



The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in the Memory of the Past the Jewish Nation: From Holocaust to Holocaust

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Abstract

This paper explores the dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the perspective of Jewish history and collective memory, with a particular focus on the Holocaust as a point of departure. Through a history of civilization approach and collective memory analysis, this paper explores how the traumatic experience of the Holocaust has shaped the identity, politics and narratives of the Jewish people to influence their views on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. It reveals how the memory of the Holocaust is not only an integral part of Jewish identity but also plays a role in shaping the policies and strategies adopted by the state of Israel. Holocaust memory is often used to justify defensive and offensive actions to sustain the Jewish state amidst external and internal threats. In this context, the “From Holocaust to Holocaust” narrative reflects the transformation and

continuity of collective trauma used as a legitimization and mobilization tool in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This paper uses historiographic methods and narrative analysis to identify recurring patterns of thought and feeling within the Jewish community and how these patterns translate into political action. It also highlights the role of critical actors, both political and intellectual, in shaping and articulating these narratives. The results of this paper are expected to provide deeper insights into the complexity of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and how history and collective memory play an essential role in the dynamics of this conflict.

Keywords: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Middle East, Jewish Nation, Holocaust

1. Introduction

The conflict in Palestine is a conflict that always triggers the birth of a new round of conflict, either with the Palestinian Authority and militants or with neighbouring countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.¹ If we follow the development of this conflict over the past 15 years, the outbreak of this conflict is like a consistent discourse launched almost every three years, starting from the 2008 conflict, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2021, and most recently in 2023.² The humanitarian tragedy that occurred in Palestine rests on the exodus of the Jewish people who were expelled from Palestine by Roman imperialism. They were scattered in parts of Europe as a diaspora. During their exile, the Jews received discriminatory treatment from European natives and even experienced a tragedy during World War II, called the Holocaust, by the German Nazi group. The massacre of the Jews by the Nazis sparked a revolutionary reaction from a Jewish figure, Teodor Herzl. Herzl developed a new ideology influenced by Western nationalism, Zionism, which was inaugurated at the International

¹ Avraham Sela and Alon Kadish, "Israeli and Palestinian Memories and Historical Narratives of the 1948 War—an Overview," *Israel Studies* 21, no. 1 (2016): 1–26.

² Samira Alayan, "The Holocaust in Palestinian Textbooks," *Comparative Education Review* 60, no. 1 (February 2016): 80–104, doi:10.1086/684362.

Congress of Zionism in Basel, Switzerland in 1897.³ This ideology motivated the Jewish people to carry out massive immigration to the land of Palestine and establish a state for the Jewish people, he said in his famous quote “A land without a people for a people without a land”.⁴

The struggle for control over the land of Palestine began with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I in 1917. This led to Palestine becoming a state under the British mandate. After the end of World War I, the Central Powers; Britain, France and Russia agreed to divide the Ottoman Empire in an agreement known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This agreement was made in May 1916 with Lebanon and Syria going to France and most of Eastern Iraq, Jordan and the Haifah region of Palestine going to Britain. Based on the consideration of the many parties who wanted to occupy the Palestinian territories, an agreement was drawn to put the Palestinian territories under international supervision. However, Britain violated the Sykes-Picot Agreement by occupying Palestine. After the British occupation, Jewish immigrants began to come and settle in Palestine. However, the public realized that Palestine only changed hands after they declared Israel as an independent state on 15 May 1948, from the Arab Muslims to the Jews.⁵

This paper contains historical snapshots and collective memories of the Jewish past that underlie the ongoing Arab-Palestinian-Israeli conflict.⁶ The establishment of the Jewish nationalist movement, Zionism. This paper aims to explain how the Jewish people, in collective memory, experienced various historical events during the diaspora in European lands. Then it can frame the Jewish nation in a negative term today, starting from the persecution of the Jews in Europe, the Pogroms and the Holocaust, the narrative of returning to the land of Zion, the formation of the ideology of Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, to the colonialism in the land of Palestine which took many victims. Since it is

³ Monique Eckmann, “History and Memory of the Other: An Experimental Encounter-Programme with Israeli Jews and Palestinians from Israel,” in *Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities: Sources, Comparisons and Educational Challenges* (Springer, 2012), 133–52.

