1949 Armistice

The *1949 Armistice Agreements* marked the end of the *1948 Arab-Israeli War*, formally concluding hostilities between Israel and its neighbouring Arab states (*Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq*). These agreements, brokered by the *United Nations*, established temporary ceasefires and delineated borders for Israel, setting the stage for the region's political landscape for decades to come. The agreements, while not peace treaties, created a framework that allowed for the cessation of active fighting and laid the foundation for future negotiations.

2.3.1 Background

The date May 14, 1948, saw the declaration of the independence of Israel. After this declaration, Arab states invaded to prevent the formation of a Jewish state. This war placed on one side Israel and on the other *Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon*. It was in this war that significant territorial changes took place alongside a clear Israeli military victory. By the beginning of 1949, both sides were getting exhausted, and mediation by the United Nations towards restoring some order became necessary. A series of ceasefires and negotiation meetings were organized to restore order to the region.

2.3.2 The Negotiations

The United Nations appointed *Count Folke Bernadotte* as a mediator in the negotiations, who initially made several attempts to negotiate a peace agreement but was ultimately killed by the *Lehi* (a Jewish extremist group). Apart from this setback, negotiations continued, with the *UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)* overseeing the process. The armistice talks took place in Rhodes, Greece, and included separate negotiations between Israel and the Arab states and UN representatives, culminating in five distinct agreements.

2.3.3 Key Terms of the Armistice Agreements

- **Israel-Egypt:** The agreement set up a demilitarized zone along the Gaza Strip and established borders along the Rafah corridor and other areas. Egypt kept control of Gaza but had to withdraw from other areas of Palestine.
- **Israel-Jordan:** The armistice line is set as the Green Line new border demarcating the frontiers between Israel and Jordan, with the latter also taking control over East Jerusalem and the West Bank. This border was later to become a point of contention concerning the disputed territories in the following peace talks.
- **Israel-Syria:** A demilitarized zone along the Golan Heights was established; however, Syria would retain control over most of the area.
- **Israel-Lebanon:** Lebanon would agree to a demilitarized zone along its border with Israel, with Lebanon remaining mostly neutral in the conflict after the armistice.

2.3.4 Outcome and Consequences

The 1949 Armistice Agreement brought a stop to all fighting for the time being, yet they failed to settle the undercurrents of the political debris, including the Palestinian refugee crises and the status of Jerusalem. Out of the armistices emerged a status quo, with Israel holding most of the territory allocated to it under the UN partition plan. However, the Arab states did not recognize Israel's sovereignty. The agreements also fixed the division of Palestine into areas controlled by Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, thus setting the stage for future conflicts and peace processes.

Another lasting effect of the armistices was further dislocation of Palestinians, with hundreds of thousands fleeing or being compelled to leave their homes where they would remain refugees for generations. All these, nevertheless, stand behind issues unresolved, but the agreements did set in place the boundary that remained until the Six-Day War in 1967.

2.4 The Refugee Crisis

In consequence of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 and founding of the state of Israel, there burgeoned a Palestinian Refugee Crisis, which lasted from the year 1948 to 1967. Time estimated that during and after the war, almost 750,000 of Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from the homes of areas which later became Israel. Many went to neighbouring Arab states, especially Jordan,

Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, while others moved to the territories of West Bank and Gaza Strip, which were under occupation of Jordan and Egypt, respectively. The trapping of many factors into a single mass departure action were fear from violence, forced expulsion by Israeli forces and razing of Palestinian villages. Refugees trapped in Arab territories remained in refugee camps, hardly retaining any rights and resources because the Arab states never integrated them. Such conditions warrant a sense of displacement and statelessness, thus becoming the main concern of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following the conferring of the Six Day War of 1967, when Israel seized the West Bank, Gaza, and other territories, the crisis worsened further, displacing even more Palestinians. While the UNRWA has tried to facilitate assistance to the refugees, the problem of the refugee has not been resolved and becomes part of the controversial issues in peace negotiations. The right of return for refugees has become a very controversial issue within Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Phase 6: The Post-1948 Period: 1956–1967

2.5 The Suez Crisis (1956)

Well, the Suez crisis broke out in 1956 and was the Second Arab-Israeli War or was referred to as the Tripartite Aggression. It certainly defined the future of history for both Middle East and Cold War. The crisis started right after the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser decided on nationalizing the Suez Canal which had been a classical waterway by which all international trading passed. This was the prime key strategic point which brought in the two countries that were major shareholders in the operation of the canal: Britain and France. His action was that which stared directly into the face of western influence in the region.

On the other hand, Israel, Britain, And France were going to coordinate on a military plan to invade Egypt. Israel, on the other hand, fought ground wars over the Sinai Peninsula, advancing toward the canal, while Britain and France began bombarding Egypt positions. The idea was to weaken the regime of Nasser and ensure the control of the west over the canal.

However, it encountered fierce opposition. The United States led by President Dwight D. Eisenhower strongly opposed the invasion due to concerns of a Cold War and the continuing influence of the Soviet Union in that area. The UN quickly moved in to make calls for a ceasefire, and the fighting ended in early November 1956. It sent a UN peacekeeping force to monitor the ceasefire.

The invasion succeeded in limited military objectives but failed politically for Britain and France since it revealed their waning influence in the Middle East and in the whole world. Nasser became a hero in the Arab world, while the Suez Canal remained Egyptian territory.

2.5.1 Key Features of the Suez Crisis

- **Nationalization of the Suez Canal:** Egyptian President **Nasser** nationalized the canal on **July 26, 1956**, cutting off access for Britain and France.
- **Tripartite Aggression:** Israel, Britain, and France coordinated military operations to attack Egypt and retake control of the canal.
- **Cold War Dynamics:** The United States, under President **Eisenhower**, opposed the invasion due to fears of escalating tensions with the Soviet Union.
- **United Nations Involvement:** The UN quickly called for a ceasefire and deployed peacekeeping forces to stabilize the region.
- **Political Consequences:** The crisis marked the decline of **British and French influence** in the Middle East and the rise of **Nasser** as a pan-Arab leader.

2.5.2 Impact of the Suez Crisis

- **End of British and French Influence:** The crisis exposed the weakening power of Britain and France on the global stage.
- **Strengthened Nasser's Leadership:** Nasser emerged as a hero in the Arab world, gaining prestige for resisting Western powers.
- **Rise of U.S. Power:** The United States asserted its dominance in the Middle East, influencing future regional politics.
- **UN Peacekeeping Precedent:** The deployment of UN peacekeepers set a precedent for future international interventions in conflict zones.
- **Suez Canal Control:** The canal remained under Egyptian control, solidifying Nasser's position in the Arab world and global geopolitics.

2.6 The Rise of Palestinian Guerrilla Movements

The rise of Palestinian guerrilla movements can be traced back to the consequences of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. With the establishment of the State of Israel, Palestinian refugees fleeing their homes found themselves dispersed across neighbouring Arab countries and territories such as the West Bank and Gaza Strip and mostly in refugee camps. The fostering of armed resistance was a situation of perceived disempowerment and frustration with the apathetic Arab states regarding liberating Palestine. These fringe resistance groups contested Israeli sovereignty and Palestinian dispossession in their heyday without a common leadership.

The first major Palestinian guerrilla organization was the Fedayeen, from the Arabic meaning "those who sacrifice themselves". These groups emerged in the early 1950s and started operating in the Gaza Strip and Jordan, where Palestinians conducted cross-border raids against Israel. Although initially small in scale, these attacks served to internationalize the Palestinian cause and were also a form of payback for Israeli actions. Although the Fedayeen's activities went on to become a voice of demonstrations over the lack of progress toward Palestinian self-determination, the Arabs were viewed as abandoning their struggle despite the organization's declaration for their support.

