

Nationalism, Recognition and the Arab-Jewish conflict

Nacionalismo, reconhecimento e conflito árabe-judaico

Nationalisme, Reconnaissance et Conflit arabo-juif



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Abstract: This article analyses the elements that constitute the Jewish nationalism and influenced the creation of the State of Israel, the links between the international political context and the Arab-Jewish conflicts and the relations between these conflicts and the political notions of recognition and identity. The study is based on documentary and bibliographic sources and has as theoretical reference the thought of Raymond Scheindlin, and other authors of literature on Jewish nationalism.

Resumo: O artigo analisa os elementos que constituem o nacionalismo judaico e influenciaram a criação do Estado de Israel, considerando as relações geopolíticas internacionais que atuam no conflito árabe-judaico e mostrando como as questões políticas do reconhecimento e da identidade estão presentes essencialmente nesse conflito. O estudo se baseia em fontes documentais e bibliográficas e tem como referencial teórico o pensamento de Raymond Scheindlin, além de outros autores da literatura sobre o nacionalismo judaico.

Palavras-chave: Nacionalismo. Reconhecimento. Conflito árabe-judaico.

Résumé: Cet article analyse les éléments constitutifs du nationalisme juif qui ont influencé la création de l'état d'Israël, en examinant les relations géopolitiques internationales qui opèrent dans le conflit arabo-juif et les problèmes politiques, essentiels dans ce conflit, de reconnaissance et d'identité. L'étude s'appuie sur des sources documentaires et bibliographiques et prend comme référence théorique la pensée de Raymond Scheidlin mais aussi d'autres studios du nationalisme juif.

Mots-clés: Nationalisme. Reconnaissance. conflit arabo-juif.

Introduction

This paper analyses the Arab-Israeli conflict, stretching over centuries, from Jewish nationalism in its various expressions – linguistic, cultural, literary, parastatal, state – problematizing the political notions of recognition and identity and assuming that Jewish nationalism can only be understood in its historical context.

The particularities of Jewish nationalism make it a complex phenomenon. Thus, this study does not intend to overcome this complexity by presenting reductionist definitions, but to accept it and analyze it in a contextualized way in some historical moments. First of all, in the period of intensification of the Zionist movement at the end of the nineteenth century, passing through the role of the non-state Jewish political organization and its participation in the First World War. Secondly, in the period of its international relations with the United Kingdom around the Balfour Declaration to arrive at the relationship of Zionism with the United Nations, which culminates in the creation of the State of Israel and in the extended conflicts with the Palestinian Arabs. In each one of these periods, we can note the expression of Jewish nationalism as a historical phenomenon.

With this, we aim to show how Jewish nationalism highlights issues that are at the root of the extended Arab-Israeli conflict, such as recognition and identity, considered not from the point of view of the individual, but from the perspective of political units (state or non-state).

The adopted methodology deals with legal-political documents and bibliographic review, using as a theoretical reference to the thought of Scheindlin (1998). This study has a historical emphasis because the national feeling of the Jewish people is realized and expressed in history. Moreover, attention to historical events is necessary because the peculiarities of Jewish nationalism could not be explained by generic definitions of the general literature on State theory regarding the theme of the nation and nationalism. In this sense, our conclusions about Jewish nationalism are not – and could not be – extended or generalized to nationalism in general.

Jewish nationalism

In 1882, Ernest Renan delivered a lecture at the Sorbonne University that was subsequently published (in 1887) under the title *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?* In this lecture, the author explains that the essence of a nation is the will to give continuity to a certain tradition, making the social work of its ancestors continue to be carried out in the present. Renan ([1887] 1997) used the expression *daily plebiscite* to explain that the daily choice of the members of a society to continue living in a certain way is what constitutes a nation. In the words of the author:

A nation is a large-scale solidarity constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices made and those who are still willing to do the same. It presupposes a past but is reaffirmed in the present through a tangible fact: the consensus, the clearly expressed desire to continue living in the community. The existence of a nation is (forgive me the metaphor) a daily plebiscite, as the existence of the individual is a perpetual affirmation of life (RENAN, [1887] 1997, p. 17, our translation).¹

If a nation is composed by conservation of elements of a certain culture, nationalism would be the feeling of belonging to the nation, and could be understood as a consciousness or feeling common to a group of individuals around an ideal, specially motivated by socioeconomic issues. The nationalist movements from the beginning of the 19th century, which culminated, for example, in the German unification and the Italian resurgence, influenced and strengthened Jewish nationalism, bearing in mind the idea of creating a national entity. Burns (1973, p. 710-711, our translation) states that:

A people can consider itself a nation because of particularities of race, language, religion or culture. In most cases, however, the factors of unification of the various groups are a common history and common aspirations for the future, or the belief in a common destiny. [...] Nationalism was undoubtedly one of the most powerful forces that shaped the history of the Western world between 1830 and 1914. [...] Fostered by the French Revolution's ideal of brotherhood, nationalism evolved through two phases. From 1800 to around 1848, it was little more than a

sentiment of loyalty to a cultural and linguistic group and a yearning to free itself from foreign oppression. After 1848, it became an active movement for national greatness and the right of each people united by cultural and ethnic ties to decide their own destinies.

Although Jewish nationalism played an important role in the process of constituting the State of Israel, it is not limited to the feeling of belonging to the state's political unity, nor is it state-mediated nationalism. Jewish nationalism predates the State of Israel and expresses itself not only in the form of the organized Zionist movement, but also in different cultural aspects. Some of these aspects have stood out since the second half of the 19th century, such as religious devotion, appreciation of the Hebrew language and literature, concentrated migratory movements, participation in international war conflicts, formation of political alliances and political-representative organization. Each of these is analyzed in the present article.

