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Israel: A Settler Colonialist State.

The process of state-building of Israel analysed through Settler Colonialism Studies.

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Dedication

I dedicate this master dissertation to Giovanna the strongest woman I know, because you have never let me down and never will I. It is thanks to your guidance that I am here today.

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Keywords: Settler colonialism, Zionism, Revisionist Zionism, Irgun Zvai Leumi, land, ethnic cleansing, mandate years, colonialism.

Abstract

This dissertation argues that although Israel is considered by most of the International Community a democratic state, well integrated in the idea of a 'normal Western society', there is a concrete contradiction in it. Through the theories of Settler Colonialism, I will analyse the occupation of Palestine by Israel as a settler colonial project. Following the ideology of the Zionist movement, since the early beginning to the radicalization of it, I will focus on the meaning of land as a 'terra nullius' for the Jewish settlers and the justification of the occupation through the primordial sense of belonging to the Promised Land, Eretz Yisrael.

I will analyse the Israeli/Palestine case under the years of the British Mandate 1920-1948 underlining the typical traits of settler colonialist society present in it. Moreover, I will reflect on the logic of settler colonialist society under a coloniser Empire such Britain, and the use of it by the former. The radicalization of the Zionist movement had a great impact on the birth of Israel and it will cover a great part of the discussion.

The aim of this dissertation is to support the idea of settler colonialism theories that see Israel as a coloniser society towards the Palestinians. I will try to show Israel not anymore as a deserved land for the victims of the history, but I will underline its aggressive nature in this specific dispute.

ΥΠΕΥΘΥΝΗ ΔΗΛΩΣΗ

Με την παρούσα δήλωση:

1. Δηλώνω ρητά και ανεπιφύλακτα ότι η διπλωματική εργασία που σας καταθέτω αποτελεί προϊόν δικής μου πνευματικής προσπάθειας, δεν παραβιάζει τα δικαιώματα τρίτων μερών και ακολουθεί τα διεθνώς αναγνωρισμένα πρότυπα επιστημονικής συγγραφής, τηρώντας πιστά την ακαδημαϊκή δεοντολογία.
2. Οι απόψεις που εκφράζονται αποτελούν αποκλειστικά ευθύνη του/ης συγγραφέα/ως και ο/η επιβλέπων/ουσα, οι εξεταστές, το Τμήμα και το Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου δεν υιοθετούν κατ' ανάγκη τις εκφραζόμενες απόψεις ούτε φέρουν οποιαδήποτε ευθύνη για τυχόν λάθη και παραλείψεις.

Ο/Η δηλών/ούσα

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(Υπογραφή)

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Introduction

“And the land grows still, the red eye of the sky
slowly dimming over smoking frontiers

As the nation arises, Torn at heart but breathing,
To receive its miracle, the only miracle

As the ceremony draws near, it will rise,
standing erect in the moonlight in terror and joy

When across from it will step out a youth and
a lass and slowly march toward the nation

Dressed in battle gear, dirty, Shoes heavy
with grime, they ascend the path quietly

To change garb, to wipe their brow
They have not yet found time. Still bone
weary from days and from nights in the field

Full of endless fatigue and unrested,
Yet the dew of their youth. Is still seen on their head

Thus they stand at attention, giving no sign of life or death

Then a nation in tears and amazement
will ask: "Who are you?"

And they will answer quietly, "We Are the
silver platter on which the Jewish state was given."

Thus they will say and fall back in shadows
And the rest will be told in the chronicles of Israel.”¹

This dissertation examines the conquest of Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel through the lens of Settler Colonialism studies. Differently from Colonialism where the native population is exploited by the coloniser, in settler colonialism the central aim of the coloniser is the elimination of the native population. As Veracini states in his article

¹ Natan Alterman, “The Silver Platter”. The Seventh Column, Davar Newspaper, 1947.

“Introducing Settler Colonial Studies”: “*Colonisers and settler colonisers want essentially different things*”².

The aim of this research is to understand if Israel can be considered a Settler Colonial State and how the use of violence adopted by the Zionists produced at last the expulsion of Palestinians from their land to ‘*make space*’³ for the new Jewish State.

How did the Zionist ideology influence the process of creation of the State of Israel? Can we conceive the new state as an example of settler colonialist society? Can we consider the Palestinian exodus a practice of elimination by the coloniser society? Through the examination of a series of events happened between the Jewish Entity (as the Arab called it) and the Arabs of Palestine during the years of the British Mandate (1920-1948) and the analysis of the Zionist ideologies under the view of settler colonialism studies, I will analyse the use of violence by the Zionists as a tool to conquer the Promised Land.

Among the academics who debate the issue, I will refer mostly to the theories of Patrick Wolfe, Ilan Pappé, Lorenzo Veracini, Nur Masalha for their studies on the correlation between settler-colonialism and genocide, as well as on the concept of ethnic cleansing referred to the event of 1948, and more generally the use of violence against the native’s population finalized to the elimination of them.

The dissertation will begin with an in-depth analysis of Settler Colonialism studies, focusing on the differences between the latter and Colonialism. I will mostly examine the point of view of P. Wolfe for what it concerns the connection between the establishment of a settler colonialist state and the elimination of the natives⁴. Introducing the Israeli/Palestine situation as a case study in the settler colonialism branch, I will show the common elements with these theories and with other examples of settler colonialist societies. A particular focus will be on the notion of *land* and its meaning in settler colonialism and more specifically in the case of Palestine -a land without people-⁵.

The second chapter will be focus on the ideological foundation of Zionist. Recalling from the start of the movement as a political entity with Herzl and introducing the ideology of

² Veracini, L., 2011. Introducing: Settler colonial studies. *Settler colonial studies*, 1(1), pp.1-12.

³ David Margolick, “Endless War”, (2008), *The New York Times*, Book Reviews : “1948 A History of the First Arab-Israeli War. By Benny Morris”.

⁴ Wolfe, P., 2006. Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), pp.387-409.

⁵ David Lloyd (2012) *Settler Colonialism and the State of Exception: The Example of Palestine/Israel*, *Settler Colonial Studies*, 2:1, 59-80.

the Zionist right-wing. I will explain the origins of the Zionist Revisionist movement, introducing the youth organisation and political party created to serve the political ambitions and ideology of Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, leader of the Revisionists. I will show the romantic idea of force and nationalism in Jabotinsky's principles, and how they evolved and produced the radical factions of the Zionist movement, The Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL).

The third chapter will show the outcomes of the Jewish claim to the Palestinian land and the occupation of it. Pointing out the role of the Revisionist party and its *militia* going through the process of recognition of the Zionist objectives, with the Balfour Declaration, until the Arab Revolt in 1936-39 and finally the proclamation of the State of Israel in 1948.

In the course of this chapter I will analyse the violence used by the Jewish faction during the Arab Revolt that will divide the Jewish community between defence and self-restraint or reprisal. Briefly covering these responses, I will focus on group that most of it chose reprisal and embraced violence and terrorism as a response: the Irgun Zvai Leumi or National Military Organization (IZL). A further notice will be done about the shifting of priority of the Jewish militia and their activities against the British occupation in 1939.

To conclude with the ethnic cleansing of 1948, I will not focus in the event per se but I will explain the Al-Nakba in a settler colonial key, *as a structure not an event*⁶.

Chapter 1:

Israeli/Palestinian Case Through the Lens of Settler Colonialism Studies

1.1 Methodological Framework

The methodology of my dissertation is mainly based on library research and secondary sources. The primary sources of this research come from letters, reports and speeches,

⁶ Ibid.

many of them made available in digital format by the Jabotinsky Institute in Tel-Aviv, Israel.