In the early 1960s, the Palestinian guerrilla movements came together into more organized and ideological groups with the most notable being the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), conceived in 1964 under the aegis of the Arab League. However, in

the early years, the PLO was a weak and ineffective organization until the latter part of the 1960s when the struggle of Palestinian guerrillas became better organized and more visible on an international level under the leadership of Yasser Arafat of the Fatah movement. Fatah conveyed a message of armed struggle and liberation of Palestine and was dearly embraced by the Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories.

By 1967, after Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, the guerrilla movements began to gain significant support from regional powers such as Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. After Israeli occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian guerrilla movements intensified their campaign. In the post-1967 phase, PLO and other factions became increasingly active in guerrilla warfare against Israeli military installations, civilians, and infrastructure, including hijacking airplanes and attacking Israeli interests abroad. In bringing about the establishment of a Palestinian state in territories lost to Israel and restoring land created by Palestinians as theirs, the PLO sought to pave the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The rise of Palestinian guerrilla movements during this period had very far-reaching consequences both for the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as for the politics of the wider Middle East. This sparked awareness of the Palestinian cause but would in itself deepen the conflict with military retaliation by Israel. Over the years, however, practices focused even more on guerrilla and armed struggle toward political solutions, particularly after the signing of the Oslo Accords in the 1990s when the PLO formally recognized the state of Israel and entered the road to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Nevertheless, the continuing fight for Palestinian rights and sovereignty still remains a major concern in regional politics.

2.6.1 Key Features of Palestinian Guerrilla Movements

- **Focus on Armed Struggle:** The core ideology of Palestinian guerrilla groups was centred on armed resistance against Israeli occupation and the aim of reclaiming Palestine.
- **The Emergence of Fatah:** Under Yasser Arafat, Fatah became the dominant military faction, leading the PLO and advocating for Palestinian nationalism.
- **Cross-Border Attacks:** Guerrilla groups conducted raids and attacks from neighbouring countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria into Israel.
- **International Attention:** Palestinian guerrilla movements sought to internationalize the Palestinian issue, often using tactics like hijacking and terrorism to draw attention.
- **Arab State Support:** Many Palestinian factions received support from Arab nations, particularly Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, which provided funding, weapons, and safe havens for their operations.

2.6.2 Results of Palestinian Guerrilla Movements

- **Increased Palestinian Nationalism:** The guerrilla movements helped foster a sense of Palestinian unity and national identity, particularly among refugees and displaced Palestinians.
- **International Awareness:** Palestinian guerrilla tactics, including hijackings and attacks on Israeli targets, brought global attention to the Palestinian cause.
- **PLO's Rise to Prominence:** Under Arafat's leadership, the PLO emerged as the primary representative of the Palestinian people and a key player in peace negotiations.
- **Strengthened Israeli Security:** Israel responded to Palestinian guerrilla tactics with heavy military retaliation, leading to tighter security measures and the occupation of Palestinian territories.
- **Shift to Political Solutions:** The persistent violence and political pressure led to shifts towards diplomacy, culminating in agreements like the Oslo Accords in 1993, where the PLO recognized Israel and sought a two-state solution.

2.7 Prelude to the Sixty Day War

The Six-Day War of 1967 was preceded by tense relations between Israel and the Arabs, more particularly Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The war itself started in May 1967 when Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser mobilized Egyptian forces in the Sinai Peninsula and ordered the withdrawal of United Nations peacekeeping forces stationed there since the 1956 Suez Crisis. He also ordered the closure of the Straits of Tiran, thereby blocking Israeli shipping routes, which Israel considered a cause for war.

Meanwhile, other than the Egyptians, Syria was busy conducting small-scale military operations along the Israeli-Syrian border, and Jordan had entered into a military alliance with Egypt, generating fears that a broader Arab-Israeli conflict was just around the corner. The Arab states acknowledged in public their support for Egypt, and Nasser's militant rhetoric appealed to pan-Arab sentiments promising to annihilate Israel and liberate Palestine.

Israel, fearing encirclement with the imminent threat of impending Arab attack, undertook pre-emptive operations. On June 5, 1967, an air strike was launched by Israel against Egyptian airfields, destroying Egyptian air force capabilities and brings thus the beginning of Six-Day War. War quickly spread against Jordan and Syria, and by June 10, 1967, Israel achieved a decisive victory and captured large territories including West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights.

2.8 Sixty Day War (1967)

The Six Day War of June 5-10, 1967, was arguably the most significant war between Israel and the coalition of Arab countries that included Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. For some months, relations had turned hostile because of the mobilization of troop power by the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in the Sinai Peninsula, followed by a blockade of the crucial Strait of Tiran for Israeli shipping. Arrested by the threat of the Arabs and their encirclement, Israel took the chance to make a pre-emptive strike. The result was that the whole campaign of the war ended in a robust and total victory within only a matter of six days, during which Israel proceeded to seize large sections of territory that included the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, as well as the Golan Heights-all regions that changed and disturbed forever the political landscape in the area.

2.8.1 Reasons for the Six Day War

The Six Day War is the last step in the range of increasing political and military tension in Middle East which aroused as a result of the deep-rooted conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbours mainly Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

- **Nasser's Rhetoric and Actions:** The major impetus of the war was the ascendancy of *Gamal Abdel Nasser, the President of Egypt*, who had risen to prominence as a chief actor among the Arab nationals. In 1967, Nasser's pronouncements called for the annihilation of Israel, creating yet another fracture in Israel-Arab relations. May 22, 1967, Nasser ordered the blockade of the Straits of Tiran, which was an important waterway for Israeli navigation, including the port of Eilat. Earlier, Israel had stated that any blockade of the Straits would be regarded as an act of war. In blocking the Straits, Nasser was widely perceived as declaring his readiness for military confrontation with Israel.
- **The Military Alliances and Mobilization:** With all these moves, Arab nations began to ally against Israel. *King Hussein of Jordan* signed a defence pact with Egypt for mutual defence in the event of aggression against Israel. Syria, a strong opponent of Israel, also took part in minor skirmishes along the Golan Heights against Israel while supporting Egypt openly. Nasser was transferring forces into the Sinai Peninsula, moving them toward Israel's border. This only increased the feeling of encirclement and pressure on Israel. The Arab League was soon calling for a united front against Israel, and preparations for war were underway in many Arab states.
- **Israeli Intelligence and Pre-emptive Strike:** The Israeli government was aware that the threat was growing, and an external multi-front war loomed before its leaders, which prompted action. Israeli intelligence had reported that on that date, Egypt and its allies were preparing for an immediate attack. The military build-up at Israel's borders, coupled with the utterances from the Arabs, made it clear to the Israeli leaders that a war was forthcoming. Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and Defence Minister Moshe Dayan of Israel decided that they would strike first. On June 5, 1967, Israel had launched Operation Focus, a sudden aerial attack on the Egyptian Air Force, which had succeeded in destroying it on the ground. This made the Egyptian air force almost totally ineffective and cemented air superiority for Israel for the rest of the war.
- **Jordan and Syria's Involvement:** Immediately after the initial Israeli strike on Egypt, Jordan entered the war believing the Egyptians would win and struck at the Israeli-held city of Jerusalem. However, Jordan was poorly prepared and suffered heavy losses. Despite very early border clashes with Israel, Syria commenced bombardments from the Golan Heights, responding in a fierce manner of retribution. The swiftness of Israeli victories on both fronts took the Arab world by surprise and further deteriorated their already ineffective war capabilities.
- **The War's Speed and Scope:** What had been intended by Israel as a pre-emptive strike to nullify the hazards now became full-scale war at astonishing speed? By the end of the second day of fighting, Israel had assumed total dominance in the air and land. East Jerusalem and a sizeable part of the West Bank from Jordan were under Israeli control by June 7, the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula were also seized from Egypt by June 10, while the Golan Heights were taken from Syria. Officially, the war raged on for 20-day-long.