⁴ Isabelle Hesse, “Competitive Memories: The Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Contemporary British Culture,” *New Formations* 93, no. 93 (July 1, 2018): 46–63, doi:10.3898/NEWF:93.03.2017.

⁵ Widya Islamiati and Syamsul Rijal, “Memahami Konflik Palestina-Israel Dalam Bingkai Berita NU Online,” *Jurnal Studi Jurnalistik* 4, no. 2 (November 6, 2022): 1–18, doi:10.15408/jsj.v4i2.28963.

⁶ Cristina Andriani, “Holocaust Collective Memory in the Context of the Palestinian–Israeli Conflict: A Multifaceted Symbol,” in *Symbols That Bind, Symbols That Divide: The Semiotics of Peace and Conflict* (Springer, 2014), 111–35.

impossible to discuss all the memories of the Jewish past, the author will only include a series of events in a small dimension from the persecution of the Jews in Europe to the establishment of the Zionist state of Israel in Palestine.⁷

2. Result and Discussion

Jewish Persecution and Zionism

The Jewish nation is an ethnic, religious and cultural group that descends from the Prophets Abraham, Isaac, and Yaqub known as the Children of Israel. The Jewish people have a long history, which involves exile, exodus, persecution, the ideology of Zionism, and the formation of the state of Israel. When Roman Imperialism expanded in the Middle East, the Jews were expelled from the land of Zion and travelled to Western and Eastern Europe. The Jewish people tried to maintain their identity while in exile, but their confidence as a superior nation on earth was quite mandarahdlesh. In principle, the Jews migrated to the land of Palestine based on their beliefs taken from the Talmud, which believes that the land of Palestine is the land promised by God for them.⁸ In addition, the Jews also believe that their fate scattered in Europe is a form of penance for the offences they committed against Yahweh God. They are waiting for a Messiah figure who will reunite them and bring peace to the world. The discourse to return to the land of Zion was still based on the theological perspective that they built until the 19th century. However, as the teachings of Western philosophy developed, the Jews began to see a potential political reality when they migrated to Palestine.⁹

The spread of the Jewish people in Europe is divided into two: the Western European diaspora and the Eastern European diaspora. Referring to the results of the French Revolution (1789) and the Declaration of Human Rights, in September 1791, the French National Assembly granted citizenship rights to Western European Jews who swore an oath of allegiance. France was at the forefront of the emancipation movement. For example, Jews were only later recognized for equal rights in Greece (1830), Great Britain (1858), Italy (1870), Germany (1871)

⁷ Rafi Nets-Zehngut, "The Israeli and Palestinian Collective Memories of Their Conflict: Determinants, Characteristics, and Implications," *Brown J. World Aff.* 20 (2013): 103.

⁸ M. Kholid Muslih et al., "Ideologi Zionisme dalam Timbangan Teologi Islam: Kajian Atas Rasisme Dalam Pemikiran Zionisme," *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 20, no. 2 (December 28, 2021): 269–303, doi:10.30631/tjd.v20i2.178.

⁹ Liora Halperin, "Origins and Evolution of Zionism," *Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 2015.

and Norway (1891).¹⁰ Western Europe offered assimilation of cultural identity to the Jews, and asked them to abandon their ancestral culture. In the end, many Western European Jews assimilated into Western culture to increase social equality, as well as to reduce the negative stigma of Western European society and xenophobia towards the Jewish people. But despite this, Western European Jews are still plagued by anti-semitism and social discrimination, as they are still seen as immigrants and refugees in Europe.¹¹

In contrast to Western Europe, the condition of 75% of the Jews in the Diaspora in Eastern Europe is no better than the fate of those in Western Europe. Discriminatory and exploitative acts against the Jews in Eastern Europe - which is controlled by the Russian Federation - are more severe and deplorable, and it seems that the discourse of change and philosophical doctrines of Western Europe did not take place in the Eastern European region. According to historian Howard M. Sachar in *For the Russian Empire*, the Jews were not far from being just a bunch of illiterate peasants. They were considered the group most responsible for the death of Jesus and chaos on earth.¹² Seeing the number of Jewish refugees swelling, the Russian government decided to concentrate them in an isolated area in Poland, which was then under Russian control, then created the Pale of Settlement in 1791 AD. The condition of the Jews who were concentrated in one area became increasingly unfavourable, seeing that the number did not match the size of the area. They experienced limited movement and access, and the worst was the Russian government's decree that obliged Jewish refugees to be conscripted into the military. The recruitment process was targeted at Jews as young as eight years old, who were forcibly taken from their families and conscripted for 25 years.¹³