Due to the timeframe of the events that I am analysing, I will use secondary sources as magazine and newspapers articles and bibliographical works.

Official data and reports from the Jewish governmental websites such as The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will also be integrated in my research. I will use data from International actors too such as The United Nations Organization.

In the examination of my case study, the independent variable is how violence is used by the coloniser (Jews) against the natives (Palestinians) and the dependent variable will then be the outcomes of this specific behaviour. In short, how the State of Israel has been built with the use of violence and terror against the native population of Palestine.⁷

1.2 What is Settler Colonialism?

Violence has been a central issue in the debate of Colonialism theories. Frantz Fanon approaches colonialism from his violent perspective and focuses on the individual aspect of it.⁸ He said that colonialism *'is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native'*⁹ (Fanon, 1963: 38). He asserted that violence is the 'natural state' of colonial rule and it is needed by the settlers to keep control of the occupied territory.¹⁰ However, further studies in the subject led to a separation between colonialism and settler colonialism. The main distinction between these two branches is the role of the natives. The first is based on exploitation while the latter is based on the elimination of the indigenous population¹¹. In fact, while colonialism aims to reinforce the difference between the colonisers and the colonised, settler colonialism aims to erase it¹². To follow the definition of Veracini: *"The difference is absolutely critical: while a colonial society is successful only if the separation between colonizer and colonized is retained, a settler colonial project is ultimately successful only when it extinguishes itself—that is, when the*

⁷ Stephen Van Evera. *"Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science"* (2015) Cornell University Press.

⁸ Josh Pallas. *"Fanon on Violence and the Person"*. (2016). Critical Legal Thinking -Law and the Political- .

⁹ Fanon, F. 1963, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Farrington, C. (trans.), Grove Press, New York, USA.

¹⁰ Josh Pallas. *"Fanon on Violence and the Person"*. (2016). Critical Legal Thinking -Law and the Political- .

¹¹ Rachel Busbridge. *"Israel-Palestine and the Settler Colonial 'Turn': From Interpretation to Decolonization"*. (2017). Theory, Culture and Society.

¹² Veracini, L., 2011. Introducing: Settler colonial studies. *Settler colonial studies*, 1(1), pp.1-12.

*settlers cease to be defined as such and become “natives,” and their position becomes normalized”.*¹³

Patrick Wolfe argues that settler colonialism and genocide are usually more connected than we expect, however that doesn't mean we can consider settler colonialism as a form of genocide.¹⁴ In his article “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” he gave several examples in which genocide converged with settler colonialism, but they still need to be distinguished. Using his words “*Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal*”.¹⁵

Territory is what he defines as the essential element of settler colonialism, and territory is what, in his perspective connects the logic of extermination to settler colonialism. In his discourse he emphasises the importance of land for the settler coloniser, because “land is life- or at least land is necessary for life”.¹⁶ Taking as an example the Indigenous people of North America, he shows that settler colonialism or genocide haven't been targeting a specific race, indeed the settler coloniser has created the concept of race to then exterminate them as *Indians* and not as owners of the land they expropriated.¹⁷

This created the tendency of identifying Indigenous people for where they are/live and not for who they are.¹⁸ As Deborah Bird Rose stated: “*all that indigenous people must do to oppose the colonizer is to stay at home*”¹⁹.

Whatever the settlers may say, the primary reason for elimination is acquisition of territory!²⁰

¹³ Veracini, L., “*The Other Shift: Settler Colonialism, Israel and the Occupation*”, (2013), Journal of Palestinian Studies. Vol. XLII, No. 2, pp.26-42.

¹⁴ Wolfe, P., 2006. Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native. Journal of Genocide Research, 8(4), pp.387-409.

¹⁵ Wolfe. Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native. 387.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. 388.

¹⁸ Ibid, 388. For more information about it is interesting to read the work of Roger W. Smith, “Human destructiveness and politics: the twentieth century as an age of genocide,” in Isidor Wallimann and Michael N. Dobkowski, eds, Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death (New York: Greenwood Press. 1987), pp 21–39, at p 31.

¹⁹ Rose, Hidden Histories: Black Stories from Victoria River Downs, Humbert River and Wave Hill Stations (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press 1991), p 46.

²⁰ Wolfe. Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native, 388.

In his work, Wolfe refers to the study of Raphael Lemkin on genocide, in which he identifies a positive and a negative dimension. Lemkin distinguished the two dimensions of the oppressor and the oppressed as: “[O]ne, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and colonization of the area by the oppressor’s own nationals.”²¹

In accordance with the vision of Lemkin, Wolfe distinguishes a positive and a negative dimension of settler colonialism, in which the former represents the creation of a new society to the detriment of the native population that represents the negative element.²²

Colonisation is a structure not an event, says Wolfe, and this is particularly important for when the discussion ends up limited to the event of 1948. He wants to explain the act of elimination as an organised aspect of settler colonialist society rather than an unexpected occurrence.²³

Wolfe looks at some of the ways in which settler colonies take over: resocialization, new religion, child abduction, native citizenship and recognise them as *positive* outcomes of the logic of elimination.²⁴

The author speaks about some of the important elements in a settler colonised society such as renaming, identity construction (refers to the new society) and the reconstruction of the land (to represent the new population).

²¹ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1944), p 79.

²² Wolfe. *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*. (2006).

²³ *Ibid.*; Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*, p 2; “Nation and miscegeNation,” p 96.

²⁴ Wolfe. *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*. 388.

1.3 Israel/Palestine as a case study in settler colonial theory

The case of Israel shows the importance of the renaming process, however it is not uniform in practice. In his work, Wolfe compares the Australian case in which nationalism in its more progressive form, sees the re-appropriation of indigenous names as a noble quest, where such a thing would be unthinkable in Israel/Palestine. In the latter situation, the process of renaming is crucial for the establishment of the new society and consequently the replacement of the Palestinian Arab.²⁵

Meron Benvenisti²⁶ wrote in his book: *“As a member of a pioneering youth movement, I myself ‘made the desert bloom’ by uprooting the ancient olive trees of al-Bassa to clear the ground for a banana grove, as required by the ‘planned farming’ principles of my kibbutz, Rosh Haniqra.”*²⁷

Wolfe underlines that the main difference lies between the ideological justification of the coloniser. In the Australian case the Aborigines are expropriated of their land because the settlers argue that they can make better use of it; differently in the case of Israel there is a primordial occupation of the land that justifies the settlers in their will of “returning home”.²⁸

Israel needed not only to reconstruct the land but also to create distance from Europe and we can see this in the choice of Hebrew over Yiddish, a decision made to underline the difference between the “New Jew” of Israel from the European Jew (diaspora) that represented internationalism.

Identity construction is an important field where labour takes on an important role. In this sense, the originally European concept of productivization is readopted to the new society. While in Europe productivization was not used to disempower anyone else, in

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Israeli political scientist that covered the charge of Deputy Mayor of West Jerusalem from 1971 to 1978. He is the author of “Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948”.

²⁷ Meron Benvenisti, Sacred Landscape. The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948 (Berkeley, CA: California U.P. 2000), p 2.

²⁸ Wolfe. Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native. 389.

Israel it is used as a tool in the ethnic conflict.²⁹ Championing the land requires a new Jew, in fact even if Arab labour was most of the time cheaper, Jewish industries were strongly discouraged to employ non-Jews.³⁰ As in other colonial societies, the final scope was to create an independent Jewish State.

Hebrew labour became a symbol of the road to redemption in contrast with the unredeemed Jews of the diaspora -that need to come over and “get their hands dirty”.