2.8.2 Courses

The Six-Day War of 1967 arose against a background of ever-increasing tension between the Israelis and the Arabs, especially the Egyptians, Jordanians, and Syrians. Egyptian President Nasser took actions that triggered Israel's war views—these included the closure of the Straits of Tiran and the massing of Egyptian troops in the Sinai Peninsula. Arab military alliances—the embattled Egypt, Jordan, and Syria ranged against Israel—heightened fears of a coordinated Arab attack.

Imagining itself encircled and threatened, Israel pre-emptively struck. On June 5, 1967, Operation Focus was commenced, during which the proverbial first blow sent the surprise attack upon the Egyptian air force. The war spread like wildfire: Israel seized the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. Being outnumbered, the swift victory was due to Israeli superior tactics, intelligence, and air superiority, all concluding the war in a decisive manner within six days.

2.8.3 Aftermath of the Six-Day War

The **Six-Day War** had profound and lasting consequences for the Middle East, both in terms of territorial changes and political developments.

- **Territorial Expansion for Israel:** Israel emerged from the war with its gains in territory—spanning the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights. Conquering Jerusalem held special meaning for the Israelis in that it became a united city with Jerusalem as its capital—though this was not recognized by the world at large. Holding on to these conquered territories disturbed the geopolitical scenery thereby placing immediate challenges upon both Israel and the Arab world in the long run.
- **Palestinian Displacement:** The war displaced thousands of Palestinian Arabs, many of whom fled or were expelled from the new occupied territories. The Palestinian refugee issue, one in and of itself a major concern since the 1948 war, was heightened by this war. While Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were under direct Israeli control, the PLO gained ground throughout the Jordan with its operations as a movement of resistance against Israeli occupation.
- **International Diplomacy and the United Nations' Role:** The war made a catalyst for the intensification of international diplomatic efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict. The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 242 in November 1967, calling for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict and the recognition of the right of all states in the area, including Israel, to exist in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. This resolution prepared the stage for negotiations for subsequent peace settlements without settling the issues at hand.
- **Political Change in the Arab World:** The Arab states, especially Egypt that ultimately bore the brunt of the defeat in the war, were deeply humiliated. The stature of Nasser had been weakened, forcing him to tender his resignation temporarily; however, he was reinstated. The Arab world was thus left with a wide divergence over how to respond to Israel and the occupation of Palestinian territories, with some countries threatening armed struggle and others such as Jordan advocating negotiation.
- **The Road to Further Conflict:** The Six-Day War had been a cease-hostilities in its own right; not that but it had paved the way for conflict. The occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel had nurtured continuous guerrilla resistance and radical activities by the PLO. The Six-Day War had aggravated the Arab-Israeli conflict, causing more

confrontations especially the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The shift of territories and the Palestinian issue remained the central issues of disruption in the Middle East for decades to follow.

Chapter 3: The Yom Kippur War, the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Intifada (1980s–2000s)

Phase 7: The Yom Kippur War (1973), the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Intifada (1980s–1990s) and the Al-Aqsa Intifada and Violence (2000)

3.1 The Yom Kippur War (1973)

The Yom Kippur War is a most known term among all for the October War. It is a conflict between Israel and the co Arab states, mainly Egypt and Syria, fought between October 6 and 25, 1973. The October war would start on the day of Yom Kippur, that is, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. But what surprises the people on these holy days is the Egyptian and Syrian surprise attack on Israel. This was probably that Arab terrorists thought that losing the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights in 1967 would make them reclaim those lands. The war brought severe casualties on both sides but highly changed the political scene in the Middle East.

3.1.1 Causes of the Yom Kippur War

The primary cause of this war was the continuation of problems left unresolved after the Six-Day War of 1967, when Israel occupied large territories, including the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank. For all the military success, the Israeli occupation of those territories worsened the already tense relations with Arab neighbours, particularly Egypt and Syria, which sought to return to their territory after the war.

- **Territorial Losses and Arab Humiliation:**

The 1967 defeat left Egypt and Syria feeling humiliated, with both countries strategically losing territories. Egypt lost the Sinai Peninsula, including the oil fields; Syria lost the Golan Heights. The loss of the territories gave rise to lasting political and economic consequences for both countries, wherein Arab leaders saw the territories as being indispensable for the restoration of national pride and sovereignty. No wonder various diplomatic forays were made, as no return of the territories by Israel only inflamed the Arab world.

- **To Avenge Egypt or Recover Its Territories:**

Anwar Sadat became President of Egypt in 1970, quickly discovering that diplomacy had failed in achieving its objectives. Sadat believed that to recover the Sinai, military action was vital. He aimed at achieving a better international image for Egypt, regaining Arab credibility after 1967's great humiliation. Recovering the Sinai Peninsula and asserting Egypt's leadership within the Arab world remained Sadat's focus. He also hoped that a military success would put pressure on Israel to join negotiations.

- **Syria's Interest in the Golan Heights:**

Equally important for Syria was the recovery of the Golan Heights. The region was of strategic importance since it overlooked northern Israel; losing it in 1967 hurt Syrian prestige severely. Also, for Hafez al-Assad, the Syrian president, reclaiming the Golan Heights would serve both national interests for Syria and strengthen his standing within the Arab world. Therefore, Syria planned the attack in coordination with Egypt to regain the territory lost in 1967.

- **Is turning its complacency upside-down and its intelligence failure?:**

Israel was taken by surprise despite having quite an excellent military reputation. It had let its guard down after the Six-Day War, believing any attack from Egypt and Syria was practically impossible. The Israeli intelligence, mainly 'Mossad,' failed to foresee the wide scale of the attack. This was public information for the Arab states to know, which is why they chose Yom Kippur, one of Israel's most important days in the year, to attack.

- **Superpower Involvement and the Cold War Context:**

The Cold War context equally played a role in the war. The United States was a stalwart ally of Israel, while the Soviet Union lent its support to the Arab states, especially Egypt and Syria. Both superpowers intervened indirectly: the United States was shoring up its military aid for Israel during the war, and the Soviet Union propped up the Arab coalition. The rivalry between the superpowers severely muddled the picture of the conflict and formulated the strategies of the Arab states.

3.1.2 Courses

In fact, during the years leading up to 1973, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was interested in obtaining the return of the Sinai Peninsula and saving face for Egypt, while the Syrian President Hafez al-Assad aimed at getting the place in the Golan Heights. Sadat thought that military action against Israel would push them towards peace negotiations and toward achieving a better bargaining position. Egypt and Syria coordinated operations and launched a surprise attack on Yom Kippur, the holiest Jewish holiday, when Israeli forces were least prepared. Despite early setbacks in intelligence, Israel was called into action and struck back very quickly. The war itself saw heavy fighting in which there were losses for both sides. After initial Arab success, the Israeli forces beat back the attackers and pushed their battle into Egyptian and Syrian territory. Political and strategic consequences from the war were profound, including oil embargoes and a shift toward peace talks, although the army of Israel did manage to make some recovery. The war did indeed create the conditions for diplomatic effort, which would later lead to the Camp David Accords in 1978 and, ultimately, a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

3.1.3 Aftermath of the Yom Kippur War

The Yom Kippur War had significant military, political, and diplomatic consequences, reshaping the Middle East and paving the way for future peace negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

- **Military Stalemate and Heavy Losses:** The war had started out favourably for the Arabs, who had been alarmingly successful in the initial days of the conflict: Egypt and Syria made substantial headway against Israeli forces. However, those forces quickly regrouped, and after an intense, pitched battle, were able to throw back the attacks and even push

into Egyptian and Syrian territory. The cost in casualty has been very heavy for both sides. The Over 20,000 Arab soldiers, and 2,500 Israelis were dead, not to mention the thousands of other soldiers who were left with deep wounds.