Tsar Alexander and the Birth of Haskalah

Things changed when Emperor Alexander II rose to rule the Russian Empire (1855-1881). During his reign, there was a relaxation of policies. This became a bright spot for the Jewish people to breathe a little fresh air, and on this occasion,

¹⁰ Encyclopedia USHMM, *Kehidupan Kaum Yahudi Di Eropa Sebelum Holocaust*, n.d.

¹¹ Gregory Harms and Todd M Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction* (Pluto Press, 2017).

¹² Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (Hachette UK, 2017).

¹³ Harms and Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction*.

the Jewish people formed a movement called Haskalah (enlightenment).¹⁴ This movement gave Eastern European Jews a new view of Western philosophy. They received secular and liberal educational doctrines that reduced their social exclusivity. They also became more open because of the access of the Empire, which was relatively lenient, as evidenced by the more dynamic life of the Jewish people, the easing of the Pale of Settlement area, and the freedom to study Western philosophical teachings and other scientific studies. This Haskalah movement later gave birth to the Jewish nationalist ideology, Zionism.¹⁵ Although conditions for Eastern European Jews were considered better during the era of Emperor Alexander II, this did not last forever, as there were protest movements from the Russian elite and grassroots demanding to close Jewish access in Moscow and return them to the confinement of the Pale of Settlement. However, anti-Semitism was still strong and even ingrained in Russian society. In 1881, the hopes of Eastern European Jewry were dashed when Emperor Alexander II died at the hands of young Russian revolutionaries.¹⁶

Tsar Alexander III and the Pogroms

Eastern European Jews came under significant pressure when Emperor Alexander III came to replace Alexander II.¹⁷ Their conditions were increasingly far from decent, and access restrictions were tightened again.¹⁸ Many Jews were relocated to the overcrowded slums of the Pale. In addition to the political backlash that ensued, the Russian peasantry and elite also vented their hatred towards the Jews in a wave of savage attacks. They launched violent actions that shook the Jewish nation to its roots. The tragedy occurred on Passover Day in 1882 and became known as the Pogroms.¹⁹

¹⁴ Michael Brenner, *Jews and Muslims in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union*, ed. Michael Brenner, Franziska Davies, and Martin Schulze Wessel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), doi:10.13109/9783666310287.

¹⁵ Robert M. Seltzer, "Chapter Two From Haskalah to Positivism," in *Simon Dubnow's "New Judaism"* (BRILL, 2014), 27–46, doi:10.1163/9789004260672_003.

¹⁶ Marcin Wodziński, "Good Maskilim and Bad Assimilationists, or toward a New Historiography of the Haskalah in Poland," *Jewish Social Studies* 10, no. 3 (2004): 87–122.

¹⁷ Victoria Khiterer, "The October 1905 Pogroms and the Russian Authorities," *Nationalities Papers* 43, no. 5 (September 20, 2015): 788–803, doi:10.1080/00905992.2015.1049134.

¹⁸ Galina M Rebel, "Why the Finest of Russians Did Not Condemn the Anti-Jewish Pogroms," *Март—Апрель*, 2021, 14.

¹⁹ Harms and Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction*.

The bloody events carved a dark memory of the Jewish past and brought the Jewish people to a psychological threshold. Fear and trauma continued to envelop them until hundreds of thousands of them decided to return to departure to Western Europe, America and Palestine. Fleeing to seek asylum and protection became their only way to survive. However, at the same time, - in Western Europe - this idea of escape is being focussed and tempered with the idea of nationalism.²⁰

Birth of Zionism

The Jewish people - as explained earlier - have a collective memory of the past that compiles the events and tragedies that befell them during their diaspora in European lands. This event then became the basis of their motivation, which encouraged them to establish an exclusive Jewish homeland. The ambition of the Jewish people to receive asylum and protection is the essence of Zionism.²¹