Jews migrated to the territory where Israel is today long before its creation as a state entity. In the words of Myers (2017, p. 51): "It is estimated that almost 4 million Jews left Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Romania between 1880 and 1929". By the late nineteenth century, Jewish nationalism was strengthened and intensified, aligning itself with the intention of establishing a political entity in the locality known as Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel), based on millennial religious beliefs. The transition from the 19th century to the 20th centuries was characterized by mass immigration of Jews to the region of Palestine. As Scheindlin (2003, p. 314, our translation) explains

Palestine already had a substantial Jewish population, comprising of the descendants of Sephardic refugees from Spain, descendants of more recent immigrants from countries in the Middle East, and descendants of various European religious movements, established in Palestine during the 18th and early 19th centuries.

The Bilu communities, whose name is derived from the biblical phrase "House of Jacob, let us go up", were composed of Jews from the Russian Empire who moved to region where today Israel is located, forming agricultural societies. Anti-Semitic movements known as pogroms influenced this migratory wave.

The pogroms took place in the Russian Empire and were tolerated by the government. The word “pogrom” is sometimes used anachronistically to designate other waves of anti-Semitic attacks, as explained by Klier (1992, p. 13):

The word “pogrom” is Russian. Its usage became inextricably linked to anti-Semitic violence after the outbreak of three great waves of anti-Jewish rioting in the Russian Empire in 1881, 1903 and 1919. It was widely charged at the time and since that the Russian government either planned, welcomed, or at least tolerated pogroms for its own devious purposes. [...] The anachronistic character of using the term ‘pogrom’ to describe earlier events is obvious when they are examined in more detail.

The pogroms of 1881 in Russia precipitated the emergence of Jewish nationalist organizations collectively known as the “Hibbat Zion” (Lovers of Zion) movement, originating in Eastern Europe. Besides the migration movement, some literary works were essential for articulating the idea of a Jewish nation. One of them is *Rome and Jerusalem* (HESS, 1958), originally published in 1862 in German. This book began to have importance a few decades after its publication, when the Zionist movement, under the command of Theodor Herzl, became central to the Jewish political sphere (VOLOVICI, 2017). Moreover, Volovici (2007, p. 35) noted the importance of the German language for the Jewish community in this period: “German served as a common language for Zionists and Jewish nationalists well beyond German-speaking areas”.

Another important literary work was *Auto-Emancipation* (PINSKER, [1882]1906). According to Cohn-Sherbok (2005), Judah Loeb Pinsker was a Russian Zionist who, after the 1881 pogroms began to argue that only the territorial national renaissance could solve the problem of the Jews. In the words of the author, “[...] the creation of a Jewish territory, where the Jews could support and govern themselves” (p. 229).

Part of the Jews of Western Europe were moderate in relation to Jewish nationalism and its traditional project, since there was a concern for the integration of Jews with non-Jewish society in Europe, with a view to the exercise of civil rights and the consolidation of citizenship in that political context. However,

Scheindlin (2003) points the Hungarian Jew Theodor Herzl (1866-1904) as one of those responsible for the expansion and international projection of Zionist ideas

He was a writer and journalist in Vienna, with little knowledge of Judaism and an admirer of France as a land of progress and enlightening ideas. As a correspondent in Paris for a Viennese newspaper, he was so shocked by French anti-Semitism, exposed by the Dreyfus case, that he devoted the rest of his life to finding a global solution to the Jewish problem. In his book *The Jewish State* (1896), he argued strongly for the establishment of a Jewish State and, in his novel *The Old New Land* (1902), he spoke prophetically about the social and technological effects that the Jewish State would be able to achieve. Although it found little support among Western Jews, Eastern European Jews acclaimed it. In 1897, Herzl organized the First Zionist Congress in Switzerland, which culminated in a resolution stating: "Zionism aspires to secure a national land for the Jewish people in Palestine, guaranteed by public legislation". Failed to obtain the sanction of the Ottoman sultan to establish the Jewish state in Palestine, Herzl entered into negotiations with Britain for a Jewish settlement in Uganda.

The revival of the Hebrew language and its consolidation as a living language, together with Jewish nationalism, reinforced the feeling of the necessity of its use in a Jewish State. In fact, Eastern Jewish intellectuals and activists, educated in a more traditional way, emphasized the importance of the Hebrew language. Scheindlin (2003) considers Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922) as a catalyst for the Jewish movement, reinforcing his commitment to restoring the Jewish people to their land and historical languages:

Although Hebrew had not been applied in daily life for centuries, it maintained the natural link between the population of Palestine, mostly Sephardic, and the increasing number of Ashkenazites – who began to arrive with the first Zionist settlers – because it was the traditional language shared by a people of distinct vernacles. Ben-Yehuda even translated the Hebrew language into a part of the teachings at the Alliance school in Jerusalem and published newspapers and periodicals in Hebrew, dealing with general Jewish topics and even inventing "Hebrew" words when necessary. He spent years compiling a

vast historical dictionary of Hebrew – published post-mortem, in 17 volumes, which remains, though obsolete in some respects, as the most complete dictionary of the language. He also founded and directed the Hebrew Language Committee, precursor of the current Academy of the Hebrew Language, the arbiter of language use for the State of Israel. In an unparalleled evolution in the history of the world, the efforts of Bem-Yehuda have borne fruit and Hebrew has been accepted, in the face of considerable debate and disagreement as the language of the nascent Jewish homeland (SCHEINDLIN, p. 2003, p. 319-321, our translation).

As can be noted, the strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people is not only due to descend, geopolitical organization or traditions (religious and secular), but also in the appreciation of the Hebrew language. For this reason, the linguistic and literary heritage is a central element of Jewish nationalism. However, the relationship of human beings with nature, through work, was one of the hallmarks of the second wave of immigration to the Palestinian region – with a duration of 10 years – driven by the Kishinev pogrom in the Russian Empire in 1903 and the failure of the 1905 Russian Revolution. As Scheindlin (2003, p. 321, our translation) puts it:

For the most part, these pioneers were idealists devoted to socialism and to the use of Hebrew as the customary language of the Jews. Their representative, A.D. Gordon, although not a socialist, promoted the idea that the Jewish people could only regenerate themselves by the beneficial force of manual labor and a return to nature. They developed the characteristic agricultural institutions of Israel: the collective settlement – kibbutz – and the cooperative settlements – moshav.

