Comparing and Contrasting the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel and the PLO Charter
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ENDURING UNDERSTANDING:

Each and every national covenant - be it a charter or the declaration of independence - reflects the guiding ideology, values, philosophies, main beliefs, codes, principles, aspirations, and ethics of any given national group.

The PLO is the declared representative of the Palestinian people. Their national ideology and aspirations are reflected in their Charter. Meanwhile the ideology and aspirations of the reborn Jewish state are recorded in the Declaration of independence of the State of Israel.

Studying them (as primary sources) allows us to understand “the core” of each community and gives us an opportunity to compare and contrast with a critical lens as to each group’s ideology, aspirations and means to achieve their goals.

ASSESSMENT:

Students will be given a copy of:

1. The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel
2. The PLO Charter, 1964
3. The PLO Charter, 1968

Analyze, Compare, and Contrast #1 and #3.

Look for the differences between #2 and #3.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. Where in the document does the Declaration of Independence make a case for Israel’s legitimacy:

   A) Legally?
B) Historically?

C) Biblically?

2. Where in the document does the Palestinian Charter make a case for its legitimacy:

A) Legally?

B) Historically?

C) Biblically?

3. Is the Bible a legal document? Can it be used as a source to endorse to a certain group the right to the land?

4. The Declaration of Independence claims for the right of the Jewish people to self-determination. The Palestinian Charter also states the same right for the Palestinians. Where do the differences lie between one document and the other?

5. Where in these official documents do we find recognition and rights for “the others” (in the envisioned Palestinian State and in the re-established Jewish State)? Mention civil rights, religious rights and political rights.

6. What is the stance of the Israelis and Palestinians in recognizing the others’ legitimate right to a state.

7. What are Israel’s main goals? Mention at least two.

8. How are they going to achieve them?

9. What are the Palestinians’ main goals? Mention at least two.

10. How are they going to achieve them?

11. Do both groups abide by the UN resolutions? Prove with examples.

12. Do both groups, or any one of them, delegitimize the other? If so, how do they do it? Explain.

13. Compare and contrast the objectives and targets between both groups.

14. Where do we find construction and where do we find destruction in each one of the documents? Illustrate with quotations.

15. Try to recognize narratives from historical facts within these two documents.

16. What is the historical context of each one of these documents? How do the events or circumstances leading up to each document affect its creation? (CIE Analyzing Primary Sources)
17. Is it valid to compare a document from 1947 with one from 1967? Consider the different political, social and historical circumstances, but still bear in mind both of them are binding today.

18. “It is important to notice that the Israeli and the Palestinian narratives are not symmetrical in their internal construction and cannot be expected to be so at the current state. The Palestinian narrative is much more monolithic in its internal structure, representing Palestinians’ need to develop their independent statehood, similar to the way the Israeli Jewish narrative was framed when Israel struggled for its independence.” Side by Side By Parallel Histories of Israel- Palestine (Bar-On, 2004)

Israel’s Declaration of Independence was precisely “the official document” emitted “when Israel struggled for its independence,” thus, is it valid to compare it with the Palestinian Charter of 1968? Remember 1968 was a year after the Arabs lost the Six Day War and when there was a shift in Palestinian thinking. It produced for the first time a demand for a Palestinian state.

Two groups are searching for self-determination. Two groups are asking for their right to sovereignty. Two groups expose in a document their projects and aspirations. Two different historical moments. Is it a fair and valid exercise to compare and contrast these two documents? What do you think? Explain why.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Grasp the differences between the Israeli and the Palestinian guiding ideologies, core values, projects and aspirations by comparing and contrasting their official declarations.

Students will be able to:

• Analyze primary sources (official documents)
• Research the historical or legal validity of every statement
• Identify narratives from facts
• Evaluate implications of each stance
• Conclude where each group stands, where their principles lie, what their ideals and convictions are, grasp their ideology and comprehend the strategies they will implement to achieve their aims.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

11th and 12th grades, Adults
FOR TEACHERS USE:

Attached you will find an analysis of each one of these documents, specifically the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel and the PLO Charter of 1968 (the latest version). I only point out the main and significant differences between the first and second PLO Charter, version 1964 vs. 1968.

There are comments and a brief analysis for most of the articles in each document. It is extremely clear to conclude where each group stands, what their core values are, their main ideologies, and how they plan to achieve their goals.

The different italics and colors will make the text easier to understand.

Dark black - My text

*Italics* - *Quoting the Declaration of Independence or The PLO Charter*

RED - *Quoting an author*

Short outline of Palestinian Charter

- Use of violence and armed conflict as main channel to achieve the Palestinian goal: the destruction of Israel
- No concessions: maximalist - absolutist position
- Reject a negotiated process
- Ask for international legitimacy but defy the UN Resolutions
- Deny Israel’s right to exist
- Not recognize the nationhood of Jews born after 1880s
- Point out explicitly that they don’t want the West Bank or Gaza in 1964 Charter (Article 24). Change the content of Article 24 in 1968 when West Bank and Gaza are now in Jewish hands, after 1967 War.