In this scheme we can easily identify “*the positive force that animated the Jewish nation and its individual new-Jewish subjects issued from the negative process of excluding Palestine’s Indigenous owners.*”³¹

Ilan Pappé gives an interesting vision of the logic of employment and its meaning. He talks about ‘exclusivity’ as demographic purity and interprets the non-employment of Palestinian Arabs in the Jewish labour market as a pragmatic action to achieve exclusivity.³²

During his work Pappé revised “letters of settlers” and noticed that the Palestinian workers were always described negatively, sometimes even compared to diseases, contrary to the Jewish labour which needed to take distance from the Arabs to have a more peaceful existence.³³

In one of his letters, David Ben-Gurion³⁴ wrote “*that employing ‘Arabs’ reminded him of the old Jewish story of a stupid man who resuscitated a dead lion that devoured him.*”³⁵

Pappé gave an interesting vision of how the Palestinians were perceived by the settlers. The ‘New Jews’ did not think they had anything in common with the people who were living there and as Pappé describes: “*Wherever there were Palestinians, there was a sense of bareness that caused some settlers to rethink the whole venture and contemplating a*

²⁹ Wolfe. *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.* 390.

³² Ilan Pappé (2012) *Shtetl Colonialism: First and Last Impressions of Indigeneity by Colonised Colonisers*, *Settler Colonial Studies*, 2:1, 39-58, DOI: 10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648825

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ David Ben-Gurion was a prominent figure in the Zionist movement, founder of the State of Israel and first Prime Minister of Israel.

³⁵ David Ben-Gurion, speech celebrating 25 years to the Second Aliya, *The Book of the Second Aliya*, p. 15.

*return from, as one of them put it, a 'land of nothingness' "*³⁶. The feeling of returning home were mixed with the feeling of being in a foreign land.

As we saw above with Wolfe's theory, the reconstruction of the land is a crucial step for the establishment of the settler society.

Pappé shows a different side of this aspect, he underlines the aggressive nature that the Jews confer to the Palestinians. In his article "Shtetl Colonialism: First and Last Impressions of Indigeneity by Colonised Colonisers" he describes the arrival of Jewish settlers to Jaffa, from which small boats (of natives) were taking them ashore.³⁷

*"This disembarkment appears in the settler view as aggressive and alien treatment. 'Aravim Hetikifu Ottanu' – 'the Arabs assaulted us' "*³⁸. The latter is a typical phrase used to describe Arabs in general, in this case referred to the boys who were helping the small boats getting ashore.³⁹ The aggressive nature of the Palestinians was detected by their behaviour, in which there was no more than difference from the European culture and certainly not hostility, but as Pappé said *"Whether it is their language, their dress, or their camels they were all reported back to Europe as unpleasant realities"*.

To use the words of Wolfe: *"settler colonialism destroys to replace"*⁴⁰ so it does not matter the culture, use and behaviour of the native population because the replacement of them is the goal of the colonisers.

³⁶ Ibid. 50.

³⁷ Pappé. "Shtetl Colonialism: First and Last Impressions by Colonised Colonisers". 50.

³⁸ Ibid. 50.; Mendel Zinger, 'From Barodi (a Shtetl in the Ukraine) to Erez Israel', *The Book of the Second Aliya*, p. 128.

³⁹ Pappé. "Shtetl Colonialism: First and Last Impressions by Colonised Colonisers". 50.

⁴⁰ Wolfe. *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*.

Chapter 2

The Zionism Movement and the Justification of Violence as “unwelcome but understandable”

2.1 Introduction to the Zionist Movement

The Zionist movement announced its goals since its first appearance. The central idea is the repatriation of the Jewish people spread around the world to their ‘birthplace’, the Land of Israel.⁴¹

However, there are several groups of Zionism, from Religious to Political.

Even if in the Theodor Herzl is often consider the founder of Zionism, the origins of the movement are far before. However, I will not discuss the origins of the movement in this dissertation. I will keep my discussion in the framework of modern and contemporary history.

The first organized group of Zionists were strongly connected with Judaism and its goal was to restore Jewish religion on the precepts of the Torah. Even though the group did not have a political nature, Palestine was already considered the land to return. From this faction of Zionism was form the Hovevei Ziyyon (lovers of Zion), that promoted the first settlements of Jewish farmers and artisans in Palestine.⁴²

The political turning point of Zionism will come with Theodor Herzl. In this paper I will focus on the raising of Political Zionism and its escalation to more violent and radical branches during the conquest of the Promise Land.

2.2 Theodor Herzl and the Path to Political Zionism

Theodore (Binyamin Ze’ev) Herzl was a recognised writer and journalist, known as the official father of Political Zionism.

⁴¹ Israel Information Center, “*Herzl and Zionism*”. Ahva Press, Jerusalem 2004.

⁴² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018. “Zionism”. Encyclopaedia Britannica.

During his adolescence he entered in contact with anti-Semitism, however the “conversion” to Zionism arrived during the years he has spent in France. In 1891 he moved with his wife to Paris, as correspondent for the influential Viennese newspaper *Neue Freie Presse*.⁴³

During his stay, Herzl was shocked to find the same anti-Semitism with which he entered in contact with in Vienna⁴⁴. The general atmosphere of anti-Semitism in Europe was not new at that time, however combined with the case of the Jewish officer Alfred Dreyfus it had a significant importance in the path that brought Herzl closer to Zionism.⁴⁵

The Dreyfus Affair was a determinant in the genesis of Political Zionism. Alfred Dreyfus was a Jewish officer in the French army, who was falsely accused of treason due to the general anti-Semitic feelings of the time. Herzl attended the trial while witnessing crowds shouted “death to the Jews”⁴⁶ in the birthplace of the ideals of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*⁴⁷.

Until now Herzl had perceived anti-Semitism as a social problem that Jews could overcome by assimilating to the society in which they were living. However, after this episode Herzl concluded that assimilation was not the right answer to anti-Semitism and that the only way for Jews to be free and safe was to have their own state.⁴⁸

Herzl started to talk about the idea of a sovereign state for Jews and in few years, he published *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State, 1896) a pamphlet in which he argued that the Jewish problem was a nation problem and not an individual one. In this book he made a distinction between the old and new anti-Semitism, perceived as different, in his world “*Modern Anti-Semitism is not to be confounded with the religious persecution of the Jews of former times. It does occasionally take a religious bias in some countries, but the main current of the aggressive movement has now changed. In the principal countries where Anti-Semitism prevails, it does so as a result of the emancipation of the Jews.*”⁴⁹

⁴³ Jewish Virtual Library, *The Jerusalem Report*, (2004) “*Israel: 100 Years since Herzl’s Death*”.

⁴⁴ David Ben-Gurion. *Theodor Herzl*. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 20 July 2016) <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Theodor-Herzl>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Fenby, “The Dreyfus Affair and Zionism”, (2006). The Guardian.

⁴⁷ Motto of the French Revolution (1789).

⁴⁸ Jewish Virtual Library, from Green David B. “*This day in Jewish history: a Zionist makes a very unfortunate marriage*”. Haareze, 2015.