Jewish non-state political organization

At the beginning of the 20th century, Jewish nationalism was expressed in immigration, linguistic valorization, moral claims, and in war. Voluntary military groups who fought alongside Britain in the First World War against the Ottoman Turks formed the Jewish legions. The Ottoman Turks organized actions against Jews under the pretext that they had discovered Jewish spy agencies working for the United Kingdom. Therefore, we can say that the Jews took

part in the First World War as a people but not as a State, as Scheindlin (2003, p. 321, our translation) wrote:

During the First World War, Turkey joined the Central Powers in the fight against the British. Fearing rebellion on the part of both Arabs and nationalist Jews, the Turkish governor of Palestine, Jamal Paxá, carried out numerous arrests and banished several Jewish settlements. The discovery of a Jewish spy agency, working for the British, served as a pretext for the persecution of Jewish settlements, even those who opposed that activity. When Britain's General Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem in December 1917, the Jews welcomed him as a liberator.

The closeness of the Jews with Great Britain through the Jewish Legion shows that the Jews were already acting in the international context as unity and in accordance with their political interests, keeping in mind that the British could be a supporter in the struggle for the recognition of the rights of the Jewish people in Palestine. One of the outcomes of this Jewish-British alliance was the Balfour Declaration (1917), in which the United Kingdom committed itself to Zionist causes, especially in favor of "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" (BALFOUR DECLARATION, 1917, online). Italy, the United States of America and France subsequently ratified the document. Although Jews from around the world enthusiastically received the Balfour Declaration, the clash between Britain's commitment to Jews and to Hashemite Muslims was one of the reasons for conflict for the next two decades.

After the First World War, the recently created League of Nations (1919) delivered the question of Palestine to Great Britain with the purpose of realizing the objectives of the Balfour Declaration. For this reason, the Jewish Agency for Israel² – an entity that expressed the institutional structure of the Jews before the creation of the State of Israel – became equally responsible for the construction of a Jewish national homeland allied to the British administration through the encouragement of immigration and the settlement of Jews:

Working closely with the World Zionist Organization – led by Weizmann – the Jewish Agency has become a type of quasi-government under British control. Zionists of the Workers' Party

dominated the agency during all mandatory period. (SCHEINDLIN, p. 2003, p. 325, our translation).

The Hashemite demand for Arab independence was ignored after the First World War. Thus, in order to satisfy the interests of the Hashemite, the British divided Palestine by creating the Emirate of Transjordan. Arab attacks on Jewish settlements were common in this period, before the official concession of the Palestine Mandate³. In response, the Jews mobilized to respond to the attacks, but without success, since the British intervention conducted the dispersal of the Jewish people. The advent of the Haganah⁴ led the British to redefine their commitment to the Zionists:

The British rapidly backed down in their attempt to revise the Balfour Declaration, but this sequence of events created a pattern for British policy throughout the mandatory period as Arab objections to the presence of Jews in western Palestine intensified, exacerbated by the appointment of an extreme Arab nationalist, Amim al-Husseini, as the mufti – Muslim religious authority – of Jerusalem. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 327, our translation).

The third wave of Jewish immigration was marked by Zionists of the Labor Party (halutsim pioneers) coming from Poland who established collective settlements and advances in the agricultural economic structure through the construction of a drainage system, as well as strengthening and encouraging the use of the Hebrew language and culture. The fourth wave of Jewish immigration was initiated in 1925 and was composed of refugees from Polish anti-Semitism:

This period saw the officialization of Jewish institutions in Palestine, such as the Haganah – Defense Organization –, Histadrut – General Federation of Jewish Labour – and The Hebrew University. The decade also saw the growth of a right-wing movement, the Revisionists, led by Vladimir Jabotinsky, in opposition to the Zionist labor parties. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 327, our translation).

This internal Jewish political tension became evident in the 1930s. In this period, the Revisionists, under the guidance of Jabotinsky and the Labour Party led by David Ben-Gurion, created

an independent Revisionist military force to protect their properties, lands and families. The secession of the Haganah Revisionists and the creation of an independent revisionist military force – the Irgun – are some of the evolutions of this movement. In response to this, Arab opposition was intensified, especially with regard to property disputes involving fellabin – small Arab farmers – and the Arab fear of the growing organization of European institutions supported by the United Kingdom.

With this in mind, we want to emphasize that the role of the invader is assumed according to the viewpoint of each social actor. By this, we mean that, to the Arabs, the Jews did not look like an ancient Middle Eastern people trying to re-establish their national identity in their historical homeland, but rather another invasion by Western settlers (SCHEINDLIN, 2003). With regard to the Islamic religion, the Jews offered to the Islamic view of the role of dhimmis – a term for non-Muslim living in an Islamic State that means “protected person”. In fact, the Arab project and its nationalist aspirations came under the Ottoman judgment and were now under British control:

Serious rebellions, incited by the exciting propaganda of the Mufti in 1929, led to murderous attacks in Jerusalem, Safed, and especially Hebron. To calm the Arabs, for a brief time, the British suspended Jewish immigration. However, the persecution of Jews in Europe during the 1930s resulted in still intense immigration to Palestine, and thus increasing tension between Jews and Arabs. These tensions were exacerbated by the growing conflict between Britain and France, on the one hand, and Germany and Italy, on the other. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 329, our translation).

Arab nationalism found expression and identification in Nazi anti-Semitism in so far as both had a “common enemy”. The Arab opposition to Britain, particularly because of the Balfour Declaration, has also aligned, albeit for different reasons, with the Nazi opposition to the British. Scheindlin (2003, p. 330) explains that

While the official anti-Semitic policies of the German Nazi government gave generous expression to Arab resentment of the Jewish presence in Palestine, with the threat of another European war in the air, Great Britain wished to appease the

Arabs in order not to endanger the control of Palestine, with its important port of Haifa and its proximity to the Suez Canal.. These considerations increased the influence of the Arabs with the British and reduced that of the Jews. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 330, our translation).