- **Diplomatic Change: The Oil Embargo:** The war transformed international diplomacy even as Israel militarily recovered. Led by Saudi Arabia, the Arab oil-producing countries enforced an oil embargo against the Western countries. This action affected profoundly the world oil markets and increased pressure on the United States to engage itself actively in seeking peace. It thus marked the beginning of a change in the global balance in favour of the Arab oil producers.
- **Sadat's Peace Initiative:** President Anwar Sadat of Egypt emerged as the most crucial Arab figure in seeking peace in the post-war period. He acknowledged that military action alone could not realize Egypt's objectives but that diplomacy would be necessary. Sadat's bold act of visiting Jerusalem in 1977 to address the Israeli Knesset culminated in the Camp David Accords of 1978 when Israel and Egypt signed a peace agreement. Egypt thus became the first Arab nation to officially recognize Israel, and Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula to pave the historical move toward peace in the region.
- **Syria's Continuity of Hostility:** For Syria, the war brought no immediate territorial gains despite its military participation, for it came out without a clear victory. The Golan Heights still lie under Israeli control, and Syria's focus mainly lies in reclaiming that region. The future of Syria's participation in any peace talks will largely focus on Syria's failure to recover the Golan Heights, thus contributing to on-going tensions in the region.
- **Long-Term Effect for the Middle East:** The war made it clear that military might be able to not overpower a yield for peace, forcing an up scaling of diplomatic interaction within the region. It also turned out to be an exposure of Israel, previously seen as invulnerable, as much as it called for revised consideration by both the Arab states and Israel of their strategies. This war would be a precursor to later peace agreements such as the Oslo Accord and other attempts at Israeli-Palestinian resolution, but at the same time solidified the shrinking divides and the indeterminate status of the Middle East.

3.2 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

The PLO was founded in 1964 with the aim of establishing an independent Palestinian state. It was originally a federation of various Palestinian groups, both political and military, with the mission being to represent the Palestinian people in their struggle against the Israeli occupation. Under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, the PLO emerged to become the foremost voice of Palestinian nationalism. During the 1960s and 1970s, the PLO did operate militarily, though it also sought to gain diplomatic recognition. It achieved both observer status at the United Nations and official recognition as representative of the Palestinian people.

3.2.1 Structure of the PLO

The PLO consists of several institutions, and each of these institutions has a different responsibility within the organization. These include:

- **Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee is the highest PLO decision-making authority, setting policy and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the organization. The chairman of the committee is typically the most influential PLO figure, while the committee is made up of representatives of various Palestinian factions, political parties, and groups.
- **Palestinian National Council (PNC):** Parliamentary in nature, the PNC is the legislative body within the PLO. It comprises members from different Palestinian factions, as well as representatives from Palestinian communities abroad. The main role of the council is to pass policies, laws, and resolutions on major issues, and it elects the Executive Committee.
- **The Various Factions and Political Groups:**

The PLO is a coalition of the various Palestinian political and militant groups, some of the most important being:

- ❖ **Fatah:** The dominant faction within the PLO, founded by Yasser Arafat, promotes a secular and nationalist approach toward Palestinian liberation.
- ❖ **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP):** A Marxist-Leninist faction initially led by *George Habash* that espoused the armed struggle.
- ❖ **Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP):** A left-wing faction philosophically consistent with the PFLP.
- ❖ **Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA)** and some other smaller outfits.
- **Chairmanship:** Chairman of the PLO is the highest-ranking office in its leadership; responsible to represent the organization in diplomatic forums and in relations with other countries and international organizations. Yasser Arafat held the chairmanship for many years until his demise when Mahmoud Abbas succeeded him.
- **Palestinian Authority (PA):** The Palestinian Authority is a derivation of the PLO, constituted during the 1990s under the Oslo Accords. The PA administers Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza and is the organization representing the people of Palestine in the regions under its control. Though the PA and the PLO are two different entities, they are tightly linked, with the PA being the executive arm of the PLO in the Palestinian territories.

3.2.2 Key Features of the PLO

- **National Liberation Goal:** The primary feature of the PLO is liberation of Palestine and establishment of an independent Palestinian state, which has been pursued through diplomatic efforts as well as armed struggle; over time, its strategies included negotiations together with military activities, especially after the 1990s Oslo Accords.
- **Unified Palestinian Representation:** Because PLO became the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people recognized by the United Nations and all international organizations, it sought to bring together all Palestinian factions with the Palestinian diaspora under one leadership, consolidating political power and providing a common forum for Palestinians to express their national aspirations.

- **Armed Resistance:** Historically, the central strategy of the PLO has been armed resistance, using various groups from its inception to the present having committed violence against Israeli civilians and military targets. At that time, for the PLO's wing armed, the Al-Qassam Brigades, and other groups operations were conducted during the years of the 1970s and the 1980s. Over time, however, especially under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, the PLO began to shift its focus toward political negotiations and diplomacy.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** The PLO transformed itself into a liberated entity from all armed struggle because it sought an international audience or support for the Palestinian cause which led many countries to recognize this cause along with the United Nations in 1974. The PLO's diplomatic efforts bore fruits through the signing of the Oslo Accords (1993) and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority which acknowledged Israel's right to exist as a process towards negotiation between both countries towards a two-state solution.
- **Internal Struggles and Factions:** In fact, PLO was not a diverse coalesces into one; it presented itself into a few extant factions with often different ideologies on forms of resistance. Such a case sometimes crept within the PLO, especially between more militant factions such as Fatah and PFLP, and other Palestinian political movements. Tensions often occurred over the years because it had to balance these competing visions.
- **International Recognition:** Over time, the PLO gained international recognition as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; in fact, it was recognized in 1974 by the Arab League as a representative of all Palestinians and an observer status was given to it by the United Nations in 1975, which significantly boosted the diplomatic standing and legitimacy of the PLO on the global scene.
- **Oslo Accords and Shift to Diplomacy:** The PLO auspiciously carried the day for itself on this auspicious turn towards a more diplomatic exercise. Therefore, action by the accords led to the formation of the Palestinian Authority as well as the recognition of Israel by the PLO in a manner that changed the position of not recognizing its existence within their folds. In fact, however, some elements did tail off, arguing that it made too many concessions.
- **Function in Palestinian Politics:** The PLO still exerts considerable influence on Palestinian politics, but has been put to the test by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Even with the multiple splits and rival factions, it endures as an icon of Palestinian unity and struggle for an independent state; a legacy that continues to shape the Palestinians' aspirations as well as their diplomatic relations with the rest of the world.

3.3 The First Intifada (1987–1993)

The First Intifada (1987–1993) was an important Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and will be remembered, along with the crime of the century, as a watershed moment in the life of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Arabic word "intifada" means "shaking off," symbolizing the Palestinian collective resistance to Israeli occupation. The uprising began in December 1987 amidst multiple incidents, including the killing of four Palestinians by an Israeli truck in the Gaza Strip, which triggered widespread protests and violence.