Short outline of Israel’s Declaration of Independence

- Plea for peace and cooperation with world and neighbors
- Equal citizen rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex
- Abide with international regulations
- Guarantee the right of immigration and citizenship to every Jew
- Give the historical, political, religious and legal basis for the state

AT THE END OF THE PROJECT YOU WILL FIND AN EXPLANATION OF HOW TO WORK WITH PRIMARY SOURCES, DEVELOPED BY CIE. YOU WILL ALSO FIND THE LINK TO THE PAGE.
Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel

Historic, national and biblical connection to the land:

*Palestine was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.*

*After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.*

**Birthplace of Jewish people; Always a sense of connection to the territory; Consider first exile to Babylon - Tehilim 137.**

*For centuries, during the exile, the connection with the Land of Israel stood firm in the diverse communities of the Galut. If the connection with the land had been ripped and the Jews hadn’t considered the Land of Israel as the land of their past and future, then Judaism would have turned into a mere religious community losing its national elements.*

*What distinguished the Jews from Christianity and Islam are not only their different religious beliefs, but also their nexus with the distant homeland of their ancestors.*

**They considered themselves and they were considered by others, as a minority in exile.**

The Jews return to the land:

*Pioneers, ma’pilim [(Hebrew) - immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.*

*For them the romanticism of being agricultural workers connected with the idea that manual labor would redeem the Jew from the malady of generations. The lemma was: Jewish worker, in agricultural work, on Jewish land. They believed in the Russian slogan: “The land for its workers.”*

*A strong sense of mission to ensure a nation for the Jews.*
It isn’t colonization in the European sense:

“Palestine was a unique case of mainly European settlers who chose to come to an undeveloped, economically undesirable country and invest capital and labor in it for nationalistic and ideological reasons.

A social structure, in which the landowners are a European minority and the workers natives, is reminiscent of the colonial societies, where the European minority ruled the local majority and exploited its labor.

From the onset the Jewish society in Palestine did not fit this pattern.

The new Yishuv was not established so that the ‘motherland’ could send its sons and daughters to settle in a country it ruled and exploit the colony’s resources.

The Jews in Palestine established their homeland without the assistance of any colonial or imperialistic power. They relied on their own hard work in building an infrastructure and cultivating land they had legally purchased. They turned Hebrew into an everyday language and Palestine as a Hebrew center of culture. ISRAEL: A HISTORY, ANITA SHAPIRA

“Unlike the White settlers in the British colonies, Zionism voluntarily undertook restrictions compatible with democratic principles of self-determination. It strove to arrive at a demographic majority in the Land of Israel before taking political control of the country.

The Zionists considered Jewish majority a precondition for Jewish sovereignty. They believed that this condition was attainable through immigration, not by expulsion or annihilation in the manner accomplished by the Whites vis-à-vis Native Americans or Aborigines.

Economic theories of colonialism and sociological theories of migration movements are equally inadequate when applied to the Zionist experience. Palestine differed from typical countries of colonialist emigration primarily because it was an underdeveloped and poor country. Usually, Europeans had immigrated to countries rich in natural resources and poor in manpower in order to exploit their wealth; by contrast, Palestine was too poor even to support its indigenous population. At the end of the Ottoman period, natives of Palestine—Jews and Arabs alike—emigrated to seek their future in America and Australia. Zionist ideology and the import of Jewish private and national capital compensated for the lack of natural resources and accelerated modernization. These two factors—ideology (except for missionary zeal) and import of capital—were totally absent in other colonial movements. Imperialist powers generally exploited colonies for the benefit of the mother country and did not invest beyond what was necessary for that exploitation. By contrast, the flow of Jewish capital to Palestine went one way only. Neither Britain nor the Jewish people derived any economic gains from the Zionist enterprise. A central argument made by those who claim that Zionism was colonialist movement concerns the taking over of land and the dispossession of Arab tenants. The argument barely stands up to critical test. Until 1948 the Zionists did not conquer or expropriate, but—
unparalleled among colonalst movements—bought land in Palestine.” *Why Zionism is Not Colonialism*, Yoav Gelber

“The land they cultivated was not taken away from its rightful owners by force or confiscated by colonial law. It was purchased, primarily from absentee landlords and real estate speculators.

As Martin Buber said in 1939, ‘Our settlers do not come here as do the colonialists from Occident, to have natives do their work for them; they themselves set their shoulders to the plow and they spend their strength and their blood to make the land fruitful.’

The land was a materially worthless piece of real estate in a backwater of the world whose significance to Jews was religious and historical.” *The Case for Israel*, Alan Dershowitz

Legal status and legitimacy:

*In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.*

The Jews had the right to determine their own future consistent with the Wilsonian principle of self-determination: Self-determination, independence and sovereignty.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

The 1917 Balfour Declaration, the 1920 San Remo Conference, the 1922 League of Nations Mandate, the 1937 Peel Commission Report, the 1947 United Nations Partition Resolution, Israel’s Declaration of Independence, and subsequent recognition of the State of Israel secured Israel’s statehood lawfully by numerous world powers, and Israel’s acceptance into the United Nations.

*This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.*

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

Consequences of nation without homeland:

*The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its*
homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations.

Survivors of the Nazi Holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.

Active participation in WW2:

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom-loving and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

Jews participated actively in WW2 with the allies and thus gained a right. Please consider Arab countries, and specifically Arab leaders from Palestine, their role and active participation with the Nazis (Haj Amin Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem).

Concrete Declaration:


WE DECLARE that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel".

It then continues with what they want to do (goals and aspirations) and how to achieve them:

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles...