The United Kingdom ruled in Palestine and Transjordan from 1920 to 1948 due to the Mandate for Palestine. The Covenant of the League of Nations regulated the British Mandate for Palestine. This British administration was provisional, even though it lasted nearly three decades, as stipulated in Article 22 of Covenant of the League of Nations:

Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. (LILLIAN GOLDMAN LAW LIBRARY, 2008, online)

In 1936, during the Mandate for Palestine, the Arab Higher Committee was created⁵. This period was marked by a series of assaults against Jewish establishments. Scheindlin (2003) emphasized that initially the British did not interfere, but when the Arabs began to attack the British garrisons, they allowed and supported Haganah in the attacks promoted by the Arab Higher Committee. As a result of these conflicts – which lasted until 1939 – the British established (in 1936) the Palestine Royal Commission, also known as the Peel Commission, whose purpose was to analyze the political feasibility of continuing the Mandate for Palestine. One year after its creation, the Commission understood that a new political division of the territory was needed, since the maintenance of the Mandate had proved impossible. The reactions to the new proposals for territorial sharing made by the Commission were diverse: the Arabs unanimously opposed, as well as the revisionist Jews, while the Jews linked to the Labor Party were favorable. As Scheindlin analyzed (2003, p. 330, our translation):

The new plan aimed at a Jewish state comprising the coastal strip, Galilee, and the Jezreel Valley; an Arab state comprising the central mountainous rural area and the Negev; and a British

enclave including Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Nazareth. The Jews were divided between supporting or not the plan, the great majority of the workers were in favor of it, the revisionists were strongly against it; the Arabs rejected it completely.

The White Paper of 1939 detailed the British government's policies for the Palestine Mandate and restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine, explicitly rescinding the Balfour Declaration with the objective of impeding Arabs from supporting Germany and Italy. Relations between the Jews and the British government were not always harmonious because there were sometimes divergent interests, particularly on the part of the British. This way, the extended Arab-Jewish conflict was not restricted exclusively to Arabs and Jews, but included other nations and suffered consequences of British international relations in Europe. In any case, the Jews in general saw in Great Britain a possibility of support in their geopolitical pretensions arising from the religious principle of Eretz Israel (Land of Israel).

The Second World War put the Palestinian Jews in a difficult political position. Although Great Britain had clearly turned their antagonist, the Jews had to work with Great Britain to defeat the Germans, whose victory would put an end to Jewish history once and for all. As in the First World War, the Jews also hoped that by actively cooperating with Great Britain, they would gain credit with her after the war. (SCHEINDLIN, p. 2003, p. 331, our translation).

In this regard, Lehi – a Zionist paramilitary organization also called Stern Gang – declared war on the mandatory government by fighting against the British through political assassinations. However, this movement initiated by the Revisionists had not received the support from the Jewish Agency, which repudiated extremism:

The British authorities have responded to the violence with mass arrests and established detention camps in Cyprus for illegal immigrants recently released from German extermination camps. Some ships, with the help of Haganah, managed to go unnoticed by the British blockade; there were a few dramatic clashes, of which the most notable is the battle between refugees and the British military on board the Exodus. The predictable result of British intransigence was to intensify

opposition even from moderate Jews against the British mandate and to get the rightists and leftists back together again. The Palestinian leadership was now unified in its opposition to British policy and, in fact, a state of war emerged between the British and Palestinian Jews (SCHEINDLIN, p. 2003, p. 333, our translation).

As can be noted, in addition to the practices of territorial expansion, the advance of the area of influence also characterized a specific mode of exercise of political power that marked the international conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries in the Middle East. It is a policy of imperialist power, practiced mainly by European industrialized nations (England, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Belgium), which included not only forms of domination, exploitation and acculturation – in Asia, Africa and America – but the practice of strategic influence in some regions of the Middle East.

This contemporary imperialism is a new facet of modern colonialism. According to Burns (1973), this power politics was not a 19th-century invention, but it began in the modern state during the 16th and 17th centuries, since it was practiced by Richelieu (1585-1642), in France, and also by Frederick the Great (1712-1786), in Prussia. In any case, the imperialist international struggles constituted an increasing portion of the political history of the Western world until the culmination of the First World War. This policy of international intervention has been expressed on the military level as well as on the international coordination level. This is why the period from 1830 to 1914 was marked by a remarkable development of law and international organizations. According to Burns (1973, p. 756, our translation):

Several conferences, especially the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, succeeded in formulating some significant principles of international law. [...] In 1885, fourteen nations signed a convention committing themselves to fight for the extinction of slavery and in 1909 was adopted a set of rules, known as the London Declaration, which defined the rights and duties of neutrals in the event of a naval war. Several new institutions exemplify the development of the international organization between 1830 and 1914. In 1874, the Universal Postal Union was created to facilitate the transmission of postal bags between nations and the following year the International Telegraph Union was founded. At the First Hague Conference (1899), the nations represented there decided to create an international court of arbitration.

After the First World War, international coordination movements, especially by the League of Nations and after the United Nations, are fundamental phenomena to understand the unfolding of the extended conflict between Arabs and Jews.

Jewish state political organization

Because of its failure to mediate Arab-Jewish tension, Great Britain referred the issue to the United Nations (UN) in order to reconcile conflicting interests. The UN's action was a milestone in the attempts to pacify that conflict. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to divide Palestine into two independent States. The Jewish State would include the Eastern Galilee, the Coastal Plain, and the Negev desert. Jerusalem, in turn, would have had a special status as an international city. The rest of the territory would become, in theory, the Arab State. The motion was supported by the United States and, unexpectedly, by the then Soviet Union. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003).

The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine proposed by the UN in 1947 intensified the Arab-Israeli conflict, since a large part of the population of the nascent Jewish State would be Arab, that is, the borders of the new State would encompass territories previously populated by Arabs. We can say that the Partition Plan for Palestine did not propose an ethnic separation and precisely for this reason, it caused more conflict.