3.3.1 Origins and Causes

The First Intifada arose from long-standing grievances held by the Palestinians, who had lived under Israeli occupation since the 1967 Six-Day War. Increasingly discontent in their own right were the highhandedness of the Israeli military, the expanding of Israeli settlements over Palestinian land, and the growing economic hardship of the Palestinian people. Particularly dire were the conditions in Gaza, with massive unemployment, overcrowded housing, and deprivation of basic services. Dissatisfaction was also rising toward the Palestinian leadership, which had become fragmented and ineffective in trying to cater to the people's needs. The first indications of the uprising appeared in December 1987 after a traffic accident in Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza set off clashes between local Palestinians and Israeli soldiers. Protest demonstrations followed, building up to civil disobedience, strikes, and clashes with Israeli military forces. The Palestinian protests were characterized largely by stone-throwing, while the Israeli forces were responding with rubber bullets, live ammunition, and mass arrests.

3.3.2 Characteristics of Intifada

The First Intifada was characterized by its popular nature, with large segments of the Palestinian population participating—men, women, and children. While previous uprisings had been led by armed factions or political leadership, the First Intifada was an action initiated by grassroots activism. Thus it became a generalized movement with active involvement from various sectors of Palestinian society. Another feature was its nonviolent resistance: strikes, boycotts of Israeli goods, and refusing to cooperate with Israeli institutions and replacing their role with one based on alternative Palestinian institutions.

Though absent from Palestine, the emergence of the PLO added another dimension to the Intifada with its claim to centrality in the representation of the Palestinian cause. Although Israel had kept the PLO aside in the previous years, during the First Intifada, it returned to the scene, with Arafat supporting protests all the way from his exile in Tunisia. At the same time, Islamic groups such as Hamas gained ground as important actors, offering an alternative to the more secular leadership embodied by the PLO.

3.3.3 Clashes with Violence and Israeli Reaction

And so, protest actions and acts of civil disobedience swept across the West Bank and Gaza. Where upon Israeli forces had to respond. These were met with tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition being used against demonstrators. The use of excessive force against unarmed protesters attracted severe international condemnation and, in turn, intensified the uprising. Nevertheless, Palestinian resistance had to carry on for several years, incurring high casualties on both sides.

The Palestinian death toll in the First Intifada was considerable, exceeding 1,000 Palestinians slain and many others being injured. On the Israeli side, approximately 160 fatalities have been tallied, most being soldiers or settlers. This violence, together with mounting international pressure for Israel, began to change the dynamics of the conflict.

3.3.4 International Ramification and the Oslo Accords

This First Intifada did not let anyone out of feeling the pinch; instead, the world stirred up pressure on Israel to end forcefully the violence by finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Then in 1991, the Madrid Conference was held, and for the first time in

many years, Israel would discuss matters concerning peace settlement with Arab countries. This paved the way for secret negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian representatives. Oslo Accords marked the official ratification in 1993 of an understanding between the PLO and Israel after years of informal talks between the two parties. The Oslo Accords itself rather than the PLO began to recognize Israel. Israel, on its part, recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Oslo Accords also paved the way for establishing the Palestinian Authority (PA) as well as a certain degree of self-rule for Palestinians over some territories in the West Bank and Gaza, even though the more significant issues remained unresolved like settlements, Jerusalem, and refugees.

3.3.5 Legacy and Importance

On their part, they held it as constituting a watershed moment for breakthrough in conflict resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. If anything, it transformed world views of the conflict: Palestinians became more and more put at the centre stage of world perception as a people with legitimate political aspirations. It also clarified that military occupation could never be a durable long-term solution, setting the stage for the Oslo Accords, which, in spite of their numerous failings, opened the way for future negotiations. Nevertheless, the end of the first Intifada did not remedy the basic questions and problems of the conflict, and that disillusioned in the following years gave birth to what will be referred to as the second intifada (2000-2005) and all the attendant juxtapositions that occurred in the years that followed. The influence of the first intifada lives with Palestinians and their continued resistance in the now on-going process towards realizing self-determination.

3.4 The Al-Aqsa Intifada and Violence (2000)

The Al-Aqsa Intifada (or Second Intifada, as it is sometimes called) can be defined as the major Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, beginning in September 2000 and continuing numerous events until almost 2005. It was characterized by a great deal of violence, political sweating, and lots of human suffering on both sides. It is termed "Al-Aqsa Intifada," after the great mosque in Jerusalem, where differences caused a lot of tension for Muslims and aroused the public protest. Below is a detailed description of the causes, key events, impacts, and wider contexts of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, intending to provide total comprehension to readers regarding this very difficult and unfortunate product of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

3.4.1 Historical Context

The understanding of Al-Aqsa Intifada should be based around the larger framework of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, since its origins lay in conflicting national aspirations over the same stretch of land. The history could be rewritten within the context of the rise of Zionism and also Palestinian nationalism towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, culminating into the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the dislocation of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, an event Palestinians refer to as *Nakba* (catastrophe).

The First Intifada (1987-1993) was a popular uprising of the Palestinian people against Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This uprising led to the signing of the Oslo Accords (1993-1995), a series of pacts between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which were meant to lead both exchange and co-operation between the two countries. These agreements resulted in the Palestinian Authority (PA), which has limited self-governance in some parts of the occupied territories. But by 2000, the entire exercise was stalling; grievance was accumulating.

3.4.2 Several factors contributed to the outbreak of the Second Intifada:

- **Failure of the Camp David Summit (July 2000):** The negotiations mediated by U.S. President Bill Clinton between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PLO leader Yasser Arafat fell short without an agreement. The summit was meant to resolve all final-status issues relating to borders, Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements. Palestinians thought that Barak's offer was too little, especially regarding Jerusalem and the right of return for refugees, whereas Israelis thought Arafat turned down an otherwise generous offer. The failure has further deepened mutual distrust.
- **Ariel Sharon's Visit to the Temple Mount (September 28, 2000):** The visit by Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon, with a large security entourage, to the Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif) in Jerusalem, where the Al-Aqsa Mosque is located, has been held to have sparked the first Intifada. Sharon came here, knowing that it is sacred to Jews as well as Muslims, and his coming here is considered a direct provocation to Palestinians to hint at Israeli control over the site. While Sharon claimed that he was not going to incite violence, his visit was indeed interpreted as insensitivity for the tension within the political atmosphere, at that moment.
- **Economic and Social Grievances:** By the year 2000, many Palestinians had become alienated from the Oslo Accords. Most had not seen any real economic benefits accruing from them, especially given the high unemployment and poverty in the West Bank and in Gaza. Israeli settlements continued to expand, and movement was hampered, with much of daily lives taken up negotiating checkpoints and barriers. These patrolled causes of grievance toward Israel - and, to some extent, the Palestinian Authority, which some Palestinians see as corrupt or ineffective.
- **Militarization and Radicalization:** The Second Intifada was marked with more arms as compared to the First Intifada, which was mainly seen in stone-throwing and civil disobedience. There was a presence of arms among various Palestinian factions including *Fatah's Tanzim*, *Hamas*, and *Islamic Jihad*, while some of these groups resorted into far more violence, such as suicide bombings. Meanwhile, the Israeli military was better equipped and prepared to respond with force to any disturbances as compared to the 1980s.

3.4.3 Violence Breaks Out

On *September 29, 2000*, one day after Sharon's visit, protests broke out in East Jerusalem near the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israeli police used teargas and live ammunitions Shoving up the crowd-Riot resulted in the loss of lives for several Palestinians and left hundreds injured. The violence quickly spread to other parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, marking the birth of the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

The early weeks were characterized by wide-scale Palestinian demonstrations often involving stone-throwing and Molotov cocktails being fired at heavy-handed Israeli responses that consisted of live fire, rubber-coated bullets, and teargas. October 2000

already saw in its death toll a number of dozens; Palestinians suffering an exceptionally higher death toll because the military asymmetry was skewed heavily in favour of Israel.