Please notice that the first act of the Jews in their independent state is to allow Jewish immigration. (Consider the year just after WW2 and the fate of the European Jews.)

““This guarantees the right of immigration and citizenship to every Jewish person willing to immigrate to Israel. This is a law based on solidarity with the downtrodden and persecuted: never again would persecuted Jews be exposed to a situation where they would not have a
place of refuge and asylum which would be willing to take them in because of their Jewish condition." The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State, Shlomo Avineri

...it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

True to the founding ideas of Zionism, the Declaration guarantees equal citizenship rights to all of the inhabitants of the country without discrimination and assures the cultural and religious rights of all communities.

Israel abides with international regulations and resolutions and the partition of Palestine (Resolution 181):

THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

Peace and Cooperation with Neighbors aspiring to mutual growth in spite of violence:

WE APPEAL - in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the up-building of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

PLEA FOR PEACE, work jointly with Arab nations for the progress of Middle East:

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

Inviting all the Jews in the world to help erect a scaffold to aid in the construction of the nation we have been and the one we aspire to be...

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and up building and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.
Religion:

The document mentions the Tanakh three times: “...the Jews gave to the world the eternal Book of Books...” “...Israel will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel....” And finally “...placing our trust in the Rock of Israel...”

History of PLO

The PLO was founded in 1964 during the first Arab summit in Cairo, where leaders of 13 Arab nations pledged to take a more active role for the “liberation of Palestine.” Since that time it has declared itself to be the representative of the Palestinian people and their nationalist aspirations.

Initially Ahmed Shukhairy led it. The guiding ideology of the PLO was outlined in the Palestine National Charter or Covenant in 1964. It functioned as the PLO’s Constitution.

Following the Six Day War, the PLO was reorganized under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. In 1968, delegates met to redraft the PLO Charter. The decline of prestige of Arab states caused by the war, created a shift in Palestinian thinking and produced for the first time a clear and consistent demand for a Palestinian state rather than conquest of Palestine by Arab countries. Adding paragraphs and changing others amended the PLO Charter of 1964.

TEACHER’S COPY: (Let the students, if age appropriate, figure out the differences between the two charters of 1964 and 1968). The main additions concern the reiterated call for armed struggle to eliminate Israel (“liberate Palestine”) and the change in attitude towards Jewish rights, as well as a change in the status of Judea, Samaria and Gaza (which were now in Jewish hands).

Text of the Charter:

Article 1:

Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people; it is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland, and the Palestinian people are an integral part of the Arab nation.

In Arabic, the document is called "Al-Mithaq Al-Kawmee Al-Philisteeni." Mithaq was at first translated as “covenant,” but later the word "charter" was adopted. Palestinians claim that “Al Kawmee” is untranslatable. It evidently implies that Palestinians are less than a nation in their own right, and are part of the Arab nation or Ummah.

Article 2:

Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit.

Strange that the imperialist and colonialist British Mandate in 1922, after the arbitrary partition of Transjordan which marked the new frontiers of Palestine, was the one who defined the frontiers and territory of the “historical Palestine.”
Article 3:

The Palestinian Arab people possess the legal right to their homeland and have the right to determine their destiny after achieving the liberation of their country in accordance with their wishes and entirely of their own accord and will.

Palestinians and Jews had and have the right to determine their own future consistent with the Wilsonian principle of self-determination.

Jews accepted the partition, Arabs didn’t. (Peel Commission 1937, United Nations 1947)

“Universalist, humanist and moral argument: The Jewish claim to independence, statehood and sovereignty is based on the idea of self determination, on the notion that Jews have a right to govern themselves and not be subject to foreign rule. This idea based on the heritage of the enlightenment is a universal idea; hence if you claim this right for yourself, you cannot deny it to others.

Specifically, if Zionism claims that Jews have a right not to be ruled by Arabs, it follows that Arabs have the same right not to be ruled by Jews. Ergo a compromise is needed; a partition is the vehicle which will grant the right to self-determination and not living under foreign rule - to both Jews and Arabs.

Tragically this debate did not occur within the Arab Community. Here an absolutist position (we have all the rights and Jews don’t have any rights) continued to be the foundation of their response to the idea of partition.” The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State, Shlomo Avineri

Article 4:

The Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential, and inherent characteristic; it is transmitted from parents to children. The Zionist occupation and the dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people, through the disasters, which befell them, do not make them lose their Palestinian identity and their membership in the Palestinian community, nor do they negate them.

Article 5:

The Palestinians are those Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine regardless of whether they were evicted from it or have stayed there. Anyone born, after that date, of a Palestinian father - whether inside Palestine or outside it - is also a Palestinian.

This article seems to make reference to any Jew born in Israel. However, the revised version of 1968 was more explicit:
Article 6:

The Jews who had normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians.

Most such Jews "of Palestinian origin" or who had "normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion," meaning before 1880, had already died by 1968. The fate of their descendants is not specified and probably most, or at least some of them, married Zionists. In any case, they were a tiny minority. The fate of the other Jews living in Palestine is not specified.

Express commitment to armed struggle:

Article 7:

That there is a Palestinian community and that it has material, spiritual, and historical connection with Palestine are indisputable facts. It is a national duty to bring up individual Palestinians in an Arab revolutionary manner. All means of information and education must be adopted in order to acquaint the Palestinian with his country in the most profound manner, both spiritual and material, that is possible. He must be prepared for the armed struggle and ready to sacrifice his wealth and his life in order to win back his homeland and bring about its liberation.