⁴⁹ T. Herzl. *The Jewish State*. 1896. 12

He explained that assimilation could not be a solution in a contest in which the majority decide who is an alien and who is a native⁵⁰. Therefore, only a Jewish state would have overcome these issues and ensure safety and stability for the Jews. Herzl considered the creation of a Jewish State mutually beneficial to both anti-Semites and Jews.⁵¹ In a section of his pamphlet he argues “*The Governments of all countries scourged by Anti-Semitism will be keenly interested in assisting us to obtain the sovereignty we want.*”⁵²

The book had great success and it became a symbol of the Zionist vision in the Eretz Yisrael (Great Israel/ Land of Israel). A section of the book is dedicated to the question of where the new Jewish state should put roots. Before Herzl, other academics had talked about the creation of a national state for the Jews.⁵³ However, Herzl discuss about political sovereignty and he identifies Palestine as the real home where the Jews should go back to. He talks about Palestine as “*ever-memorable historic home. ...The only name would attract our people with marvellous potency*” and he firstly think of it “*as a neutral State remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.*”⁵⁴

The idea of a Jewish State in Palestine soon developed into the famous slogan ‘a land without people for a people without land’⁵⁵. An idea based on the “functional absence of native people in Palestine”, as Lloyd called the ‘present-absentee’, a condition that combined the logic of ethnic cleansing and occupation to the importance of the space conceived as a constitutive force of law.⁵⁶ This approach has been interpreted as typical of colonial thinking and, using the words of Said : “*Zionism never spoke of itself unambiguously as a Jewish liberation movement, but rather as Jewish movement for colonial settlement in the Orient*”⁵⁷.

Moreover, the slogan was further explained in 1920 by Zangwill⁵⁸ who stated:

“If Lord Shaftesbury was literally inexact in describing Palestine as a country without a people, he was essentially correct, for there is no Arab people living

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid 13.

⁵³ David Ben-Gurion. *Theodor Herzl*. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 20 July 2016).

⁵⁴ Herzl. *The Jewish State*. 1896. 15

⁵⁵ David Lloyd (2012) Settler Colonialism and the State of Exception: The Example of Palestine/Israel, *Settler Colonial Studies*, 2:1, 59-80.

⁵⁶ Lloyd, “Settler Colonialism and the State of Exception” (2012), 61.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 62; Said, ‘Zionism’, p. 23.

⁵⁸ Israel Zangwill was an English writer and activist in the front row of the Zionist movement.

in intimate fusion with the country, utilising its resources and stamping it with a characteristic impress: there is at best an Arab encampment."⁵⁹

The concrete outcome of the book was the First Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland in 1897. The Congress was the first international gathering of Jews on a national and political basis⁶⁰. During the Congress a program was developed and then adopted, later known as the Basle Program, with the aim to recognise a Jewish sovereignty on a Jewish territory in the international arena.

In the Basel Declaration there was no mention of the native population of Palestine, the final purpose was simply described as *"the establishment of a publicly and legally secured home in Palestine for the Jewish people"*⁶¹.

However, this did not mean that there were no people in Palestine, neither that they were unaware of the existence of them. It rather showed the influence of the colonial atmosphere present in Europe at that time, and in this optic the natives of Palestine were simply considered not worthy within the framework of European supremacy.⁶² In 1914 Weizmann stated:

*"In its initial stage, Zionism was conceived by its pioneers as a movement wholly depending on mechanical factors: there is a country which happens to be called Palestine, a country without a people, and, on the other hand, there exists the Jewish people, and it has no country. What else is necessary, then, than to fit the gem into the ring, to unite this people with this country? The owners of the country [the Turks] must, therefore, be persuaded and convinced that this marriage is advantageous, not only for the [Jewish] people and for the country, but also for themselves."*⁶³

The Basle Program was not the only outcome of the Congress. Several organs were created to support the Zionist ideas, as the Jewish National Fund and the World Zionist

⁵⁹ Nur Masalha, "Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948". (1992), Institute for Palestine Studies.

⁶⁰ Jewish Virtual Library, from Green David B. *"This day in Jewish history: a Zionist makes a very unfortunate marriage"*. Haarez, 2015.

⁶¹ Nur Masalha, "Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948". (1992), Institute for Palestine Studies.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

Organization (WZO). The latter represent a political tool of the Jewish people and Herzl was nominated its first president.

Herzl understood that the congress was the first important step for the realization of its goals and right after he wrote in his diary:

*If I had to sum up the Basel Congress in one word—which I shall not do openly—it would be this: At Basel I founded the Jewish state. If I were to say this today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in 50, everyone will see it.*⁶⁴

2.3 Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Zionism

The uncontested father of Revisionist Zionism is Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky (1880-1940). He was a famous writer and poet who had gained recognition as a well-established Russian journalist.⁶⁵

Jabotinsky's view of Zionism was strongly influenced by his experience in Russia where he lived marginalised in the Pale of Settlement⁶⁶ and he witnessed, among others, the pogrom of the Jews of Kishinev in 1903.⁶⁷ The latter event was decisive to shape his ideas about the necessity of a Jewish Army.

During World War I, his idea of a Jewish Legion started to take shape and he worked for the establishment of a Jewish Unit Army who would have fought alongside the British army. Jabotinsky thought that the Jews should fight with the British Empire to free the Promise Land (Palestine) from the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁸ In the late 1917 the British Army agreed with the Jewish legion to serve in the Jordan Valley.⁶⁹ Jabotinsky's Legion had a

⁶⁴ David Ben-Gurion. *Theodor Herzl*. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 20 July 2016) <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Theodor-Herzl>

⁶⁵ Y. Shavit. *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement, 1925-1948* (London, England: F. Cass, 1988):8; C. Shindler, *The Triumph of Military Zionism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006)61-67.

⁶⁶ Pale of Settlement: was a part of the Russian Empire where Jews could live. Usually Jews were not allowed to reside in the rest of the Empire.

⁶⁷ E. Daniel. *The Jewish Radical Right: Revisionist Zionism and It's Ideological Legacy*. (by Eran Kaplan, University of Wisconsin Press, 2005, 234pp).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Brenner, *The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir* (London: Zed Books, 1984): 33.

minor role in the battle, however the experience made a significant imprint in his conception of Zionism and in the role that Britain had in the Jewish Question.⁷⁰

The idea of the Jewish Legion, above all, will always remain the focus of his thoughts and will define his distance from “*the contemporary Zionist leadership, which was dominated in the 1920s by the towering figure of Haim Weizmann*” (Zouplna 2008:4).⁷¹

After the experience of the battalion he stayed in Palestine where he helped form the *Haganah* (Defence Force), a defensive committee with the aim to protect Jewish settlements in the region. In 1919 he was arrested and consequently expelled from Palestine, where he would never be allowed to return.⁷²

In 1923 he published a historic article “On the Iron Wall” in which he elaborates his militaristic and colonial views which would put the basis for a Jewish Palestine. He underlines the necessity of the support of the British Empire and mostly the dependence on British colonial structures, together with an uncooperative and hostile relationship with the Arabs of Palestine.

“*Voluntary reconciliation between Palestinian Arabs and us is absolutely out of the question*”, Jabotinsky wrote in ‘On the Iron Wall’.⁷³ He explained that although he had no hard feelings against the Arabs of Palestine but rather a “respectful indifference” that would have not changed the fact that Zionism was a colonising regime and should have been perceived as such.⁷⁴

In this way he interpreted the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine: “*Their meaning for us is that a foreign power has taken an obligation to create in the country such conditions of governance and security, under which the local population, however much it desires that, would not be able to obstruct our colonisation, administratively or physically*”.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Jabotinsky Zeev, “Jews in Palestine: The Revisionists and the Mandate” Jabotinsky Institute [henceforth JI] : A 1 -9/ 22 (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1929):2-4.

⁷¹ J. Zouplna. *Revisionist Zionism: Image, Reality and the Quest for Historical Narrative*. (Middle East Studies, 44(1): 3-27. 2008).

⁷² Brenner, Iron Wall, 40.

⁷³ Z. Jabotinsky. *On the Iron Wall*. (1923). 257.

⁷⁴ Z. Jabotinsky, *On the Iron Wall*. 257.