The term “Zionism” comes from the root word Zion or sion, which in early Jewish history was a synonym for the word Jerusalem. Zion is the English pronunciation, Latin is sion, and Hebrew is Tsyon. The meaning of this term is “hill”, the holy hill of Jerusalem, which also symbolizes the concept of “Jewish theocracy”. Zion is also translated as “high hill”, where the holy hill erected by Prophet Solomon stands.²² Long before the rise of Zionism and the 1896 International Congress of Zionism held in Basel, Switzerland, the term Zionism was first used by an Austrian Jewish writer and journalist, Nathan Birnbaum (1885). However, Zionism as a concept of thought had developed several years earlier under the term Jewish nationalism. This concept developed among Jewish thinkers who were exposed to the doctrine of Western European nationalism. They were called Proto-Zionism or the Predecessors of Zionism. Moses Hess (1812-1875) was the first to formulate Zionism in a metaphysical concept of Jewish nationalism as a reaction to anti-Semitism, which was later developed practically by Perez Smolenskin.²³ Perez was active as an exponent of the Eastern European Haskalah and a devotee of Jewish nationalism. Perez

²⁰ John Etty, “Alexander Iii, Tsar of Russia 1881-1889,” *History Review*, no. 60 (2008): 1.

²¹ Howard M Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (Knopf, 2007).

²² Andi Satrianingsih and Zaenal Abidin, “Sejarah Zionisme Dan Berdirinya Negara Israel,” *Jurnal Adabiyah* 16, no. 2 (2016): 172-84.

²³ Alan R Taylor, “Zionism and Jewish History,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, no. 2 (1972): 35-51.

developed Moses' metaphysical concepts by expressing his ideas in a journal he established in Hebrew, *Ha-Shahar*.²⁴

The doctrine of Jewish nationalism continued to develop since the early 19th century. Many writings of Jewish journalists echoed the ideology of Zionism in the term nationalism. For example, in 1839, a rabbi named Yehuda Alkalai published an article entitled *Darchai Noam* (The pleasant path), this article proposed the colonization of the Holy Land (Palestine). A rabbi from East Prussia Zvi Hirsch Kalischer published a similar paper on redemption by action. And in 1862, Moses Hess responded to discriminatory behaviour against German Jews by writing *Rome and Jerusalem*.²⁵

After the development of the metaphysical concept initiated by Moses Hess, this ideology further developed among Zionist practitioners after the pogroms that occurred in Eastern Europe. The *Haskalah* envisioned by the Jewish people is only a memory of the light extinguished by the event. However, some students and Jewish literacy activists decided to implement a more practical concept of Zionism. In response, Zionist groups began to emerge in the Pale region, including *Hibbat Zion* (Love of Zion). This group was involved in various social and political activities in the Eastern European Pale. In substance, the ideology they built was not far from their predecessors, namely that life under Russian control was untenable, and the only solution was *Eretz-Israel*. In 1882, under the leadership of Doctor Leo Pinsker, this group published a paper entitled *Autoemancipation*. It was the first substantive formulation and analysis of anti-Semitism. He argued that anti-Semitism in the world was incurable, and that the Jewish homeland was the only means of liberation.²⁶

Theodor Herzl and the Politics of Zionism

Over the years, the notion and term Zionism has developed, starting from metaphysical ideas and concepts, then represented by practitioners in more tangible concepts. This time, a figure emerged who was not only a practitioner, but he formulated the idea of Zionism in a more politically structured dimension. He was Theodor Herzl, an Austrian journalist. Herzl contemplated several events

²⁴ Encyclopedia Judaica, Perez Smolenskin. *Jewish Virtual Library*, 2008.

²⁵ Harms and Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction*.

²⁶ Walter Laqueur, *The History of Zionism* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003).

that befell the Jews in Eastern Europe. The contemplation then grew into an obsession after covering anti-Semitism in France.²⁷

Herzl differed slightly from traditional Zionist activists, arguing that concrete steps needed to be taken to realize peace for the Jewish people, namely more politically and diplomatically. Herzl had a sophisticated strategy that had never been thought of by his predecessors, diplomatic relations with the ruling elite - Jewish and non-Jewish - became the primary step in realizing a state for the Jewish people. Herzl mentioned in a tract written in 1896 with the full title *Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen lösung der Judenfrage* (The Jewish State: A modern solution to the Jewish question). He states that Zionism is a combination of various aspirations. These include (1) the rise of Jewish nationalism along with nationalism in Europe and the Arab world, (2) a response to anti-semitism and the persecution of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, (3) a reaction to the increasing assimilation of Jews into European society. In this sense, Zionism is a negation or rejection of centuries of diaspora life characterized by persecution, expulsion, discrimination, assimilation and migration. Diasporic life will mould Jewish individuals who are slave-like, impotent, weak, cunning, and at the mercy of others.²⁸