The political situation must be remembered: according to the UN resolution, the "Jewish state" should encompass more than half of Palestine (according to the 1947 borders under the British Mandate). In this territory, more than 40 percent of the population were Arabs. Arab spokesmen argued that it was impossible to establish a Jewish state in which half the population was Arab and demanded the cancellation of the partition. The Jews, who were bound by the UN resolution, wanted to prove that the partition was possible. Then, efforts were made (in Haifa, for example) to persuade the Arabs not to leave their homes. However, the realization of the war itself led to the mass exodus. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 176, our translation).

The political will to establish geopolitical divisions derives from the very differentiation among peoples. However, the geographical threshold does not always accurately follow cultural distinctions. In this perspective, the setting of political borders is, in a sense, arbitrary. The creation of boundaries does not overcome the complex nature of ethnic and religious diversity. An architectural expression of this division is the “Wall of Separation”⁶, called by the Israelis a security barrier against terrorism and by the Palestinians a racial segregation barrier. It is a boundary between two titans of history: Western civilization and Islamic civilization:

The Wall is not only a structure of wire and concrete. More than anything else, the Wall – like all similar walls – is an ideological statement, a statement of intent, a mental reality. The builders declare that they belong, body and soul, to one camp, the western camp; and declare that on the other side of the wall begins the opposite world, the enemy, the masses of Arabs and other Muslims (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 184, our translation).

The Arab League, formed in Cairo (Egypt) in 1945, had taken on the responsibility of Palestinian Arab affairs and opposed the division. Again, Britain refused to engage in a dialogue on the implementing of the divisive plan, with the British Mandate for Palestine ending in 1948. On the same day, David Ben-Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency in Tel Aviv, proclaimed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the State of Israel. As a result of this vote and the division of the territory, Arab troops advanced in Palestine and there were attacks against the Jewish settlements. The 1948 Arab-Israeli War began, also called by the Israelis the War of Independence or War of Liberation.

Although the British refused to intervene and continued to disarm the Jewish forces, the Jews were able to maintain control of most parts of the country where they had settlements. When Israel declared independence on May 24, 1948 and the remaining British troops departed, the armies of Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, with the support of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, initiated large-scale military attacks against Israel. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 334, our translation).

It is clear that the creation of the State of Israel did not mean the end of the Arab-Jewish conflicts, but represented a historical stage from which a new phase of wars began. If before the conflicts were Arab-Jewish, from 1948 the conflicts are Arab-Israeli. After 1948, some Jews also became Israelis and were born as citizens of a State, even though it was not recognized by all neighboring Arab states. The end of the British Mandate for Palestine, with the withdrawal of its troops, opened the way to a new phase of attacks, which soon arrived.

First of all, the war of 1948 was not one war, but two, in sequence, without a break between them. The first war was fought here between Jews and Arabs. It began immediately after the UN General Assembly resolution of November 29, 1947, which decreed the partition of Palestine between a Jew and an Arab state. This war lasted until the proclamation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. That day started the second war – between the State of Israel and neighboring countries. (AVNER, 2012, p. 173-174, our translation).

The establishment of the new State, while expressing the political attempt to solve a century-old problem, has created others: the Israeli model of granting citizenship has led to population growth and the resulting social and economic problems. Israel began to concentrate Jews (Israeli citizens, from then on) from various countries. In the words of Scheindlin (2003, p. 340-341, our translation):

Refugees now came in large numbers to the country as Jews from Middle Eastern and North African countries, fearing the hostility of their native countries because of their association with the Jewish State, fled to Israel, as did the rest of the European refugees from Second World War. The Knesset sanctioned the Law of Return, which gave Jewish immigrants the immediate right to automatic citizenship. Human potential has become extremely necessary, but the resulting demographic explosion has confronted the young State with enormous economic and social difficulties, particularly in view of the cultural and technological disparities in the countries of origin of immigrants.

The creation and recognition of the State of Israel does not represent the end of the Arab-Jewish conflict, because the conflicts with the Arabs continued even after the War of Independence. The Arab rejection of the political recognition of Israel as a State has even been expressed at the level of language and discourse. Proof of this is that the Arabs, in general, called Israel a Zionist entity for several decades after the establishment of the new State.

Jordan and Egypt continued the fight, urging the guerrillas, called fedayeen, to ambush small targets in Israel. Not only the Arab states boycotted Israel, but also the companies which negotiated with Israel and those, of maritime transport, with appeal in Israeli ports. Israel was banned from using Arab airspace and travelers who had visited Israel or with Israeli visas were not allowed to enter the Arab countries. Egypt closed the Suez Canal to Israel and blocked access to the port of Eilat in southern Israel. Jordan forbade the Jews access to the holy sites of Jerusalem, the majority of which remained in the part that Jordan had occupied – and systematically profaned them. Arab nations refused to recognize the state, even refusing to mention it; for decades, the normal designation for Israel in the Arab press was the “Zionist entity”. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 342, our translation).

The problem of recognition is central to the Arab-Israeli conflicts from a linguistic and political point of view. The Arab community, in general, did not recognize either the State or the name Israel, but they designated it generically as an entity. However, the root causes of conflicts involve mutual lack of recognition. Over 1948, Avnery raised the thesis that peace in that region would only be achieved through recognition by Israel of the Palestinian people and their State. According to Avnery (2012, p. 17, our translation):

(1) There is a Palestinian people, although the name Palestine was removed from the map. (2) It is with these Palestinian people that we must make peace. (3) Peace will be impossible unless the Palestinians can create their State alongside Israel. (4) Without peace, Israel will not be the model state we dreamed of in the trench, but something very different.

During the Cold War, the Middle East region had areas of litigation and ideological dispute of influence between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has made the Arab world its influential ground with close ties to Syria and Egypt. The inefficiency of the UN in mediating conflicts during the bipolarization of the world is another aspect to be considered:

Egypt was led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, a pan-Arabist with an aggressive view of Arab unity and expansion. With the encouragement of the Soviets, Egypt took control of the Suez Canal and intensified the fedayeen attacks against Israel. On October 29, 1956, the British and French conspired with Israel to attack Egypt. Israeli forces invaded the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and decimated the Egyptian army within a week; then, under the pretext of separating Egyptians from Israelis, Great Britain and France entered the region and recaptured the canal. Because the international revolt against Great Britain, France and Israel, the latter abandoned Sinai, receiving in return the United Nations guarantee for the security of the Egyptian-Israeli border and the suspension of the Egyptian blockade on Eilat – although Israel could not get the use of the Suez Canal. But given the United Nations position between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War, these guarantees achieved little strength, and Israel remained subject to constant attacks. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 342-343, our translation).