Remember: The local Arab residents had never had political independence and were not a distinct people. They were historically part of the Arab community.

Article 7 of the 1964 edition read like this:

Article 7:

Jews of Palestinian origin are considered Palestinians if they are willing to live peacefully and loyally in Palestine.

“The presence of Arab population in Israel was not a conclusive reason against the Zionist movement because that community had never enjoyed political independence, and Jews were at liberty to seek political revival in the only place that had been their homeland.” The National Rights of Jews, RUTH GAVISON

The Historic Palestine:

After Bar Kokhba´s rebellion against the Roman Empire in 135 CE the Roman Emperor decided to destroy not only Jerusalem but all the traditional Jewish nomenclature of the region. His intention was to erase every single trace of Jewish culture. Thus he renamed Judea as Palestine and Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina.
Under the Arab Muslim administration in the 12th and 13th centuries the term “Palestine” was in complete disuse. It reappears in the 19th century in Europe to refer to the Holy Land and it covers both sides of the Jordan River.

Since the destruction of the Jewish state in antiquity until the beginning of the British Mandate in the region, the land called “Palestine” wasn’t a country nor did it have established borders. It was a part of the Great Syria.

It was only after the British conquest in 1917-1918 and the subsequent establishment of the British Mandate, that this territorial region is officially called “Palestine” for the first time in centuries.

This designation wasn’t acceptable for the Jews or the Arabs. From the Jewish point of view it reestablished a name associated with the Roman Empire’s intent to destroy the Jewish identity and culture in the Land of Israel.

For the Arabs it was meaningless. It designated an independent area which for the Arabs was a part of the Great Syria. That region that the British nominated Palestine was not an independent country but the southern region of the Great Syria.

Calling for the destruction of the State of Israel:

Article 8:

The phase in their history, through which the Palestinian people are now living, is that of national (watani) struggle for the liberation of Palestine. Thus the conflicts among the Palestinian national forces are secondary, and should be ended for the sake of the basic conflict that exists between the forces of Zionism and of imperialism on the one hand, and the Palestinian Arab people on the other. On this basis the Palestinian masses, regardless of whether they are residing in the national homeland or in diaspora (mahajir) constitute - both their organizations and the individuals - one national front working for the retrieval of Palestine and its liberation through armed struggle.

Here they declare the principle of the armed struggle and deny Israel’s right to exist.

Article 9:

Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. This it is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase. The Palestinian Arab people assert their absolute determination and firm resolution to continue their armed struggle and to work for an armed popular revolution for the liberation of their country and their return to it. They also assert their right to normal life in Palestine and to exercise their right to self-determination and sovereignty over it.

The Palestinians defined themselves and their national movement as a violent movement directed at destroying the nation state of the Jews.
Article 10:

Commando action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular liberation war. This requires its escalation, comprehensiveness, and the mobilization of all the Palestinian popular and educational efforts and their organization and involvement in the armed Palestinian revolution. It also requires the achieving of unity for the national (watani) struggle among the different groupings of the Palestinian people, and between the Palestinian people and the Arab masses, so as to secure the continuation of the revolution, its escalation, and victory.

In this article the Fedayeen (those who sacrifice themselves) are named as the nucleus of the armed struggle.

The PLO was responsible for many of acts of terrorism, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians: the murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games; the killing of 21 schoolchildren at Ma’alot in 1974; the death of 35 people and wounding of 85 in an attack on Israeli tourist buses along the Haifa-Tel Aviv coastal highway in 1978; the hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship in 1985 and the murder of disabled American Jewish passenger Leon Klinghoffer to mention a few.

Article 11:

The Palestinians will have three mottoes: national (wataniyya) unity, national (qawmiyya) mobilization, and liberation.

Article 12:

The Palestinian people believe in Arab unity. In order to contribute their share toward the attainment of that objective, however, they must, at the present stage of their struggle, safeguard their Palestinian identity and develop their consciousness of that identity, and oppose any plan that may dissolve or impair it.

Article 13:

Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine are two complementary objectives, the attainment of either of which facilitates the attainment of the other. Thus, Arab unity leads to the liberation of Palestine, the liberation of Palestine leads to Arab unity; and work toward the realization of one objective proceeds side by side with work toward the realization of the other.

Article 14:

The destiny of the Arab nation, and indeed Arab existence itself, depend upon the destiny of the Palestine cause. From this interdependence springs the Arab nation’s pursuit of, and striving for, the liberation of Palestine. The people of Palestine play the role of the vanguard in the realization of this sacred (qawmi) goal.

The Palestine Liberation Organization’s Zuhair Mohsen told the Dutch newspaper Trouw in 1977:
"The Palestinian people [do] not exist. The creation of a Palestinian state is only a means for continuing our struggle against the state of Israel for our Arab unity. In reality today there is no difference between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interests demand that we posit the existence of a distinct Palestinian people to oppose Zionism.

For tactical reasons, Jordan, which is a sovereign state with defined borders, cannot raise claims to Haifa and Jaffa; while as a Palestinian, I can undoubtedly demand Haifa, Jaffa, Beer-Sheva and Jerusalem. However, the moment we reclaim our right to all of Palestine, we will not wait even a minute to unite Palestine and Jordan."