⁷⁵ Jabotinsky, *On the Iron Wall*, 260.

His article challenged the reader to “*find a single case when colonisation proceeded upon the consent of natives*”⁷⁶. To which he concluded “*There has never been such a case*” and that Palestine would be no exception - “*As long as the Arabs have a spark of a hope to get rid of us, they will not sell this hope for any sweet words or nutritious sandwiches, precisely because they are not rabble but rather a people, very backward, yet living.*”⁷⁷

He considered the “*nationalities problem*” to be “*the question of national territory and that of the national minorities*”.⁷⁸ His nationalism was not different from the forms of nationalism diffused in Europe at that time for which “*each race has an unquenchable thirst for its own state*”.⁷⁹

Jabotinsky applied his idea of nationalism to Palestine. He understood majorities and minorities as the focus of political actions, and there was no paradox in his mind with the fact that discrimination of minorities was the very first reason of the problem that Zionism was going to resolve.⁸⁰

Jabotinsky recognized that there was no compensation that the Jews or anyone else could offer to the Palestinians and he took distance to the “hypocritical” position of the Labour Zionism that preferred to mask its desires in the values of socialism and justice. He remarks his belief in a Jewish Army stating that the sooner Zionist recognised the reality the sooner they would understand that Zionism could only succeed “*under the protection of a force independent of the local population – an iron wall, through which the local population cannot break*”.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Jabotinsky, *On the Iron Wall*, 260.

⁷⁸ Jabotinsky, Zeev, “RACE” Jabotinsky Institute [henceforth JI]: F - 1913/ 201/ EN (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1913 [republished 1928])

⁷⁹ Jabotinsky, “RACE”, 1913, JI: F - 1913/ 201/ EN: 3; O. Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003):59

⁸⁰ L.Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (London: Croom Helm , 1983)18, see also; Zimmer, *Nationalism*,72; Shapira, *Land and Power*, 7. Shapira writes on the positive inspiration nationalism had on Zionism: “The concept of nation that originated in the French Revolution was not serviceable as a basis for a Jewish conception of nationhood [...] Ironically, it was the Romantic-exclusivistic brand of nationalism (whose prescriptions meant that the Jews could never be an integral part of the organic nation) that contained certain ideas able to function as a basis for an elaborated notion of a Jewish nation and national movement”.

⁸¹ Jabotinsky, *On the Iron Wall*, 263.

2.4 The Betar Youth

In the same year of the publication of “On the Iron Wall”, Jabotinsky went to Riga to speak with an audience of young Jewish students about “Activism and Zionism”.⁸² During the speech the students were so taken by it that they challenged Jabotinsky to call them to action and to create a group that would support his vision.⁸³ The activism and involvement of these young students helped to shape the idea of creating a political party and the Betar Youth can be considered a result of it.⁸⁴

The Betar group was initially known as “the Joseph Trumpeldor group of Zionist Activist Youth”.⁸⁵ Trumpeldor was a Captain in the Zion Mule Corps that he met during his service in the Jewish Legion. Jabotinsky was able to transform his death on the battlefield into a legend that inspired the modern Jewish youth.⁸⁶ Trumpeldor impersonated the virtues and qualities of the ‘new Jew’ without which the new Jewish State could not be create. He argues that “*the youth movement aspired to create the type of Jew the nation needs in order to establish a Jewish state with greatest speed and perfection*”⁸⁷.

The Betar youth were the direct expression of the revisionist Jewish identity, based on values like pride, loyalty, European *etiquette* and in which territory was the determining factor of the national identity and not Judaism.⁸⁸

An excellent example of the values of which the group was representative of is the anthem “Song of Betar” (1932):

In blood and sweat a new race shall arise,
Proud, generous, and cruel...
For peace is muddy,

⁸² Shindler, *The Triumph of Military Zionism*, 50.

⁸³ Shindler, *The Triumph of Military*, 51, “According to Jabotinsky’s account, following an indulgence in drink and song, the students took a sword and tapped it on the table three times to confirm their pledge that together with Jabotinsky they would ‘roll up their sleeves and straighten out the Zionist movement’.”

⁸⁴ Melzer, Emanuel. "Revisionist Zionists." YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe 18 November 2010. 17 January 2018 <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Revisionist_Zionists>.

⁸⁵Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement*, 20-25,51.

⁸⁶ Jabotinsky, “Brit Trumpeldor: Its Origin Objects and Structure”, JI: F - 1934/ 207/ EN, 1934.

⁸⁷ Sofer, Sasson (1998) “Zionism and the Foundations of Israeli Diplomacy”. 210.

⁸⁸ Sasson. “Zionism and the Foundations of Israeli Diplomacy” (1998); Zouplna, Jan (2005) “The Evolution of a Concept: The Relationship between State and Religion in the Thought of Vladimir Jabotinsky, 1919–1940”, *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 4(1):13-31

Sacrifice blood and soul,
For the sake of the hidden grandeur
To die or to conquer the mountain.⁸⁹

The movement had a great success and by 1932 nuclei were present in gran part of Europe and later in America, China, South Africa, England and South America.⁹⁰

2.5 Jabotinsky and the Maximalist

Jabotinsky leaves his ideology open to different interpretations. This emerged in three different factions.

The Maximalists Abba Achimeir, Yehoshua Heschel Yevin and the poet Uri Zvi Greenberg advocated direct action and distinguished themselves for their radical revolutionary determinism. They were linked to the Betar movement and found strong support from them.

Differently the moderate factions were distinguished for believing in political and diplomatic solutions.⁹¹ The moderates formed two other factions, one wanted to remain close to the Zionist Organization, while the other pushed Jabotinsky to leave and to create a different representative body.⁹²

The Maximalist ideology met the frustration and excitement of the members of the Betar group and became increasingly influential in Palestine. However, the reality of this new generation of Palestinian Jews was socially and politically different from the European one, and in the following years it will emerge as a form of underground terrorism.

Achimeir, Yevin and Greenberg formed “Brit ha- Biryonim” a group bearer of values of war and pride projected into the purpose of the creation of the Jewish State.⁹³ They wanted

⁸⁹ Jabotinsky Zeev , “Song of Betar” Jabotinsky Institute [henceforth JI]: A 1 - 10/ 10, (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1932), Worthy to note the nuance of language and translation of sources, that no two translations of the hymn are exactly alike, although only different in selective wording.

⁹⁰ Jabotinsky, Zeev, “Brit Trumpeldor: Its Origin Objects and Structure” Jabotinsky Institute [henceforth JI]: F - 1934/ 207/ EN, (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1934).

⁹¹ Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist*, 44-50.

⁹² Shindler, *The Triumph of Military*, 164; Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist*, 42,49.

⁹³ Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist*, 131. The name is significant because it is taken from a band of Zealots – the *biryoni* – who were said to have actively resisted the Romans, setting to the barely remaining food stores in besieged Jerusalem. It is common for English translations of the “Biryonim” to appear as

to reinforce the image of Zionism as a revolutionary rather than a political movement and of which the establishment of the State in the historical borders of Biblical Israel represented the main purpose.⁹⁴ The Maximalist group has been often associated with fascism for its radical values and its admiration for the revolutionary activism mixed with trait of the far right-wing.⁹⁵

Both Jabotinsky and the Maximalist advocated militarism for the Jewish youth.