For the economic and social development of Israel and its structure for the reception of immigrants, it is worth considering the reparation pact made by West Germany:

In 1959, Israel formalized its relationship with West Germany, which agreed to invest millions of dollars in Israel's economy as reparations for its treatment of Jews during Second World War. Ben-Gurion accepted the reparations facing intense controversy, since many, who had suffered from persecution, were opposed to any reconciliation. These funds were a great boost for Israel's new economy. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 343, our translation).

Recognition and identity

The Eichmann trial in 1960, which brought the Holocaust issue into discussion, was an opportunity to report Nazi atrocities and crimes against humanity to the world. This fact had a symbolic historical meaning for the Jewish people, as Felman (2002, p. 128) explained:

It is this new collective story that did not exist prior to the trial – a story at the same time of the victims' suffering and of the victims' recovery of language-and the newly acquired semantic and historical authority of this revolutionary story, that for the first time create what we know today as the Holocaust: a theme of international discussion and of world conversation designating the experience of the victims [...]. Israel's claim to a law through Eichmann's judgment and the monumental legal history constructed by the trial have thus to some extent fulfilled the mission of the law to be, in Robert Cover's concept, "a bridge to the future".

The American philosopher of law Robert Cover developed this idea of law as a bridge. For him, the law, by regulating conducts, does not have a total focus on the present (imputation consequences to conducts), nor completely in the future (aiming to regulate the conducts to come), but it is precisely what connects this temporal movement with the present and the future. In the words of the author, "it is [the law] the bridge – the committed social behavior which constitutes the way a group of people will attempt to get from here to there". (COVER, 1985, p. 181).

The idea of a state of their own was one of the "bridges to the future" – to use Robert Cover's terms. The notion of something proper to the Jews was present in the existence of the newly created State of Israel, in the court that judged Eichmann and in the type of imputation of responsibility applied. Arendt (1999, p. 17, our translation) says that

[...] only a Jewish court could render justice to the Jews, and it was the task of the Jews to judge their foes. Hence the almost widespread hostility in Israel against the mere mention of an

international court that could accuse Eichmman not of crimes “against the Jewish people”, but of crimes against humanity perpetrated on the body of the Jewish people.

Although the creation of the State of Israel has enabled Jewish nationalism to express itself as belonging to a state entity, it has not marked the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the contrary, the creation of the State of Israel provoked a transformation in the way of expressing this Arab-Israeli conflict, as the embodiment of Jewish nationalism in the form of a national state has intensified its tension with the expressions of Arab nationalism, especially in conflicts with countries that share borders with Israel. An example is the accusation (promoted by Syria and Egypt with the support of the Soviet Union) that Israel was conducting an expansionist project: “when tensions between Israel and Syria intensified in 1967, [...] Egypt and Syria accused Israel of mobilizing to attack the borders of the north”. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 344-345, our translation). In fact, the Israeli wars took place with neighboring countries that fought either for their own interests or in the name of Arab nationalism. However, these neighboring countries did not represent the desire of the Arabs who lived in Palestine, particularly the Arab refugees:

With the conquest of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, Palestinian nationalism – in opposition to Arab nationalism – emerged as an active force in the region. A conglomerate of Arab-Palestinian organizations known as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which had been formed in Jordan in 1964, adopted a Constitutional Charter in 1968, calling for the liberation of Palestinian Arabs from Israeli rule, the restoration of Palestinian dignity, the destruction of Israel and the establishment of a homeland for Palestinian Arabs in this territory. The most active of these organizations was Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat, who was appointed chair of the PLO after the 1967 war. The PLO coordinated organized terrorism in Israel and outside the Middle East, taking steps to hijack aircraft and bomb Jewish installations all over the world. The PLO was expelled from Jordan as a destabilizing element in a blood purification, executed by King Hussein, and found a new base in Lebanon, from where it planned and executed continuous hijackings of planes and people – and murders. The most remarkable example was the death of Israeli Olympic athletes in their hotel in Munich during an attack during the 1972 Olympics. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 346, our translation).

The Arab-Israeli conflict took on particular contours with the Cold War. While Israel had United States support, neighboring countries received military support from the Soviet Union. The global political context has a direct influence on the Arab-Israeli conflict, from the two World Wars to the Cold War. Israel is the stage of interests that exceeds the political recognition of a Jewish state and the geopolitical union of the Arabs. The October 6, 1973 attack on Yom Kippur day is an example of this:

The date chosen for the attack was Yom Kippur, October 6, 1973, Israel was surprised, unprepared for the only religious holiday, observed even by many lay Jews, and the soldiers had to be summoned to the synagogues. [...] Though their forces were much smaller in number of men and equipment, Israel had still shown its military superiority; but there was no joy in his victory. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 346, our translation).

This attack surprised the Israeli defense and had profound repercussions on the social structures and confidence of state policies to promote an environment of peace. It was a traumatic experience that has caused resentment and instability within Israeli society. Indeed, terrorism and the PLO's attacks led to more dramatic events, such as the hijacking of Air France's flight to Entebbe (Uganda) in 1976. In the 1980s, the PLO was destroyed during the war in Lebanon and its operations were transferred to Tunisia. . This war helped to exacerbate the internal problems in Israel, with the rejection of public opinion. According to Scheindlin (2003, p. 351, our translation):

The 2006 Lebanon war has been successful in destroying the PLO's infrastructure in that country and resulted in the organization exile in Tunisia. [...] it cost Israel the support of the international community and aroused considerable anger within Israel when the Israelis realized that their troops were suffering and killing for very little profit.