The Palestinian cause was “reconstructed” in 1964 by Egypt. President Gamal Abdel Nasser wanted to achieve Arab unity with Egypt at its head. In his intent to achieve pan-Arabism he joined Egypt with Syria creating the UAR - United Arab Republic - but due to the fact that the Arabs didn’t have many elements in common (remember they were divided by clans; there were power and control disputes), his project was unattainable.

Thus Egypt reached the conclusion that the one excuse that would be extremely efficient to unify the Arab world was the fight against Israel.

It is then that Nasser speaks about the need to liberate Palestine, about the need to free the land in order to create the great Arab nation. He invites the members of the Arab League in January 1964, where under Nasser’s initiative, the PLO is founded.

Article 15:

The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national (qawmi) duty and it attempts to repel the Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Arab homeland, and aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine. Absolute responsibility for this falls upon the Arab nation - peoples and governments - with the Arab people of Palestine in the vanguard. Accordingly, the Arab nation must mobilize all its military, human, moral, and spiritual capabilities to participate actively with the Palestinian people in the liberation of Palestine. It must, particularly in the phase of the armed Palestinian revolution, offer and furnish the Palestinian people with all possible help, and material and human support, and make available to them the means and opportunities that will enable them to continue to carry out their leading role in the armed revolution, until they liberate their homeland.

Article 16:

The liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual point of view, will provide the Holy Land with an atmosphere of safety and tranquility, which in turn will safeguard the country's religious sanctuaries and guarantee freedom of worship and of visit to all, without discrimination of race, color, language, or religion. Accordingly, the people of Palestine look to all spiritual forces in the world for support.
Following the Israeli War of Independence in 1948, as part of the Armistice Agreement signed on April 3, 1949, Jordan was compelled to allow “free access to the holy sites and cultural institutions and cemeteries on the Mount of Olives.”

However Jews were barred from entering into the Old City and visiting Jewish holy places including the Temple Mount. Synagogues within the Old City were destroyed; and gravestones in the Jewish Mount of Olives were desecrated and used as paving stones. Thus religious freedom was - at least then - a fallacy.

Article 17:

The liberation of Palestine, from a human point of view, will restore to the Palestinian individual his dignity, pride, and freedom. Accordingly the Palestinian Arab people look forward to the support of all those who believe in the dignity of man and his freedom in the world.

Arab Palestinians ask for freedom and sovereignty but won’t allow it for others.

“Palestinian self-determination cannot be permitted to undermine Jewish self-determination. It cannot pertain to the whole of the territory. Two states for two peoples.” The National Rights of Jews, Ruth Gavison

Article 18:

The liberation of Palestine, from an international point of view, is a defensive action necessitated by the demands of self-defense. Accordingly the Palestinian people, desirous as they are of the friendship of all people, look to freedom-loving, and peace-loving states for support in order to restore their legitimate rights in Palestine, to re-establish peace and security in the country, and to enable its people to exercise national sovereignty and freedom.

Article 19:

The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the State of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time, because they were contrary to the will of the Palestinian people and to their natural right in their homeland, and inconsistent with the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations; particularly the right to self-determination.

Defiance of UN General Assembly Resolution 181, which called for partition of Palestine, which is especially surprising given the Palestinian insistence on “international legitimacy.”

Resolution 181 of November 1947 envisaged two ethnic nation states, each of which would provide self-determination to Jews and Arabs (now Palestinians).

“The Arab states (some of them members of the United Nations) went to war not only against the emerging Jewish State, but also against a UN resolution. The only case when member states of the UN not only did not abide by a UN resolution, but went to war against it.” The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State, Shlomo Avineri
Article 20:

The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate for Palestine, and everything that has been based upon them, are deemed null and void. Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history and the true conception of what constitutes statehood. Judaism, being a religion, is not an independent nationality. Nor do Jews constitute a single nation with an identity of its own; they are citizens of the states to which they belong.

Erase or deny archeological and other evidence of Jewish habitation in Jerusalem and elsewhere in ancient times:

Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history and the true conception of what constitutes statehood.

Denial of Jewish peoplehood and of their right to self-determination:

Judaism, being a religion, is not an independent nationality. Nor do Jews constitute a single nation with an identity of its own; they are citizens of the states to which they belong.

For centuries, during the exile, the connection with the Land of Israel stood firm in the diverse communities of the Galut.

If the connection with the Land had been ripped and the Jews hadn’t considered the Land of Israel as the Land of their past and future, then Judaism would have turned into a mere religious community losing its national elements.

What distinguished the Jews from Christianity and Islam are not only their different religious beliefs, but also their nexus with the distant homeland of their ancestors.

They considered themselves and others considered them as a minority-in-exile.

“Jewish identity over the years was maintained and transmitted via membership in communities of faith and worship. Jews who did not observe did not remain Jews. Often Jews who integrated into host societies and agreed to the privatization of their distinct Jewish identity as a religion were not effective in transmitting it to latter generations. Yet the ties among Jewish communities were not exhausted by religion even before secularization. Jews felt a community of fate and shared a history and a culture across countries in which they lived and the languages that they used. The strength of this sense of shared fate is a central component of the amazing fact that Jews remained a distinct ethnic group despite centuries of dispersion...