A few of the most iconic and miserable scenes of this period: *September 30, 2000; 12-year-old Muhammad al-Durrah was killed in Gaza*, which was involved in a clash between Palestinian gunmen and Israeli troops. Footage of Muhammad and his father, Jamal, huddled behind a concrete barrel as bullets flew was sensationally broadcast around the world. This awful image became a powerful symbol of Palestinian suffering. Although the death circumstances of Muhammad remain disputed, the powerful image galvanized Palestinian anger and moved many internationally to the cause.

3.4.4 Escalation and Types of Violence

The Al-Aqsa Intifada then speedily morphed into a volatility cycle that lasted in excess of years. Unlike the first intifada, which relied mainly on public uproar, the second one did have both organized militant attack and spontaneous protests. Below were some of the more vociferous patterns of violence among others:

3.4.4.1 Palestinians Covered the Following Steps:

- **Suicide Bombings:** Suicide attacks were, and in some instances even today still continues to be, one of the varieties of actions carried out by groups such as Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and at times the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (linked with Fatah) in order to murder Israeli civilians. Among the major attacks are the *Dolphinarium discotheque bombing in Tel Aviv (June 2001, 21 killed)*, the *Sbarro pizzeria attack in Jerusalem (August 2001, 15 killed)* and the *Passover massacre in a hotel in Netanya (March 2002, 30 killed)*. These attacks went on to kill hundreds of Israelis, mostly civilians, and spread fear all around.
- **Armed Attacks:** Armed clashes of Palestinian militants targeted Israeli soldiers, settlers, and civilians with drive-by shootings, ambushes, and raids, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza.
- **Protests and Clashes:** Large-scale protests near checkpoints resulting in deadly clashes with Israeli forces.

3.4.4.2 Israeli Responses:

- **Military Operations:** Large military operations were carried out in order to suppress the uprising and to decapitate militant leaderships. The largest operation was "*Operation Defensive Shield*" (*March-April 2002*) and included incursions into West Bank cities like Jenin, Nablus, and Ramallah. The Jenin refugee camp became a focal point of the international public discussion and controversy, given the extent of destruction and civilian casualties. In the Palestinians' early account of events, the so-called "Jenin massacre" was denied by the subsequent Israeli investigation, but not before it had fed widespread international outrage.
- **Targeted Killings:** Using aerial bombardment and ground forces, Israel assassinated high-profile militant leaders, including *Hamas's Ahmed Yassin (March 2004)* and *Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi (April 2004)*. Such attacks usually resulted in civilian casualties and contributed greatly to Palestinian anger.
- **Checkpoints and Closures:** For the sake of security, Israel increased restrictions on Palestinian movement, expanding checkpoints and building the *West Bank separation barrier (begun in 2002)*. While Israel insisted that the barrier was necessary for protection from attacks, Palestinians claimed that it amounted to land grabbing because of its encroachment upon the West Bank territory and its isolation of communities.
- **Siege of Arafat's Compound:** In 2002, Israeli soldiers besieged Arafat's headquarter in Ramallah for months and confined him to the compound. He was accused by Israel as being the mastermind behind the violence, a claim Arafat vehemently denied.

Casualty Toll: In 2005, thousands died during the period of the Intifada. Estimates vary: approximately 3,000-4,000 Palestinians and 1,000-1,200 Israelis were killed. Palestinian casualties were higher because, given the superior firepower of the Israeli forces, many of their civilians died. Israeli civilian deaths were caused mainly as a result of suicide bombings and attacks in public areas. On the flip side, profound trauma struck both sides, with thousands hurt and vast devastation of infrastructure, mostly in Palestinian areas.

3.4.5 Political and Social Impact

The consequences of the Al-Aqsa Intifada were far-reaching for both Palestinians and Israelis, being instrumental in transforming their societies and the evolution of the conflict.

3.4.5.1 Palestinian Society:

- **Fragmentation and Radicalization:** The Intifada deepened fissures within Palestinian society. Fatah first supported the Intifada but soon groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad began to gain popularity by resorting to militant resistance. This tendency enhanced Islamist groups' political clout at the expense of the PLO.
- **Economic Collapse:** The violence crippled the economy of the Palestinians. Israeli closures and checkpoints interfered with trade and labour, unemployment rose, and poverty grew. The destruction of infrastructure, so vital for national life and commerce, aggravated the crisis.
- **Leadership Crisis:** The leadership of Arafat was rumoured to be in crisis from both outside and within. Palestinians criticized him, while Israel and the U.S. accused him of being complicit in terrorism. His death in November 2004 marked a momentous occasion when the PA president's mantle was passed on to Mahmoud Abbas.

3.4.5.2 Israeli Society:

- **Concern and Polarization:** The wave of suicide bombings traumatized Israelis, instilling paranoia and propelling them towards right-wing politics. Support for the peace process plummeted, many became sceptical of Palestinian intentions.

- **Political Shifts:** Elected prime minister in 2001, Ariel Sharon took a hard-line stance against the Intifada but shocked many by leading the 2005 unilateral disengagement from Gaza, evacuating all settlements, and removing all troops. Part of this was to reduce Israel's exposure to violence and change the dynamics of the conflict.
- **Separation Barrier:** The barrier built in the West Bank reduced suicide attacks but became a symbol of division and a point of international contention, declared illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2004.

3.4.6 International Involvement

The international community faced difficulties in mediating the conflict. The United States, under *President George W. Bush*, put forward the "*Roadmap for Peace*" in 2003, a plan that outlined steps towards a two-state solution, but foundered amidst violence that engulfed the area. The *Quartet (the U.S., the EU, the UN, and Russia)* was founded to coordinate peace efforts but found it facing similar challenges.

The Intifada generated global interest in the condition of the Palestinian people, certainly through the imagery of their suffering, but it also ignited debates on what constitutes terrorism and Israel's right to defend itself. The European countries were more inclined to criticize Israeli actions while the U.S. remained the strongest ally.

3.4.7 Decline and Aftermath

The Intifada began to decline in 2004-2005, and several factors contributed to this decline:

- **Exhaustion and Losses:** Both sides had suffered casualties from the four years of violence with enormous human and economic costs.
- **Reforms by the Palestinians:** Mahmoud Abbas, the elected president of the PA in 2005, started to take a more conciliatory course, advocating for negotiations instead of violence.
- **Israeli Measures:** The separation barrier and targeted killings had curtailed the number of attacks against Israeli targets, while the Gaza disengagement under Sharon's aegis began to divert attention from the Intifada.
- **Internal Palestinian Dynamics:** Ceasefires were part of the processes, and the February 2005 Sharm el-Sheikh summit between Sharon and Abbas helped de-escalate tensions.

The end of the Intifada is frequently assigned to 2005, although episodes of violence persisted after that date. The legacy it left back most strongly helped in shaping the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

- **Mistrust withered:** Violence cast doubts on all trust in the peace process; willingness to cooperate and coexist was in question by both parties.
- **Break of Hamas:** Hamas became much more popular during the Intifada and won the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections, taking over Gaza in 2007; thus, the Palestinians' governance was split.
- **Moves toward Unilateralism:** Israel's disengagement from Gaza may thus be viewed as a signal of a transition away from negotiations and towards unilateral actions, a trend reinforced in the years following.
- **Humanitarian Impact:** The Intifada caused deep scars; thousands of families on both sides mourn losses, while millions of Palestinians continue to experience deprivation and economic hardships.