Another international issue that intensified Israeli popular dissatisfaction was the resolution, published by the UN in 1975, stating that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination". (UNITED NATIONS, 1975, online). That is the famous Resolution 3379, revoked in 1991 by the United Nations, by Resolution 46/86.

(UNITED NATIONS, 1991).⁷ Most countries voted in favor of the repeal, while some Arab countries in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia voted in favor of upholding the Resolution 1975. The Resolution 3379, associated with Israeli economic problems and the decline of Jewish immigration, generated deep social discontent in the country, which influenced the 1977 elections when the opposition party took office for the first time.

The discontent resulted in a political revolution in the 1977 elections, in which the Likud party – a descendant of the old Revisionist party, which until now had always been in the opposition-came to power for the first time. The Likud was headed by Menachem Begin, a former leader of the Irgun. (SCHEINDLIN, 1998, p. 243, our translation)

Historically, Israeli conflicts have been mediated by other countries. One of the facts that illustrate this is the Camp David conference (1978), chaired by U.S. President Jimmy Carter, which made possible an agreement whereby Israel agreed to return all of Sinai to Egypt. According to Scheindlin (2003), the rupture of this impasse and the consolidation of the pact was favored by Egypt's difficult economic situation, the march of events in the Cold War, the personality of the Egyptian leader and the persistence of Jimmy Carter. However, this rapprochement between Israel and Egypt has created dissatisfaction in more conservative sectors of the Arab world:

But both leaders took risks in carrying out these negotiations, particularly Sadat, who alienated the entire Arab world from the process; in 1981 he was murdered by a Muslim fanatic when he searched the troops in a military parade. A sort of "cold peace" has developed over the years between Israel and Egypt, which is preserved, in spite of the vicissitudes. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 350, our translation).

Even with the destabilization of the PLO and the "cold peace" between Israel and Egypt, in the 1980s another fact aggravated the Arab-Israeli conflict: the rise of Hezbollah – an Islamic fundamentalist movement supported by Iran that began to carry out new terrorist attacks:

But it was the Palestinian masses that came to dominate the scene from 1987, when a spontaneous rebellion in the Gaza Strip spread to all occupied territories in a general protest against Israeli rule. Distant, in Tunisia, the PLO managed to take control of the rebellion known as the Intifada, and organized a “day of solidarity” a few weeks later, in which the Arab citizens of Israel held a march in support of the movement. The Intifada came to be symbolized by the unpleasant specter of children and teenagers throwing stones at Israeli troops, these themselves are not much older, who were trapped between the instinct to retaliate and the horror of shooting children. [...] but the pressure on Israel to enter into discussions with the Palestinians advanced against the rigid position of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who not only refused to recognize the PLO but also greatly exacerbated tensions. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 352, our translation).

As a result of the Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States started to mediate in peace negotiations between the Arab countries and Israel. In this case, the PLO should not be a partner in the negotiations, only the Arab governments. The political tension scenario took on other aspects of the peace negotiations, including the recognition of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. In 1992, Yitzhak Rabin of the Labor Party renewed hopes for the possibility of peace talks:

The result was the joint Declaration of Principles, signed at an emotional ceremony on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993, in which Israel for the first time recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. This agreement thoroughly planned a process in phases of Israeli withdrawal from the territories and the gradual takeover of its control by the Palestinians, through an entity called the “Palestinian Authority”. [...]. The image of President Bill Clinton, Rabin and Arafat shaking hands, in a scene reminiscent from the historical greeting between Begin, Sadat and Carter in 1978, seemed the beginning of a new era. (SCHEINDLIN, 2003, p. 354, our translation).

Rabin – a hero of the War of Independence and the Six-Day War, a zealous military chief concerned with Israel’s security – concluded that the damage generated by the Intifadas⁸ has become far worse for Israeli life than the control over the conquered territories.

This mood of optimism encouraged Jordan to sign a peace treaty with Israel. However, there does not seem to be any consensus, despite the foreign incentive associated with the

prospect of peace. The feeling of betrayal generated among many Palestinians was because the agreement did not give them State status, but autonomy for an undetermined Palestinian entity. Just as the Arabs did not initially recognize the State of Israel and designate it as a Zionist entity (generic and indefinite), the Israelis did not recognize the State of Palestine, but an entity representative of a community. The recognition of the other as equal was out of the question. The exercise of recognition expresses alterity (assuming the existence of the other) and tolerance (affirming the liberty and autonomy of the other). While the possibility of the existence of a nation depends on the self-identification, the possibility of dialogue among nations depends on the recognition of the other, as explained by Mindus (2019, p. 119, our translation):

Indeed, the problem of defining nation has always been of a political nature and concerns the boundaries of identification with a particular social group. The “identification” must be understood here in the intransitive sense: in the sense of self-identification and not of identifying someone or something [...] Identification in an intransitive sense [...] refers to the practical-political problem of recognizing oneself in a given group or at different points in time.

Thinking thus, the political recognition of the other– and not its silencing –as a subject of international law is a necessary condition for the possibility of dialogue. This recognition allows facing problems by the way of reason rather than the way of the sword. Therefore, we can note that non-recognition is a phenomenon present in the essence of Arab-Jewish conflicts throughout the 20th century. The absence of mutual recognition is a motivating factor in the conflicts that reach their apex in the creation of terrorist organizations.

The dissatisfaction of the Palestinians with the non-recognition of their state, the leadership of Yasser Arafat, and the perception of a crisis of political representation encouraged the organization of Hamas. This Islamic fundamentalist group rejected the legitimacy of any Jewish State and hence of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Hamas rejected the PNA because it only came into existence because Israel recognized it, that is, the existence of the PNA does not come

about through a self-proclamation or a movement of self-identification. The PNA now has its “political existence” precisely because of the act of recognition by another State (Israel) that, in turn, is not recognized by the PNA itself. The problem of recognition has been present at several political moments of the Jewish people, both during the pre-State and post-State periods. The creation of the State of Israel did not mean a historical overcoming of the problem of political recognition of the different ethnic groups that populated that territory for centuries.