Those who remained Jews chose to do so. And they chose to do so because they felt it was an important part of their identity. The fact that this identity was not only religious became clear when many who stopped observing, some of whom defined themselves as having no religion, wanted to remain and transmit their Jewish identity to their children. The cultural revival
leading to Zionism was in fact triggered by this wish.” The National Rights of Jews, RUTH GAVISON

Article 21:

The Arab Palestinian people, expressing themselves by the armed Palestinian revolution, reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine and reject all proposals aiming at the liquidation of the Palestinian problem, or its internationalization.

Here the maximalist–absolutist position gives no room for negotiations or compromises. It is explicit:

...reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine and reject all proposals aiming at the liquidation of the Palestinian problem, or its internationalization.”

The means to solve the Palestinian problem is by an armed revolution:

The Arab Palestinian people [are] expressing themselves by the armed Palestinian revolution.

Article 22:

Zionism is a political movement organically associated with international imperialism and antagonistic to all action for liberation and to progressive movements in the world. It is racist and fanatic in its nature, aggressive, expansionist, and colonial in its aims, and fascist in its methods. Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement, and geographical base for world imperialism placed strategically in the midst of the Arab homeland to combat the hopes of the Arab nation for liberation, unity, and progress. Israel is a constant source of threat vis-a-vis peace in the Middle East and the whole world. Since the liberation of Palestine will destroy the Zionist and imperialist presence and will contribute to the establishment of peace in the Middle East, the Palestinian people look for the support of all the progressive and peaceful forces and urge them all, irrespective of their affiliations and beliefs, to offer the Palestinian people all aid and support in their just struggle for the liberation of their homeland.

“Zionism is being demonized twining the term with expansionism, colonialism, imperialism, racism...” Gil Troy

The Arabs never understood the Zionist movement. They interpreted Zionism as a mere colonialist movement, without understanding its substance as a national revival movement. How could they understand it? It was a foreign concept.

“The national idea” in European meaning and context, hadn’t been known in the region... With the exception of Egypt, the Arabs were divided into ethnical and religious tribes and communities. They were governed by supra-national empires. The First World War introduced to the region the strange customs of the European Culture.” (SYKES-PICOT)
“Thus in the Middle East, Zionism and Israel were interpreted primarily as the spearheads of Occident. Zionism symbolized not only a strange concept but a completely different civilization.”

*El contexto del proceso de paz, Medio Oriente, Yoav Gelber*

“Those who claim that the Jewish refugees who immigrated to Palestine in the last decades of the 19th century were the tools of European imperialism must answer the following question: for whom were these socialists and idealists working? Where they planting the flag of the hated czar of Russia or the anti-Semitic regimes of Poland or Lithuania? These refugees wanted nothing to do with the countries from which they fled to avoid pogroms and religious discrimination....

The land they cultivated was not taken away from its rightful owners by force or confiscated by colonial law. It was purchased, primarily from absentee landlords and real estate speculators.

As Martin Buber said in 1939, ‘Our settlers do not come here as do the colonialists from Occident, to have natives do their work for them; they themselves set their shoulders to the plow and they spend their strength and their blood to make the land fruitful.’

The land was a materially worthless piece of real estate in a backwater of the world whose significance to Jews was religious and historical.”

*The Case for Israel, Alan Dershowitz*

“Palestine was a unique case of mainly European settlers who chose to come to an undeveloped, economically undesirable country and invest capital and labor in it for nationalistic and ideological reasons.

A social structure in which the landowners are a European minority and the workers natives, is reminiscent of the colonial societies, where the European minority ruled the local majority and exploited its labor.

From the onset the Jewish society in Palestine did not fit this pattern.

The new Yishuv was not established so that the ‘motherland’ could send its sons and daughters to settle in a country it ruled and exploit the colony’s resources.

The Jews in Palestine established their homeland without the assistance of any colonial or imperialistic power. They relied on their own hard work in building and an infrastructure and cultivating land they had legally purchased. They turned Hebrew into an everyday language and Palestine as a Hebrew center of culture.”

*ISRAEL: A HISTORY, ANITA SHAPIRA*

“Unlike the White settlers in the British colonies, Zionism voluntarily undertook restrictions compatible with democratic principles of self-determination. It strove to arrive at a demographic majority in the Land of Israel before taking political control of the country. The Zionists considered Jewish majority a precondition for Jewish sovereignty. They believed that this condition was attainable through immigration, not by expulsion or
annihilation in the manner accomplished by the Whites vis-à-vis Native Americans or Aborigines.

Economic theories of colonialism and sociological theories of migration movements are equally inadequate when applied to the Zionist experience. Palestine differed from typical countries of colonalist emigration primarily because it was an underdeveloped and poor country. Usually, Europeans had immigrated to countries rich in natural resources and poor in manpower in order to exploit their wealth; by contrast, Palestine was too poor even to support its indigenous population. At the end of the Ottoman period, natives of Palestine—Jews and Arabs alike—emigrated to seek their future in America and Australia. Zionist ideology and the import of Jewish private and national capital compensated for the lack of natural resources and accelerated modernization. These two factors—ideology (except for missionary zeal) and import of capital—were totally absent in other colonial movements. Imperialist powers generally exploited colonies for the benefit of the mother country and did not invest beyond what was necessary for that exploitation. By contrast, the flow of Jewish capital to Palestine went one way only. Neither Britain nor the Jewish people derived any economic gains from the Zionist enterprise. A central argument made by those who claim that Zionism was colonalist movement concerns the taking over of land and the dispossession of Arab tenants. The argument barely stands up to critical test. Until 1948 the Zionists did not conquer or expropriate, but—unparalleled among colonialist movements—bought land in Palestine.” *Why Zionism is Not Colonialism*, Yoav Gelber

“Those who accuse Israel of racism exhibit a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the Jewish state. The Jews of Israel themselves comprise multiple racial and ethnic groups. Jewish Israelis comprise Europeans, Africans, Ethiopians, Persians, etc. Race therefore cannot form the basis for alleged institutionalized discrimination in Israel because the alleged discriminators (Jewish Israelis) are multi-ethnic themselves.