Chapter 4: The Camp David Accord, the Oslo Accords & Peace Process

4.1 The Camp David Accords (1978–1979) – A Turning Point in the Middle-East

The accords were based on a successful speech by the American president at his Camp David retreat during 1978-1979; they came to be called Camp David Accords. It is following the expedition of Yom Kippur War, which took place in the year 1973, where both presidents recognize the futility of the legalities with regard to Egyptian-Israeli conflict. Between Sadat and Begin negotiated terms in clumsy fashion over 13 days in September 1978, with the mediation of Carter.

The accords' primary outcome was the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, which resulted in Egypt becoming the first Arab country to recognize Israel in return for the Sinai Peninsula. The accords also included broader frameworks related to Palestinian self-government in the territory later subject to Israeli occupation, namely the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but these provisions remained vague and unresolved.

4.1.1 Key Features:

- **Peace between Egypt and Israel:** Egypt became the first Arab nation to recognize Israel and established diplomatic ties.
- **Return of Sinai Peninsula:** Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula, which it had occupied since the 1967 Six-Day War.
- **Palestinian Autonomy:** A framework was established for Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza.
- **Normalization of Relations:** Egypt and Israel agreed to normalize diplomatic and economic relations.
- **U.S. Role as Mediator:** The U.S. played a central role in facilitating the negotiations and ensuring the agreement's success.

4.1.2 Impacts:

The Camp David Accords had lasting diplomatic, political, and social impacts:

- **First Arab-Israeli peace agreement.**
- **Egypt's regained territory** and the end of Israeli occupation in the Sinai.
- **Normalization of Egypt-Israel relations.**
- **Increased U.S. influence** in Middle East peace diplomacy.
- **Challenges for the Palestinian issue**, as the accords were seen as insufficient for Palestinian aspirations, leaving many issues unresolved and contributing to continued tensions in the region.

The Accords, however, set the groundwork for later peace talks, though the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a major unresolved issue.

4.1.3 Key leaders and their roles in Camp David Accord

The Camp David Accords (1978) were historical peace agreements between Egypt and Israel, high-jacked by the United States.

4.1.3.1 Anwar Sadat – President of Egypt

- He was the first Arab leader to recognize Israel officially.
- The fictional character was put forward by taking the bold initiative in the pathway of peace after years of fighting and the consequences of the Yom Kippur War (1973).
- He consented to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel in return for bringing back the Sinai Peninsula under Egypt's sovereignty.
- Took considerable political risks at home and in the Arab world.

4.1.3.2 Menachem Begin – Prime Minister of Israel

- Omit the Israeli forces from the areas of Sinai Peninsula.
- Free from sovereignty in Sinai and turns to peace with a nation.
- The peace with Egypt is recognized in ending hostility with the Arab world.
- Continued his hard approach on issues pertaining to the West Bank and Palestinian autonomy.

4.1.3.3 Jimmy Carter – President of the United States

- Mediator and facilitator in all talks.
- Takes the reins for the thirteen days of negotiation in Camp David, Maryland.
- Very much sophisticated in all the diplomatic efforts in bridging the very wide gap between Sadat and Begin.
- Key and prime in pushing the final draft agreement.

4.1.3.4 Result:

Signed into a peace treaty in '79 - this made Egypt the first Arab country to officially recognize Israel, in turn requiring Israel to hand back the Sinai Peninsula.

In 1978, Sadat and Begin were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, for their respective roles in the event.

4.2 Some Famous Views Regarding the Camp David Accords

1. Shimon Peres (Israeli Politician and Former Prime Minister)

“The Camp David Accords were a monumental turning point in the Middle East. For Israel, the peace agreement with Egypt was a major strategic victory, ending decades of hostility with the largest and most powerful Arab nation. Yet, it also revealed the complexities of peace in the region, as the accords did not resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continued to challenge the possibility of comprehensive peace.”

– From *The New Middle East* (1993)

2. Jimmy Carter (U.S. President and Mediator of the Accords)

“The Camp David Accords are a testament to the possibility of peace between enemies. They prove that with patience, diplomacy, and the commitment to mutual understanding, even the most entrenched conflicts can be resolved. This agreement, where Egypt and Israel established peace, was not just about political negotiation—it was about providing hope to a region marred by war for decades. The accords demonstrate that bold leadership can transform history.”

– From *The Blood of Abraham* (1985)

4.3 The Oslo Accords and the Promise of Peace (1993–2000)

The Oslo Accords include a series of agreements signed between 1993 and 1995 to resolve the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and thereby create the conditions for peace. They emerged from a transition in attitude of both parties produced partly by the force of the First Intifada (1987–1993) and the realization that military might could not solve the conflict, and partly by the changing international environment. The Oslo Accords were a major turning point in relations between Israel and the Palestinians and somehow generated hope for peace in the Middle East.

4.3.1 The Origins of the Oslo Process

The Oslo peace process began with an in-camera negotiation facilitated by Norwegian diplomats early in 1993. The negotiations took place in Norway among Israeli and Palestinian representatives in the absence of any other Arab state. The Israeli-Palestinian

conversation was spurred by mutual acknowledgment that the status quo—the continuing violence and Israeli occupation—was insupportable. The secret negotiations were undertaken by the PLO, represented by Yasser Arafat, and Israel, represented by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, in an effort to open a path toward peace and settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The breakthrough consisted of Israel agreeing to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and in turn, the PLO recognizing Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state. This recognition was considered a major departure from the previous position both sides held, namely, that they refused to acknowledge each other's legitimacy. Rather, the Oslo process was predicated on a phased approach of negotiations and confidence-building measures, culminating in the signing of a final peace agreement in five years.

4.3.2 Key Provisions of the Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords consisted of two major agreements: the **Oslo I Accord** (1993) and the **Oslo II Accord** (1995). The key provisions of the accords included:

- **Mutual Recognition:** The Oslo Accords marked the first time Israel and the PLO recognized each other. Israel acknowledged the **PLO** as the representative of the Palestinian people, while the PLO recognized **Israel's right to exist** and committed to renouncing terrorism.
- **Palestinian Self-Rule:** The accords provided for the creation of a **Palestinian Authority (PA)**, which would have authority over parts of the **West Bank** and **Gaza Strip**. This was a step toward Palestinian self-rule, with elections planned for the newly created **Palestinian Authority**.
- **Withdrawal of Israeli Forces:** Under the Oslo Accords, Israel agreed to gradually withdraw its military forces from parts of the **West Bank** and **Gaza Strip**, transferring control to the Palestinian Authority. The withdrawal process was designed to happen in phases, beginning with Gaza and certain parts of the West Bank.
- **Final Status Issues:** The accords outlined the need to address critical **final status issues**—such as the status of **Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements**—in later negotiations, aiming for a permanent peace agreement. These issues were left unresolved in the Oslo Accords and were to be the focus of future talks.
- **Security Cooperation:** The accords also established mechanisms for **security cooperation** between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, aimed at maintaining order and preventing violence. Both sides agreed to work together to combat terrorism and violence from extremist groups.

4.3.3 The Promise of Peace and Its Challenges

Initially, the Oslo Accords were perceived as a breakthrough. For the first time, both sides appeared to be on their way toward a solution that would enable Palestinians to govern themselves and coexist as peaceful neighbours with the Israelis. When Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin, and Bill Clinton, the President of the United States, shook hands in Washington, D.C., on the momentous day of September 13, 1993, history was made because this act signified the ushering in of a new dimension in Middle Eastern diplomacy.

In 1994, Arafat, Rabin, and Shimon Peres (Israel's foreign minister) received the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts. Amid hopes that peace was around the corner, the Oslo Accords were widely regarded by many as a major step forward in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The agreements were, however, stubborn to enforce. Both parties were faced with heavy resistance from extremist factions. In Israel, while the right-wing-apologists and the settler movement opposed the idea of Palestinian self-rule, it was considered that concessions would be suicidal in terms of Israeli security. In Palestine, armed radical factions like Hamas and Islamic Jihad issued proclamations of the Oslo Accords, accusing Arafat and the Palestinian Authority of too much compromise.