On 29 August 1897, the First Zionist Congress was held in Basel, Switzerland. It promoted the principles of Zionism to all the world's Zionist organizations and contemplated how to realize a Jewish state in the land of Palestine. After all the elements were involved in building the foundations of Zionism, Herzl saw the need to fundraise and gain international support to realise these ideals. Then Herzl carried out diplomatic touring duties to seek support from several parties, including the person he visited was, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the Ottoman Ruler in 1901. Herzl offered to help pay off Ottoman debts in exchange for a patch of land in Palestine for the Jews. However, Sultan Abdul Hamid II rejected this offer. Apart from the Ottomans, Herzl asked for British support, but what was offered was land in Uganda. Herzl's journey was fruitless until it caused chaos at the Sixth Zionist Congress. Among them, some wanted practicality and dynamism. Some put forward their idealism to choose the land of Palestine. Herzl died in 1904 at the age of 44.²⁹

²⁷ Derek Jonathan Penslar, *Theodor Herzl* (Yale University Press, 2020).

²⁸ Leonard C Epafra, "Memahami Ingatan Kultural Yahudi Dalam Konflik Israel-Palestina," *Jurnal Kawistara* 3, no. 2 (2013).

²⁹ Uri Zilbersheid, "The Utopia of Theodor Herzl," *Israel Studies* 9, no. 3 (2004): 80–114.

Ottoman Collapse

Palestine - until the early 20th century, was a geopolitical entity bound by the policies of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire in the 18th century was already weakened and in decline, marked by the absence of a worthy successor since Sulaiman Al-Qanuni died. The decline of the Ottoman Empire was its vast territory which made it challenging to organize state administration, while the rulers were constantly at war to continue expanding Ottoman territory.³⁰ Compared to the Abbasid Sultanate, which prioritized the education and scientific sector of Muslims, the Ottoman Empire was oriented towards military strategy and territorial expansion. The instability of the state triggered internal Ottoman rebellions, including the Young Turk Movement group. Sultan Abdul Hamid II came to power to replace Sultan Murad V. Unlike Murad V, Abdul Hamid II tended not to be intervened by anyone. Abdul Hamid II dissolved parliament when he came to power and suspended the constitution. He considered that the parliament would hinder his policies while in power.³¹ The Sultan became more authoritarian after the freezing of the constitution because there was nothing to limit his power. Seeing this, the Young Turk Movement considered that the decline of the Ottomans was due to the absolute dictatorial leadership of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, so they had the ambition to limit the Sultan's power and even overthrow him. The Young Turks launched a revolution on 3 July 1908 AD, demanding that the frozen constitution be restored. This revolution received full support from the layers of society who had begun to feel the dictatorial leadership.³² In the end, this demand was granted by the Sultan and other officials.³³

Zionism and the Young Turk Movement

Previously, it was explained that Theodor Herzl had offered financial assistance to Sultan Abdul Hamid II in exchange for a plot of land in Palestine. However, the offer was flatly rejected by Abdul Hamid II. As a result of this

³⁰ Tamara Gissela, "Pemikiran Gerakan Turki Muda Dalam Upaya Menjatuhkan Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909 M)," 2017.

³¹ Oktay Özel, *The Collapse of Rural Order in Ottoman Anatolia: Amasya 1576-1643*, vol. 61 (Brill, 2016).