However, Jabotinsky believed in aesthetic militarism as a way to show to the European powers and its anti-Semitism that Zionism was able to establish and maintain a modern nation-state.⁹⁶ His obsession for militarism did not refer to the virtues of war per se but to the military life and education.⁹⁷ In one of his articles “On Militarism” (1929) he argued “*The truth is that only war is ugly; military life per se has many beautiful aspects that unfortunately are lacking in civilian life*” and he continues “*..fraternity of army life, its Spartan simplicity, and equality between rich and poor; second, the hygienic benefit, the fresh air and bodily fitness; thirdly, military discipline itself*”.⁹⁸

The Maximalists, instead, believed that force was the revolutionary way for Zionism to reach its aims.⁹⁹ Even though, both Jabotinsky and the leaders of the Maximalist factions were intellectuals and their actions remained more symbolic than violent.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Jabotinsky remains always vague and open to different interpretations on the concept of violence that he described as “unwelcome but understandable”.¹⁰¹

“thug” or “hooligan”, hence referring to the Maximalist group as the *League of Thugs*. However its name holds deeper meaning in Hebrew, closer to “rebel”, “outlaw” or even “empty men of violence”.

⁹⁴ Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist*, 136.

⁹⁵ Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist*, 63,350.

⁹⁶ Jabotinsky Zeev, “The Betar View on State and Social Problems” *Jabotinsky Institute* [henceforth JI]: A 1 - 7/236 (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1940); Eran, Kaplan, “A Rebel with a Cause: Hillel Kook, Begin and Jabotinsky’s Ideological Legacy” *Israel Studies* 10, no. 3 (2005): DOI: 10.1353/is.2005.0128: pp.87-89

⁹⁷ Jabotinsky, “On Militarism”. 264-7.

⁹⁸ Jabotinsky, “On Militarism” (1929). 265.

⁹⁹ Yehoshua H. Yevin, “Betar and the Zionist Revolution” [1932]. *The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948 a Documentary History*, edited by Eran Kaplan (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011): 145.

¹⁰⁰ Shapira, “*Land and Power*”. 201. Speaking on Jabotinsky’s similarities to Theodore Herzl and Max Nordau Shapira writes: “Like Herzl and Nordau he was a secular nationalist. He believed, as they did, that politics was the dominant component and that economy, society, and culture despite their importance, were all subordinate to the political dimension”.

¹⁰¹ Jabotinsky, “*On Militarism*”, 266.

Chapter 3

The Years of the British Mandate (1920-1948)

3.1 International Recognition of Jewish Zionist Ambitions

After World War I the territory of Palestine, formerly under Ottoman's rule, was occupied by the British army in 1917. In 1922 Great Britain was committed by the League of Nations to ensure and assist the socio-political and economic development of the inhabitants of Palestine with a mandate that will last until 1948.¹⁰²

However, the recognition of Zionism by the British Government was given by the foreign secretary Arthur James Balfour in 1917 in a letter sent to Lord Rothschild that will become famous as the Balfour Declaration.

The Declaration shows the sympathy of the British Government “*with Jewish Zionist aspirations*”¹⁰³ and continues: “*His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people*”.¹⁰⁴ The letter ends with a clause that was neglected by the British Government stating “*it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country*”.¹⁰⁵

With this declaration Britain officially favoured Jewish immigration in Palestine as well as new settlements and the growth of the Jewish economy. At the same time, Jewish from Palestine were guarantying the development of Hebrew schools to create a cultural and education network in the region and buy lands from the Arabs.

¹⁰² Babak Mayamey, “Zionism: A Critical Account 1897-1949. The Development of Israel and the Exodus of Palestine from A “New Historians” Perspective”. (2010). POLIS Journal Vol.4. University of Leeds.

¹⁰³ Letter from Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild, 1917. “Balfour Declaration”.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

The land, after the immigration, has been a major issue in the construction of the Jewish State.¹⁰⁶ In his book Segev refers to prominent Palestinian families as “*patriots on the outside, traitors on the inside*” because they were selling lands to the Jews.¹⁰⁷ The Jewish Agency included clause, that later became part of the Israeli law, to forbidden to sale land to non-Jews.¹⁰⁸ As we mentioned above the land is the central need for the success of a settler colonial State.

3.2 Disorders between Arabs and Jews

The first anti-Zionist feelings, and consequent actions, erupted into revolts in 1920, 1921 and 1929.¹⁰⁹ These riots rose from different circumstances, however the constant behind it has been a clearer position from the British Empire about the Jewish immigration and the occupation of the land. During the 1929 riot the generals act of violence converged in an organized strike that would continue until “*the British Government changes its present policy in a fundamental manner*”¹¹⁰.

The requests of the Arabs were three: “*the prohibition of Jewish immigration; the prohibition of the transfer of Arab land to Jews; the establishment of a National Government responsible to a representative council*”¹¹¹.

The response of the British Government was a strong repression of the riots with the promise that the Royal Commission would have given a clear answer to their claims. Until 1937 a relatively calm period returned to Palestine¹¹². In July 1937 the Royal Commission was published and its recommendation provoked the anger and disappointment of both side, Arabs and Jews. The resentments for the latter declaration produce the ‘Arab Disturbances’ most commonly known as the Arab Revolt that last over three years. During the revolt more than “5000 Arabs, 300 Jews and 262 Briton had been

¹⁰⁶ Charles Glass. “*The Mandate years: colonialism and the creation of Israel*”. (2001) London Review of Books.

¹⁰⁷T. Segev. “*One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*”. (2000) Henry Holt and Company, LLC. New York.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Glass. “*The Mandate years: colonialism and the creation of Israel*”. (2001) London Review of Books.

¹⁰⁹ L.Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (London: Croom Helm, 1983). 92.

¹¹⁰ United Kingdom. Parliament. *Report of the Royal Commission on Palestine* Cmd. 2687 (London: The Stationary Office, 1929): 96.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 97.

¹¹² Horne, E. Porter. *A Job Well Done: a History of the Palestine Police Force 1920-1948* (Lewes, East Sussex: Book Guild, 2003).

killed.”¹¹³ This revolt was significantly important because it forced the British to recognise Arab nationalism and in the Zionist framework it provoked an internal dispute, mostly based on the legitimacy of the use of force¹¹⁴. Three responses came out from this dispute: self-restraint, legalised self-defence and violent attack.

The first reaction of the Zionists was the announce by the Jewish Agency of the implementation of a self-restraint policy by the institution of the Jewish community¹¹⁵. The position taken by the Jewish leaders was more strategic than moral. The aim of the self-restrain policy was in one hand for the Jews to appear as “men of morality” and to claim that Zionism was a peaceful organization on the other hand the moral construction was used to create a sense of superiority on the ‘barbaric’ Arab people.¹¹⁶ The goal of this strategy was at last to show to the British that the Jews were the victim and the Arabs the aggressor. The incessant attacks by the Arab produced accusations by the Revisionist branch of resignation and political failure to the mainstream Zionist current. Jabotinsky, as head of the Revisionists and founder of the New Zionist Organization¹¹⁷, accused the Jewish leaders of presenting the Jews as “not a nation but a flock of sheep” to the eyes of the Arabs and British.¹¹⁸

The Jews contrarily to the Arabs, did not stop their *offensive*, and in 1937 the violence from the IZL escalated and killed 13 Arabs.¹¹⁹ Few months later, on the 14th of November, day known as the Black Sunday the IZL group coordinated several attacks in Jerusalem that killed 10 women and men.¹²⁰ This day had a specific meaning for the Jewish political leaders, because the IZL was clearly refusing the policy of self-restraint and introducing terrorism as an option.

¹¹³ Flapan, Simha. *Zionism and the Palestinians*. (London: Croom Helm, 1979):237.

¹¹⁴ Meir, Chazan, "The Dispute in Mapai over 'Self-Restraint' and 'Purity of Arms' During the Arab Revolt." *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 3 (2009).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 92.