4.3.4 The Aftermath and the Collapse of the Peace Process

By the late 1990s, unravelling began to occur within the peace process. While there was constant violence from Palestinian militants, Israeli settlement expansion within the West Bank coupled with no progress in the final status issues such as the status of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees began eating away at trust between both sides. In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak attempted to broker an accord for peace with Arafat at Camp David Summit, but both sides could not reach a final agreement owing largely to their disagreement about Jerusalem and refugees. The failure of these talks, and the subsequent outbreak of an armed uprising that came to be known as the Second Intifada (2000-2005), marks the demise of the Oslo framework.

4.3.5 Legacy

The Oslo Accords were a historic attempt at peace, but they ultimately fell short of their purpose of achieving a lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although the accords resulted in the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and increased international visibility for the Palestinian cause, they failed to resolve the main core issues of the conflict. The accords demonstrated, at least in theory, that peace may be possible, while, in practice, they illuminated the huge challenges in making comprehensive final peace agreements away with an enormous trust deficit.

Even though never realizing their final goal, the Oslo Accords remain a cornerstone in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since they proved that an option for peace exists through negotiation and diplomacy, even in the context of one of the most intractable conflicts in modern history.

4.3.6 Key leaders and their roles in Oslo Accord

Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin were central players in the Oslo Accords, which were major steps toward finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

4.3.6.1 Yasser Arafat (Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization):

- Recognized Israel's right to exist. This was a historic shift for the PLO that had not hitherto acknowledged Israel.
- Renounced violence. Arafat committed to an end of terrorism and full support for a peaceful settlement by negotiation.
- Accepted detailed framework for self-rule: In essence, Arafat led the PLO in accepting some limited Palestinian self-governance under the Oslo Accords in parts of the West Bank and Gaza.
- Became president of the Palestinian Authority: He governed the new body after the agreement in charge of the Palestinian territories.

4.3.6.2 Yitzhak Rabin (Prime Minister of Israel):

- Recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. This was a big political and diplomatic step by Israel.
- Agreed to Palestinian self-government: This meant agreeing to an Israeli withdrawal from the parts of the West Bank and Gaza in phases, while the PA takes over.
- Supported a two-state vision: While Rabin was cautious, he was one of the few Israeli leaders believing in peaceful coexistence either with or without a Palestinian state.
- Signed the Oslo Accords: In 1993, Rabin signed the accords with Arafat and U.S. President Bill Clinton on the lawn of the White House.

4.3.6.3 The two earned:

Their cooperation set in motion the first direct talks, and mutual recognition took place between Israel and the PLO. For their shared endeavours toward peace, they were awarded the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize along with Shimon Peres.

4.4 Some famous views regarding the Oslo Accord

1. Rashid Khalidi – *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (1997)

Rashid Khalidi presents the Oslo Accords as a significant yet fundamentally flawed initiative. He criticizes the framework for failing to address core final-status issues such as Palestinian refugee rights, the status of Jerusalem, and Israeli settlement expansion. Khalidi argues that the accords fragmented Palestinian leadership and did not result in a viable sovereign state, thereby creating only an illusion of peace rather than substantive resolution.

Reference: Khalidi, R. (1997). *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*. Columbia University Press.

2. Robert Malley – *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (2000)

Robert Malley critiques the Oslo process as overly optimistic and structurally weak. He emphasizes the absence of enforceable guarantees for Palestinian sovereignty and highlights the neglect of critical realities such as Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank. According to Malley, the Oslo framework initially generated hope but ultimately deepened mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians.

Reference: Malley, R. (2000). *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After*. Viking.

3. Gideon Levy – *The Punishment of Gaza* (2006)

Gideon Levy offers a strongly critical perspective, arguing that the Oslo Accords disproportionately favored Israel. He contends that the process entrenched Israeli control over Palestinian territories while providing minimal tangible benefits to Palestinians. Levy underscores that continued settlement expansion during the Oslo period undermined the prospects of a two-state solution and perpetuated Palestinian socio-political and economic dependency.

Reference: Levy, G. (2006). *The Punishment of Gaza*. Verso.

CONCLUSIONS

The Arab-Israeli dispute, which to date has lasted more than a hundred years into the year 2000, is one of the most complicated and long-lasting conflicts that modern history has recorded. It has successively set national aspirations at odds with one another and their religious significance and at some point by geopolitical rivalries. From its origins in the late nineteenth century coinciding with the rise of Zionism and Arab nationalism, through the cataclysmic events of the 1948 War, the 1967 Six-Day War, and the hopeful yet faltering Oslo Accords, the conflict has taken a toll on the lives of millions and continues to cast its shadow upon the Middle East and beyond. In the year 2000, when the Al-Aqsa Intifada broke out, the vision of peace seemed further and further out of reach, highlighting the devastating complexities of the two peoples' claims to the land. Historically, the clash had its roots in Jewish aspirations for a homeland catalysed by the Balfour Declaration and waves of immigration collided against Palestinian resistance to displacement as epitomized in the *Nakba of 1948*, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were uprooted during the establishment of Israel. Subsequent wars, but mainly that of 1967, warped the shape of the area, where Israel controlled the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem; this intensified the grievance of Palestinians but secured Israeli strategic addenda. Each military victory, however, increased the human and political costs to Israel and solidified the cycle of resistance and repression. The First Intifada, spanning 1987 to 1993, displayed the will of the Palestinians, but they fell short when the years ended, culminating in the Camp David Summit's breakdown and ignited by Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount, revealing the fragility of negotiated peace. This historical arc illumines the complexity of the conflict: it is no

mere territorial dispute; it's a clash of narratives, identities, and traumas. To Israelis, the conflict is existential in a hostile environment rooted in persecution throughout history and in the shadow of the Holocaust. For Palestinians, it represents dispossession, occupation, and failure to realize self-determination. Both sides have experienced mass casualties—the deaths of many, their homes, and their faith in each other losing over the course of a century, with latter addend external powers, from British colonial rulers to American mediators, fanning the flames of tensions by their inconsistent policies. Not only does this failure show the stubbornness of the local situation in 2000 but also the limitations of international diplomacy to resolve deep-rooted conflicts. But the tale up to the year 2000 does not seem altogether bleak. These moments—like Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, the Oslo handshake between Rabin and Arafat—suggest the possibility of reconciliation, however evanescent. They are lessons from the story of the conflict that peace entails acknowledgment of mutual pain, addressing structural inequalities, and recognition of coexistence rather than domination. This was the direction taken as the shadow of the Second Intifada loomed, as the path forward called for much bolder leadership that would not shy away from the zero-sum mentality. It reminds us, in this reflection on that historical perspective, that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not a human tragedy, not something fated to be. The resolution cannot come about through erasure, but rather through learning-how-to-talk, render-justice, and practice compassion—and thus build future structures in which both people can live well. By 2000, the path to peace was littered with obstacles, yet history teaches us to seek understanding rather than division.

Keywords: Arab-Israeli Conflict; Zionism; Arab Nationalism; Balfour Declaration; Nakba; Arab-Israeli War of 1948; Six-Day War; West Bank; Gaza Strip; East Jerusalem; First Intifada; Camp David Summit; Ariel Sharon; Second Intifada; Anwar Sadat; Yitzhak Rabin; Yasser Arafat; Oslo Accords; The Holocaust; Self-Determination; Territorial Disputes; Refugee Crisis; Peace Process; Middle East Geopolitics

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