³² Ryan Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1908-1922* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

³³ Gissela, "Pemikiran Gerakan Turki Muda Dalam Upaya Menjatuhkan Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909 M)."

problem, the Jews, after Herzl, began to antagonize Abdul Hamid II. With the Ottoman condition on the verge of collapse, the Zionists saw a potential gap in overthrowing Abdul Hamid II by mobilizing the international media and uniting the enemies of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, including the Young Turks. The relationship between the Young Turks and the Zionist movement can be traced back to establishing the Committee of Union and Progress in 1907 AD. Zionists argued that the Young Turks were a card they could use to pressure the Sultan.³⁴ Young Turkey believed that with the overthrow of Abdul Hamid II, the state could unite the diverse elements in the government. The Europeans also stopped pressurizing the Ottoman government and assumed that the Europeans would promise to protect it. Sultan Abdul Hamid II was successfully removed from power on 27 April 1909 AD and handed over to Muhammad Rashad, better known as Mehmed V. In his time, the Sultan's leadership was only a symbol and a puppet controlled by three absolute rulers with military backgrounds: Mehmed Tala'at, Ismail Enver, and Ahmed Cemal.

The Land of Palestine and the 1858 Argaria Law

Most Palestinian people are farmers, considering that this region is included in the Fertile Crescent region, which gets the waters of the Jordan River. The Zionists coveted the region. But in the mid-19th century, the Ottoman Empire suffered significant setbacks. The expansion of the area made it overwhelmed to control its power. The Ottomans suffered substantial financial losses due to mismanagement. To stabilize revenues, the Sultan sought reform and reorganization in 1839.³⁵

In 1858, the Ottoman Agrarian Law began to be enforced. The policy was implemented so that the state could control land ownership by registering ownership, making certificates, and imposing taxes. Unfortunately, this policy had a significant impact that was felt after several decades until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This impact was felt by most Palestinians who worked as farmers. Inevitably, they had to register their land to the state. They were caught in a dilemma, and their choices were only two, which were equally at

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ana Silviana and Ariza Fuadi, "Legal Policy on the Use of Heir Certificates (SKAW) for Registration of Land Rights Transfers in Indonesia," *LAW REFORM* 19, no. 2 (December 29, 2023): 294–320, doi:10.14710/lr.v19i2.52626.

risk of losing their land. First, the farmers register the land in their name, which risks losing the land because they cannot afford to pay the tax. Secondly, the farmers ask a landlord to register and pay the tax, risking losing their land to a third party. And that third party is the Zionist groups who have prepared and read it carefully.³⁶ Time and again, internal Ottoman blunders occurred, even to the extent that Ismail Enver Pasha (a Young Turk figure) is considered the person most responsible for his decision to bring the Ottomans into World War I in the central bloc.³⁷

Jewish Immigration to Palestine (Aliyah)

Long before European Jews immigrated to Palestine in 1882, a minority Jewish population was already living in Palestine.³⁸ They lived peacefully alongside Palestinian Arabs, the majority of whom were Muslims and some Christians. They were recorded as citizens of Palestine under Ottoman rule, and the non-Jewish population accounted for about 96 per cent of the total population. The groups living in the region are divided into two: Firstly, the Sephardim (black Jews), who were Ottoman citizens, integrated into Arab culture and had good relations with Muslim and Christian communities. Secondly, the Ashkenazim (white Jews), a group of Jews who developed in Eastern Europe. This group first immigrated to Palestine to seek asylum and protection but was later followed by a large wave of Eastern European Jewish immigration, which brought Zionism as the forerunner of the state of Israel.³⁹

The wave of Eastern European Jewish immigration (Aliyah) was divided into two clusters: First (1882-1903), 25,000 Eastern European Jews immigrated to Palestine. However, not long after their arrival, most of them decided to return to Palestine because they found that the land of Palestine did not match their expectations, which had many large agricultural fields and empty land. Second (1904-1914), 30,000 Eastern European Jewish immigrants entered Palestine. Unlike Aliyah I, they were more aggressive and determined in their political

³⁶ Harms and Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction*.

³⁷ Sabrina Puddu, "From Common Land to Farmhouses: Agricultural Penal Colonies and the Project of Modern Rurality in Sardinia, Italy," *The Journal of Architecture* 28, no. 7 (October 3, 2023): 1184-1213, doi:10.1080/13602365.2023.2297477.

³⁸ Daniel Pipes, "A Muslim Aliyah Paralleled the Jewish Aliyah: Part I, to 1948," *Middle East Quarterly*, 2024.

³⁹ Harms and Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction*.

endeavours. Unlike Western European Zionism, which took the model of European nationalism as an image for the modern state of Israel. However, in later developments, the model taken was Russian socialism. Herzl's nationalist and contemporary model of Zionism felt bourgeois to most of the young Eastern European Zionists.⁴⁰ They bought land and built the first settlements and agricultural areas in Kibutsim and Moshavim. They also managed the area exclusively, employing the Jewish community and profits from the crops they enjoyed.