Israel, unlike neighboring Arab nations, does not use religious coercion; neither is there segregation or discrimination against minorities who are not Jewish.” *Countering Challenges to Israel’s Legitimacy*, Alan M Dershowitz

Refuting Racism:

“Israel adopted a multicultural approach towards its Arab minority, maintaining the Status of Arabic as an official language. Israeli Arabs send their children to schools which teach Arabic, with their curriculum tailored to their culture.” *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, Shlomo Avineri

Once again the PLO Charter negates Israel’s right to exist:

Article 22:

*The demands of security and peace, as well as the demands of right and justice, require all states to consider Zionism an illegitimate movement, to outlaw its existence, and to ban its
operations, in order that friendly relations among peoples may be preserved, and the loyalty of citizens to their respective homelands safeguarded.

The next article manifestly applies for all the people except the Jews:

Article 23:

The Palestinian people believe in the principles of justice, freedom, sovereignty, self-determination, human dignity, and in the right of all peoples to exercise them.

Article 24 in the 1964 version of the Charter excluded any claim by the Palestinians to the West Bank and Gaza - and by inference to Jordan - which together had comprised about 80% of former Palestine:

Article 24:

This Organization does not exercise any territorial sovereignty over the West Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on the Gaza Strip or in the Himmah Area. Its activities will be on the national popular level in the liberational, organizational, political and financial fields.

This article was subsequently deleted from the 1968 Charter following Jordan's loss of the West Bank and Egypt's loss of Gaza in the Six Day War, 1967.

Article 24 in the 1968 Charter:

Article 24:

For the realization of the goals of this Charter and its principles, the Palestine Liberation Organization will perform its role in the liberation of Palestine in accordance with the Constitution of this Organization.

Article 25:

The Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of the Palestinian revolutionary forces, is responsible for the Palestinian Arab people's movement in its struggle – to retrieve its homeland, liberate and return to it and exercise the right to self-determination in it – in all military, political, and financial fields and also for whatever may be required by the Palestinian case on the inter-Arab and international levels.
Article 26:

The Palestine Liberation Organization shall cooperate with all Arab states, each according to its potentialities; and will adopt a neutral policy among them in the light of the requirements of the war of liberation; and on this basis it shall not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab state.

Article 27:

The Palestinian Arab people assert the genuineness and independence of their national (wataniyya) revolution and reject all forms of intervention, trusteeship and subordination.

Article 28:

The Palestinian people possess the fundamental and genuine legal right to liberate and retrieve their homeland. The Palestinian people determine their attitude towards all states and forces on the basis of the stands they adopt vis-a-vis the Palestinian case and the extent of the support they offer to the Palestinian revolution to fulfill the aims of the Palestinian people.

There was no Palestine as a state. It was part of the Ottoman Empire. Take a look at Article 7 and the interpretation.

Article 29:

Fighters and carriers of arms in the war of liberation are the nucleus of the popular army, which will be the protective force for the gains of the Palestinian Arab people.

The Fedayeen are the fundamental elements of the armed struggle. Take a look at Article 10 and the interpretation.

Article 30:

The Organization shall have a flag, an oath of allegiance and an anthem. All this shall be decided upon in accordance with a special regulation.

Article 31:

Regulations, which shall be known as the Constitution of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, shall be annexed to this Charter. It shall lay down the manner in which the Organization, and its organs and institutions, shall be constituted; the respective competence of each; and the requirements of its obligations under the Charter.
Article 32:

This Charter shall not be amended save by [vote of] a majority of two-thirds of the total membership of the National Congress of the Palestine Liberation Organization [taken] at a special session convened for that purpose.

If you look today for the Palestinian National Charter in the Official page of the PLO you won’t find it, at least not in the English version. However they do mention it as a current and valid document.

http://palestineun.org/about-palestine/palestine-liberation-organization/

Palestine National Council:

The PNC, which is the highest decision-making body of the PLO, is considered to be the parliament of all Palestinians inside and outside of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The PNC normally sets PLO policies, elects the Executive Committee and makes the necessary changes in its own membership, as well as changes to the Palestine National Charter (a special meeting is required) and to the Fundamental Law of the organization. The PNC also elects a speaker, two deputies and a secretary, who make up the Bureau of the Council. The Council has its own standing committees for various aspects of its work, such as its legal and political committees. The composition of the PNC represents all sectors of the Palestinian community worldwide and includes numerous organizations of the resistance movement, political parties, popular organizations (each of the above is represented by specific quotas) and independent personalities and figures from all sectors of life, including intellectuals, religious leaders and businessmen.