Avnery (2012) considers the Oslo Accords a historical error, but this could be considered a historic step, as Israel and the Palestinian people would recognize each other. However, the Declaration of Principles was not clearly drafted in terms of territorial boundaries. The Oslo Accords would provide the Palestinians a minimum base similar to a state, which would evolve progressively until the establishment of the sovereign State of Palestine. Arafat set a goal that included the following objectives: the State of Palestine would take place in all occupied territories; the borders would be reestablished along the lines of those existing before the 1967 war; the capital of Palestine would be East Jerusalem; the expulsion of Jewish settlements from Palestinian territory; the solution to the refugee problem through an agreement with Israel. We can say that, to a greater or lesser degree, these objectives still exist and any Palestinian leader, who would accept less, would be considered by the Palestinian people as a traitor.

Final considerations

Nationalism creates the possibility of political unity and, from this unity, one nation can dialogue with others. Nationalism forges an identity composed of two processes: the recognizing oneself and being recognized, that is, identifying oneself as a political entity and being considered as such by other entities of the same type. This way, the phenomenon of alterity requires identity and recognition. From that point on, dialogue becomes possible because there can only be a dialogue between two subjects if they exist. It means that if one does not recognize the existence of the other, there will not be possibility for dialogue, which enables war. This relation between identity, recognition, alterity and dialogue permeates the Arab-Israeli conflict from the end of the 19th century to the wars of the second half of the 20th century, as analyzed in this article.

Jewish nationalism was already existed long before the creation of the State of Israel. The organization of the Jews made their participation in the First World War possible even without being a State – when they fought on the side of the British against the Ottomans in the expectation of obtaining the support of the United Kingdom with respect to Zionist interests –, which resulted, in part, in the Balfour Declaration. Jewish nationalism must be understood from a political and cultural point of view. An example of this is the Jewish literature that begins to become important in the second half of the 19th century, after the Russian pogroms, reinforcing the importance of the Hebrew language in Zionist agendas.

With the creation of the State of Israel, the Arab-Jewish conflict becomes an Arab-Israeli conflict and Jewish nationalism becomes an internationally recognized State entity. However, such recognition was not unanimous and, therefore, the military conflict extends into the second half of the 20th century, with developments in the 21st century. Like Jewish nationalism, Arab nationalism is also expressed in State terms, but not always, as in the case of the non-state political organization called the Arab Higher Committee, besides the PLO itself.

The Arab-Israeli conflict can not be explained exclusively in terms of a conflict between Jewish and Arab nationalisms, since international issues also influenced it, as in the case of German Nazism, the British Mandate for Palestine, and the Russian pogroms, for example. The international organizations – such as the League of Nations, today United Nations – are essential social actors in understanding the extended Arab-Jewish conflict, because they were key players in the realization and juridicization of the Mandate for Palestine and in the process of delimiting borders and creating the State of Israel. The creation of geopolitical boundaries that separate States does not always respect the existing ethnic differences. The arbitrariness of territorial delimitations is evident both in the Mandate for Palestine and in the creation of the State of Israel and is the basis of the conflicts between the two peoples after 1948.

Jewish nationalism is not a homogeneous movement, since it has disruptions and internal differences. These differences not only reflect political disagreements, for example, between the Labour Party and Revisionist ideals, but also religious discrepancies, especially when we confront secular understandings of the Israeli State with Hebrew beliefs – the very

idea of “Land of Israel” has an ancient religious foundation.

In any case, Jewish nationalism was strengthened with the State of Israel, as it added legal recognition to the feeling of belonging of a people, from the perspective of the civil status of a citizen of the Israeli State. Given its history, we can notice that Jewish nationalism was based – among other elements – on the State. Until 1948, Jewish nationalism was based on a hypothetical, abstract, future, and religious State, whose worldly achievement depended on the pre-state political organization of the Jewish people and the support of other States and international organizations such as the League of Nations and United Nations. After 1948, Jewish nationalism gained strength with the state phenomenon and possibly for this reason the Palestinian Arab-Israeli conflict intensified. This has repercussions even in the language field, when, for instance, the Palestinians call Israel a Zionist entity, as if it were a parastatal political organization.

Jewish nationalism is a complex issue, and academic research should not attempt to overcome this complexity by defining it in a reductionist way, but rather to recognize it, understand it and analyze it in a contextualized way. We concluded that Jewish nationalism has many facets – religious, linguistic, cultural, literary, state and parastatal – that appear to a greater or lesser degree at certain historical moments. The attempt to understand the Jewish feeling of nation must always include an analysis of all these characteristics and its contextualization in every historical moment, from the Zionist movement of the 19th century, through the world wars and the creation of the State of Israel, to the conflicts of the end of the 20th century.

Notes

¹ Une nation est donc une grande solidarité, constituée par le sentiment des sacrifices qu'on a faits et de ceux qu'on est disposé à faire encore. Elle suppose un passé ; elle se résume pourtant dans le présent par un fait tangible : le consentement, le désir clairement exprimé de continuer la vie commune. L'existence d'une nation est (pardonnez-moi cette métaphore) un plébiscite de tous les jours, comme l'existence de l'individu est une affirmation perpétuelle de vie.

² Jewish Agency is the popular name for the Jewish Agency for Israel.

³ The Mandate for Palestine is discussed and explained later in this article.

- 4 A paramilitary organization of the Jewish people that acted against the Arabs and the British administration of the Mandate for Palestine.
- 5 Also known as Higher National Committee, the Arab Higher Committee was a political organ under the leadership of the mufti, a juridical-religious authority who has the power to determine the legitimate interpretation of the Quran in concrete cases of application of the law.
- 6 Construction work on the Wall of Separation was initiated in 2000 and separates Israel from the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. There are over 700 kilometers and in some places the height is as high as eight meters.
- 7 "The General Assembly decides do revoke the determination contained in its resolution 3379 of 10 November 1975".
- 8 Intifada is a word of Arabic origin that means revolt and generally designates Palestinian armed struggle (from the eighties onwards) against the Israeli presence in the territories occupied and claimed by Palestinians.

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