It can be concluded that this was a time bomb and a consequence of the blundering policies of the Ottoman Empire, which reduced the property rights of Palestinian farmers by establishing the Ottoman agrarian law (1858). From 1878 to 1908, the Zionists had purchased 100,000 hectares of land in Palestine. This small step by the Zionists had a very significant impact on Palestine at the end of the Ottoman Empire.⁴¹

Palestine across two World Wars

During the World Wars, the land of Palestine was in a threatened position. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire was defeated, and the British mandate over Palestine significantly impacted the region's political stability.⁴² Zionists who had good relations with Britain tried to lobby back to give Zionist Jews legitimacy to sovereignty in Palestine after previous negotiations between Britain and the Arabs, which asked the Arabs to revolt against Ottoman imperialism in exchange for Arab independence. All of this is recorded in a series of promises that are scheduled as follows:

1. Hussein-McMahon Correspondence (1915-1916)

These negotiations occurred between the British high commissioner in Cairo, Sir Henry McMahon, and Sharif Hussein of Mecca. They exchanged letters from 1915 A.D. to 1916 A.D., discussing Britain's request to the Arabs to launch an uprising against the Ottoman Empire and Sharif Hussein's desire for weapons ammunition and Arab independence from

⁴⁰ Epafra, "Memahami Ingatan Kultural Yahudi Dalam Konflik Israel-Palestina."

⁴¹ Yuval Ben-Bassat, "The Challenges Facing the First Aliyah Sephardic Ottoman Colonists," *Journal of Israeli History* 35, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 3–15, doi:10.1080/13531042.2016.1140873.

⁴² Walid Khalidi, "Palestine and Palestine Studies," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 44, no. 1 (November 1, 2014): 137–47, doi:10.1525/jps.2014.44.1.137.

the Ottomans. Although Britain was willing to assist Arab autonomy, in this case, McMahon was observant enough to keep strategic areas of territorial consideration for his interests. Britain divided the Ottoman mandate for the Allies, including Syria and Lebanon, given to France. Britain got a mandate over Jordan and Iraq, excluding the west bank of the Jordan River (Palestine). This secret negotiation between Britain and France was known as The Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916).⁴³

2. Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916)

As mentioned earlier, this treaty was the result of secret negotiations that took place between Britain and France. The actors involved in this agreement were Francois Georges-Picot, a diplomat representing the French side, and Sir Mark Sykes, a member of the British Parliament. In these secret negotiations, the two countries carved out the territorial boundaries of the Middle Eastern countries, which then divided their mandates over the region. France got Syria and Lebanon, and Britain got Jordan and Iraq. Britain then excluded the West Bank of the Jordan River (Palestine), whose administration was to be determined later. Thus, Britain and France have used these regions as proxies to gain priority access and facilitate their business networks and various national interests.⁴⁴

3. Balfour Declaration (1917)

The Balfour Declaration is the most controversial document in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The view of the legitimacy of the Jewish people - to establish an independent state in Palestine - has become the root of all the problems of the current conflict.⁴⁵ The Balfour Declaration was written as a letter issued by the British foreign minister, Arthur Balfour, to Lord Walter Rothschild, the leader of the British Jewish community, in 1917 AD. Balfour permitted Walter to create a national settlement for the Jewish people, as stated in his letter, which reads:

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people...”

⁴³ Hanafi Wibowo, *Palestine: Long Road To Freedom* (Neosphere Digdaya Mulia, 2024).

⁴⁴ Robert Johnson, “The de Bunsen Committee and a Revision of the ‘Conspiracy’ of Sykes-Picot,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, no. 4 (July 4, 2018): 611–37, doi:10.1080/00263206.2018.1448790.

⁴⁵ Arthur James Balfour, “The Balfour Declaration,” *Speeches on Zionism by the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Balfour*, 1917, 19–21.