In 1988 in Geneva, Arafat announced that he would accept the existence of the State of Israel, renounce terrorism, and accept UN Resolutions 242 and 338. Despite this declaration, the PLO continued terrorist attacks against Israelis.

Following the negotiations with Israel in Oslo:

“In his September 9, 1993, letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat stated that those articles in the Palestinian National Charter which deny Israel’s right to exist or are inconsistent with the PLO's new commitments to Israel following the mutual recognition of the Oslo Accords, are no longer valid. Arafat also stated that "the PLO undertakes to submit to the Palestinian National Council for formal approval the necessary changes in regard to the Palestinian Covenant.”
On May 4, 1996, the Palestinian National Council wrote a resolution in its 21st session held in Gaza City declaring its intention to amend the Palestinian National Charter by ‘canceling the articles that are contrary to the letters exchanged between the PLO and the Government of Israel 9-10 September 1993.’ The Council assigned its legal committee with the task of redrafting the Palestinian National Charter in order to ‘present it to the first session of the Palestinian central council.’

On January 13, 1998, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat sent a letter to US President Bill Clinton outlining the specific articles of the Charter that were nullified or amended as a result of that decision, and wrote that ‘all of the provisions of the Covenant which are inconsistent with the PLO commitment to recognize and live in peace side by side with Israel are no longer in effect.’

On Dec. 14, 1998, in accordance with the Wye River Memorandum, both the PLO Executive Committee and the PLO Central Council reaffirmed this decision in the presence of President Clinton. President Clinton addressed the assembled Palestinian officials by stating, ‘I thank you for your rejection—fully, finally and forever—of the passages in the Palestinian Charter calling for the destruction of Israel. For they were the ideological underpinnings of a struggle renounced at Oslo. By revoking them once and for all, you have sent, I say again, a powerful message not to the government, but to the people of Israel. You will touch people on the street there. You will reach their hearts there.’

As of June 16, 2006, the most recent date of the Palestinian National Charter on the official PLO website, the 1968 Charter remains in its original form, with an outline of the intended updates mentioned above. A more recent version of the Charter could not be found as of December 29, 2011.

On March 28, 2011, according to Eurasia Review, PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas asked the Executive Committee of the PLO to convene a Constitution Committee for the first time since 2006 with the intention of amending the PLO Charter by September 31, 2011. As of December 29, 2011, this committee has not convened and the Charter remains unchanged.” http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000387

“The decision fails to meet the obligations laid out in the Oslo Accords in two respects. First, the actual amendment of the Covenant has been left for a future date. As of now, the old Covenant, in its original form, remains the governing document of the PLO, and will continue in this status until the amendments are actually approved... There is a sharp difference between calling for something to change and actually implementing the changes. Second, the decision does not specify which clauses will be amended.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_National_Covenant
How to Analyze a Document

Documents shed light on moments and events in history. They provide specific information or give a broad description. They give us a unique glimpse into the past, which secondary sources cannot provide. Reading several documents from the same time frame that stretch over a period of time allows the reader to see a context for an evolving idea, theme, or undertaking. Similarly, reading several documents from the exact same time, but with differing origins, allows a tapestry to be woven of that moment. The reader should consider answering the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” questions that contribute to the writing and interpretation of the text or document under review.

1. What is the origin of the document? Is it authentic? How does the type of document present the information? Is the material authentic? What is the source of the material? What was the purpose of the document? If a prescription for action or report, what action or inaction followed what was written?

2. Who composed the document and for whom was it intended? What is the relationship between the author(s) and the recipient(s) and how does this affect content, phraseology and tone? How does the document impact other readers who are not part of the targeted recipients? Why would different audiences interpret a document differently?

3. What is the historical context? How do events or circumstances leading up to the document affect its creation? What is the significance of the document at this time? Does the document stand alone, or is it part of a series of documents (an exchange of letters, a phase in negotiations, etc.), and how does this affect its content, phraseology and tone?

4. What is the content and how is it presented? Specifically, how does the document begin and end, what are its main points? What can be inferred from specific words or phrases used (or omitted)? What can one deduce about the author’s (or recipients’) views, intentions and interests? Why, specifically, in some diplomatic documents, are phrases and words ambiguous or certain words omitted?

5. Why was the document significant? Who did it impact? When was it made public, if at all? Who knew about the document when it was written? If private or secret, who did not know about its contents at the time? What does that mean for that moment in history if there are parties to a conflict and they do not know what was really going on in an adversary’s plans or mind? Were new terms coined or ideas introduced? How did others react to the document’s publication? How has the meaning of the document changed over time?
<table>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>Shlomo Avineri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publisher</strong></td>
<td>Hachette UK (2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISBN</strong></td>
<td>0465094805, 9780465094806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Case for Israel</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publisher</strong></td>
<td>John Wiley &amp; Sons, Inc. 1st edition (August 1, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISBN</strong></td>
<td>0471679526, 9780471679523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td><strong>Israel’s Rights as a Nation State in International Diplomacy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Editor</strong></td>
<td>Ambassador Alan Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publisher</strong></td>
<td>Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISBN</strong></td>
<td>978 14658 3132 3</td>
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<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
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<tr>
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| **Publisher** | Black Swan (February 26, 2008)                                     |
| **ISBN**   | 0552774286, 9780552774284                                            |