¹¹⁶ Anita Shapira, "Land and Power: the Zionist Resort to Force 1881-1948". (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). 236-238.

¹¹⁷ New Zionist Organization (NZO) was founded by Jabotinsky after the WZO refused to stipulate a declaration stating that the final aim of Zionism was the creation of a Jewish State.

¹¹⁸ N.Z.O. Presidency, "Information Bulletin - South Africa, No. 9 [At the Twelfth hour of Zionism]" JI: G4 - 17, 1936.

¹¹⁹ Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 71.

¹²⁰ Shindler, *The Triumph of Military*, 196-197; Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 71; Chazan "The Dispute in Mapai", 109.

The reaction of the Jewish Agency was the addition of the concept of “Purity of Arms” to the already used self-restraint policy.¹²¹ This principle was made to justify the Jewish ‘counterattack’ and meant that the Jewish side was using force only for self-defence and it emphasises the importance of values and morality¹²². A manifesto published by the Jewish Agency Executive stated:

*“The Jewish Yishuv was severely tested during the period of bloodshed— and withstood it. With courage and tenacity, it defended all our positions— but also maintained a purity of its arms of defense; out of moral recognition and political maturity, the Yishuv meticulously adhered to boundaries of self-defense and, by overcoming elemental impulses and exercising national discipline, managed to avoid harming innocent Arabs”.*¹²³

3.3 Haganah Defence Force and the Irgun Split

The new policies of the Jewish leadership provoked a fragmentation inside some of the organs of the Zionist Organization. The Haganah organization (Defence Force of Israel) already vulnerable due to its poorly armed and untrained militia, had different response to the new policy.

Reduce from the riots of 1929, in which the limitation of the defence group openly emerged, a faction of fighters led by Avraham Tehomi left the Haganah and found its own group called *Irgun Bet* (Organisation B) or *Ha-Haganah Ha-Leumit* (National Defence).¹²⁴ The new division followed the ideology of the Maximalist Revisionist especially for what it concerns the ideals of nationalism.

The policy of self-restraint opened new discussions into the already fractioned defence force. The Irgun group split, and the moderate faction composed by Religious and General Zionists returned within the ranks of the Haganah group¹²⁵. A smaller portion, inspired by the Maximalist Revisionist thought and mostly composed by member of the Betar

¹²¹ Chazan, “The Dispute in Mapai”, 108.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid, 104.

¹²⁴ Anon. “The New Zionist (Revisionist) National Army” National Archives: KV 5/ 34/19 (London, England, 1939); Shindler, *The Triumph of Military*, 189; Shavit, Jabotinsky and the Revisionist, 97.

¹²⁵ Shavit, *Jabotinsky and the Revisionist*, 97.

Youth, reorganised into the Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL).¹²⁶ Meanwhile, Tehomi joined the first group in the reunification with the Haganah and the IZL chose Jabotinsky as leader¹²⁷.

Without the moderate leadership of Tehomi, Jabotinsky was not able to stop the radicalization of the group that soon adopted the motto “A bomb for a bomb, and one Arab life for a Jewish life”¹²⁸.

Meanwhile the Arabs contrarily to the Jews, did not stop their *offensive*, and in 1937 provoked an escalation of violence by the IZL and killed 13 Arabs.¹²⁹ Few months later, on the 14th of November, day known as the Black Sunday the IZL group coordinated several attacks in Jerusalem that killed 10 women and men.¹³⁰ This day had a specific meaning for the Jewish political leaders, because the IZL was clearly refusing the policy of self-restraint and introducing terrorism as an option.

Even though, Jabotinsky was considered the leader of the IZL, the birth of this faction represented the end of the Revisionist Zionist as a cultural and ideological movement based on the aesthetic principle of militaristic life and became a concrete expression of it.

The summer of 1938 was signed by violence. In less than two months there have been four attacks, each of them killed at least 10 people at a time.¹³¹ Lenni Brenner reports several of them as “a bomb exploded in the Arab market of Haifa and killed 21 people, and 52 were wounded”.in August of the same year another bomb was thrown in the market of Jaffa and killed 24 and injured 35. In one of the reports of the “Fighting Jews” the use of terrorist measure is described as :

“When the Arabs set a bomb, they consider themselves lucky to kill five or ten Jews. When the Irgun Zvai Leumi [...] set a bomb, they usually kill 40-50 Arabs”¹³².

¹²⁶ Ibid, 97-98.

¹²⁷ Jabotinsky, Zeev , “Discussions with Eliyahu Golomb in London” Jabotinsky Institute: A 1 - 4/ 39 (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1938-1939); Zvai Leumi, Irgun, “Instructions from Zeev Jabotinsky [Agreement with A. Tehomi]” Jabotinsky Institute: K 4 - 1/ 10, (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1935-40).

¹²⁸ Shindler, *The Triumph of Military*, 194; Zvai Leumi, Irgun, “The Sentinel - Weekly Bulletin (No. 10)” Jabotinsky Institute: [The Fighting Jew]K 4 - 15/ 7 (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1939).

¹²⁹ Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 71.

¹³⁰ Shindler, *The Triumph of Military*, 196-197; Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, 71; Chazan “The Dispute in Mapai”, 109.

¹³¹ Brenner, *The Iron Wall*.71.

¹³² Irgun, “The Sentinel”; N.Z.O, Presidency “ZIONNEWS Zionist News” JI: G 4 - 21/ 1 (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1939).

The escalation of the violence produced in June 1938 an interesting turning point. The British Army captured and sentenced to death Ben-Yosef, a militant on the ranks of IZL¹³³. Jabotinsky and other Revisionists took the opportunity to create a new hero, a modern Josef Trumpeldor, ready to die for its ideals.¹³⁴

The episode awakened feeling of hostility against the British presence in Palestine and in one of its conversation with Eliyahu Golomb¹³⁵ Jabotinsky said “*I can tell you that, where I now a terrorist in Eretz Israel, I would have felt the urge, after the trail, to do something against England*”¹³⁶.

At the end of 1938 these ideas were actualized during the World Betar Convention of 1938, when the movement changed its oath from “*I will raise my arm only for defence*” to “*I will raise my arm for defence of my people and the conquering of my homeland*”¹³⁷.

Israel, as other settler colonial society, sought the support of Britain at the beginning, however in the ‘*case of settler colonial entities this dependency must be temporary*’¹³⁸. The British were necessary for the formation of the legal/administrative, diplomatic and military structure without which Israel could not have developed and growth as independent entity.¹³⁹

In the February of 1939, an English organ of the IZL published an article about the ‘Fighting Jews’ that said:

“If there were Jews who thought that they could possess a country in any other way, by waiting for it to be given to them, by buying it out or by self-restraint in the face of the terrible atrocities inflicted upon them- the history of the past 20 years in Palestine has taught them that their methods have led

¹³³ Jabotinsky, Zeev , “Shlomo Ben Yosef Affair” Jabotinsky Institute: A 1 - 4/ 74 (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1938); Jabotinsky, Zeev , “Communique from New Zionist Organization [Disturbances]” Jabotinsky Institute: A 1 - 9/ 43A 1 - 9/ 43 (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1936).

¹³⁴ Jabotinsky, Zeev , “Communique from New Zionist Organization [Disturbances]” Jabotinsky Institute: A 1 - 9/ 43A 1 - 9/ 43 (Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1936).

¹³⁵ Eliyahu Golomb was the Head of the Haganah Defence Force.

¹³⁶ Jabotinsky, “Discussions with Eliyahu Golomb in London” JI: A 1 - 4/ 39, 1938-1939.

¹³⁷ Brenner, *The Iron Wall*,73; Shindler, *The Triumph of Military*, 221.