Post-World War II Palestine

In its development, during the Second World War, the relationship between Zionism and Britain was considered disharmonious and could not be recovered. This was caused by the Passfield White Paper issued by the British in 1930. The document made a narrative of restrictions on Jewish immigration to the land of Palestine due to acts of violence against the Palestinian people that occurred after the Balfour declaration in 1917 AD so that the conflict between the two sides could not be avoided. The British attitude toward the white document of 1930 AD was then considered a form of betrayal of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 AD.⁴⁶

In response, the Zionist movement became more aggressive. During World War II, the Zionists became a more militant entity under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion, who later became Israel's first prime minister. They targeted British settlements in Palestine and pressured Britain to withdraw from its mandate.⁴⁷

As Zionist militancy grew and the Holocaust was perpetrated by Nazi Germany, so did Jewish-American interest in Zionism. They organized the Biltmore Conference in New York (1942) to support the ideology of Zionism. The conference stated that access to Palestine should be opened to unlimited Jewish immigration and that Palestine should become an independent Jewish settlement.⁴⁸

At the end of World War II, in 1947 AD. Britain decided to withdraw and relinquish its mandate over Palestine. At the same time, the UN Assembly passed the first resolution with a two-state solution. Israel got 55 per cent of the territory, and Palestine got only 45 per cent of the territory, with Jerusalem under UN International supervision. A year after the resolution, Zionists proclaimed the independence of a Jewish state called Israel in 1948. However, a few days after that, Israel was criticized and resisted by Arab countries, such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, leading to a new round of warfare, the Arab-Israeli War.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Adey Almohsen, Ahmad S al-Karmi, and Mao Zedong, "Arab Critical Culture and Its (Palestinian) Discontents after the Second World War," *Arab Studies Journal* 29, no. 1 (2021): 56–83.

⁴⁷ Kobi Kabalek, "Between Nationalism and Internationalism: Robert Weltsch and the Colonial Dilemma in World War II Palestine," *AJS Review: The Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies* 48, no. 1 (April 2024): 77–99, doi:10.1353/ajs.2024.a926058.

⁴⁸ Lilach Rosenberg-Friedman, "Nationalism, Gender and Feminine Identity: The Case of Post-World War II Zionist Female Emissaries," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 8, no. 2 (2014): 194–216.

⁴⁹ Rashid Khalidi, "1948 and after in Palestine: Universal Themes?," *Critical Inquiry* 40, no. 4 (2014): 314–31.

After hundreds of years in the diaspora, Theodor Herzl's dream of establishing a Jewish state seems to have been realized. However, compared to a dream, this event is more appropriate to be considered a major disaster whose impact continues today. Prolonged conflict and human tragedy continue to be shown by the Israeli Zionist group without mercy.⁵⁰

3. Conclusion

The collective memory of the Jewish records a series of events during their diaspora in Western and Eastern Europe, which significantly influences their identity, attitudes and outlook on life in the present and future. This memory developed into an ideology of Jewish nationalism known as Zionism. From the collection of past experiences of the Jewish people, it can be concluded that Zionism is a strategic discourse that has been well organized since its inception, even in the metaphysical concept initiated by Moses Hess. This discourse was then undertaken by Theodor Herzl, an Austrian journalist who dared to break the traditional ideology of Judaism and awaited the coming of the Messiah to reunite the Jewish people in the land of Zion. However, the development of Zionism was inseparable from the internal mistakes and policy blunders made by the Ottoman Empire. Firstly, the 1858 agrarian reform law made land titling mandatory for the entire Ottoman territory. Secondly, Sultan Abdul Hamid II's suspension of the constitution, dissolution of parliament and authoritarian behaviour triggered the Young Turk revolution, which the Zionists used as a form of revenge. Thirdly, Enver Pasha and his colleagues decided to establish relations with Germany and engage in World War I with the Central Bloc against the Allies, which ended in defeat. Theodor Herzl realized his dream of establishing a Jewish state, but subsequent developments were more deserving of being judged as catastrophic, the effects of which continue to be felt today. The humanitarian tragedy that the Zionist Israelis continue to show mercilessly created a conflict that flared up again on 7 October and continues to this day. This conflict is dominated by the language of violence that causes many victims. Thus, the journey of Jews and Zionism to this point, if referring to the collective memory of the Jewish people, can be said to be a tragedy "from Holocaust to Holocaust".

⁵⁰ Ori Yehudai, *Leaving Zion: Jewish Emigration from Palestine and Israel after World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

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