¹³⁸ L. Veracini. “The Other Shift: Settler Colonialism, Israel and The Occupation”, 34.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 34.

to utter defeat and failure; that there is only one way, and that is fight grimly for what is yours or else you will lose it."¹⁴⁰

From the abstract above, is possible to notice that the three years of ongoing Revolt shaped the ideology of the IZL to a final status.

Meantime the Arabs kept their requests solid, demanding the immediate creation of an Arab State and the end of Jewish immigration in Palestine.

The White Paper of 1939, also known as Macdonald White Paper, shown an unexpected change in the British policy. The paper was meant to 'meet the needs of the Palestinians' and were interpreted by the Jews as a treason to their cause¹⁴¹.

The initial feeling of 'Anglophilia' shared by the Revisionist Zionists for their allies was replaced by what Shapira called 'Anglophobia'.¹⁴²

In September 1939 the Arab Revolt was completely sedated by the British Army.

3.4 The 1948 Al-Nakba: structure not an event

The feeling of Anglophobia did not end with the end of the Arab Revolt and soon the situation became unmanageable for the British Government that decided to pass the question of Palestine to the United Nations¹⁴³. In 1947 the General Assembly of the UN met to decide a partition plan for Palestine. There was decided and voted the UN 181 Resolution that foreseen the division of Palestine in two separate entities: a Jewish State and an Arab State, with Jerusalem under international administration¹⁴⁴. Benny Morris, an Israeli historian, described the event as a moment of joy for the Jews 'dancing the hora on the street of Tel Aviv' but he underlines that not everyone joined, referring to Ben-

¹⁴⁰ Zvai Leumi, Irgun, "The Sentinel - Weekly Bulletin (Vol.1 No. 3)" Jabotinsky Institute [henceforth JI]: K 4 - 15/ 7 [The Fighting Jew], Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1939.

¹⁴¹ Shindler, *The Triumph of Military*, 217.

¹⁴² Shapira, *Land and Power*, 246.

¹⁴³ Now the organ in charge of the international resolution of conflict.

¹⁴⁴ United Nation General Assembly, Resolution 181, 29 November 1947.

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>

Gurion that said: “*I could only think that they were all going to war*”.¹⁴⁵ Meanwhile Britain declare the withdraw of its troops for the 14 of May 1948.

On May of the following year, Ben-Gurion appeared to be right.¹⁴⁶ As soon as the British Army left the country, a violent civil war spread out in Palestine: The War for Independence for the Jews and Al-Nakba (The Catastrophe) for the Arabs.

The Palestinian exodus -or ethnic cleansing- is consider “more than simply a one-time physical act of expulsion”¹⁴⁷. The dispossession of the Palestinian, as we have seen in the previous paragraphs, is not an episode of a single day, it rather needed a long time to be organised “*a new legal infrastructure to legalise the transfer of lands from Palestinians to Jews, to concomitantly denationalise Palestinians while granting automatic citizenship and legal status to Jews, and to consolidate and protect these foundational forms of dispossession*”¹⁴⁸.

During the war 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee from their home.

The ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, as Wolfe assert in his works on settler colonialist society, was a well-structured step of the establishment of the State of Israel: “*Colonisers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event*”.¹⁴⁹

The impact of the war as much as of the radical ideology of IZL is perceptible in a speech of Ben-Gurion to the Labour party in 1948:

“It is it difficult for me now to understand any language other than the language of war. I hear every other language as a foreign language that I learned a while ago and that has since, sunk, as if fallen into the abyss. And it is best that all of us forget for now a great deal of what we learned in other distant times- even though the "distant time" is but a few months ago! - and

¹⁴⁵ David Margolick, “Endless War”, (2008), The New York Times, Book Reviews : “1948 A History of the First Arab-Israeli War. By Benny Morris”.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ben White, “The Palestinian Nakba goes far beyond one day in 1948”. (2016), The National.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Karma Nabulsi, “In Jerusalem we have the latest chapter in a century of colonialism” (2017), The Guardian.

*focus the essence of our lives, all our senses and our limbs in one single desire
- the desire to win.*¹⁵⁰

Conclusion

I have tried to show how the concept of elimination or replacement was crucial in the state-building process of Israel. After remarking the main differences between settler colonialism and colonialism, I have analysed the concept of land showing that the occupation of it was followed by the intention to replace the native people, in this case the Palestinian Arabs. This idea has always been central in the Zionist ideology, and had its strengthening with the split of the Revisionist faction and later the creation of the IZL.

Starting with Political Zionism where the notion of Theodore Herzl of “spiriting away” the Arab population of Palestine “gradually and circumspectly” were already present.¹⁵¹ The real turning point of the Zionist ideology came with Jabotinsky and the Revisionist party. Since 1923 when Jabotinsky first began writing about the “Iron Wall” he had assumed that confrontation was both inevitable and necessary against the Arab “natives”¹⁵². As we saw, Jabotinsky was strongly influenced by the nationalist ideas that were crossing Europe. He found in Zionism the instrument to create the ‘New Jew’ who could have compete with the other great races of Europe. The Betar Youth was the first step to change the behaviour of the Jewish youth. He saw in it a means to fight anti-Semitism instead of running from it.

The real escalation of the violence arrived with the IZL group. For the first time a Jewish group officialise the use of terrorism as an instrument of action, even though the Jewish Agency and its leaders did not approve it. The militaristic values and ideas of the

¹⁵⁰ Israel, David Ben-Gurion, “People’s Council and Provisional Council of State, 1948-1949” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs: [Available from: <http://jcpa.org/article/major-knesset-debates-1948-1981>].

¹⁵¹ Karma Nabulsi, “In Jerusalem we have the latest chapter in a century of colonialism” (2017), The Guardian.

¹⁵² Jabotinsky, *On the Iron Wall*.

Revisionist group became real during the Arab Revolts through the action of *its* militia. The group gained the reputation of a ‘terroristic organization’ due to the number of attack and death that has left behind.

During the last decade of the Mandate the IZL include the British presence in Palestine in its targets. Finally, with the withdraw of the British troops in 1948, the Zionists could go back to their main target.

In the last chapter of my thesis I tried to underline the importance of the Palestinian Al-Nakba understood in a settler colonial vision, not as an event of a day or a year but an organised structure. It has been a process that dates back at the origins of the Zionist ideology and the event of 1948 have been a manifestation of it.

As we can see, this notion as well as the vision of Israel as a settler colonialist society, would not be understandable without the framing of settler colonialism. After the appropriation of the land the process of elimination is soon to come. The ethnic cleansing has been considered a “symptom of settler colonial anxiety about demographics” and can be identified in the origins of the policy of settlements by the Zionists.¹⁵³

During the war of 1948 this process had reached its worst expression. Almost a million of Arabs were forced to live their home, and the ones who stayed have been subjugated by the Israelis ever since.

Within the framework of settler colonial studies new solution and approaches are been taken about the Israeli/Palestinian case. Most of them include the process of decolonization and liberalization as a solution of the Palestinian Al-Nakba.

Within these theories is possible to understand the event of 1948 as an ongoing process that started way before, and it did not come to an end yet. Today the Nakba of the Palestinians changed its expression but not its meaning.

As Ben-Gurion said, “*the future of the region remains to be seen, the 1948 war has yet to end and the winner is still not clear*”¹⁵⁴.

¹⁵³ Ben White, “The Palestinian Nakba goes far beyond one day in 1948”. (2016), The National.

¹⁵⁴ David Margolick, “Endless War”, (2008), The New York Times, Book Reviews : “1948 A History of the First Arab-Israeli War. By Benny Morris”.

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