Nevertheless, the EZLN has recently criticized certain political candidates and exhibited a loss of interest in the electoral process and a loss of confidence in Mexican civil society.

There are several possibilities for the future regarding this conflict. On one hand, it is evident that the EZLN will reinforce the “other campaign” that it launched as a new strategy based on listening in order to seek alliances with the Mexican civil society. The EZLN’s role in Mexican politics during the electoral period has been cautious, particularly with Mexican “workers, campesinos, teachers, students, employees . . . the workers of the city and the countryside.”

SEE ALSO Mayan Genocide in Guatemala; Violence against Indigenous People, Latin America.

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ZIONISM
Zionism is the political movement created to foster the establishment of a Jewish state. It is based on the idea that Jews, wherever they live, constitute a single people. It developed in Europe in the late nineteenth century against a backdrop of rising nationalism and anti-Jewish sentiment, especially in areas ruled by the czar, where the greatest number of Jews lived, but also in France, where the Dreyfus case revealed widespread resentment of Jews, even in a modern democracy where they were comparatively assimilated. Because it defines Jew not by religious observance, language, place of birth, or culture, but by descent, Zionism is an ideology of race.

To many early Zionists, the location of the future Jewish state was of no importance; among the areas contemplated were Argentina and Uganda. The first World Zionist Congress, organized by Theodore Herzl and held in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897, set its sights on Palestine in order to draw upon the religious tradition that holds that with the coming of the Messiah, Jews will be reunited there and the kingdom of God will be accomplished for the whole of humankind.

MODERN PALESTINE
In 1868 there were 13,000 Jews in Palestine, out of an estimated population of 400,000; the majority were religious pilgrims supported by charity from overseas. In 1882 the Frenchman Baron Edmond de Rothschild, combining philanthropy and investment, began to support Jewish settlers from eastern Europe who were brought to Palestine to build a plantation system along the model the French had set up in Algeria. By 1895 the number of Jews had grown to 50,000; they spoke Yiddish, Arabic, Persian, Georgian, and other languages. Hebrew was a liturgical language, spoken in daily life by no one. As late as 1907, Jews made up only 80,000 out of a population of 700,000.

In 1917, Lord Balfour, the British foreign minister, seeking support for Britain’s efforts in World War I, issued a declaration expressing sympathy with efforts to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, then under British rule. He also vowed that such a homeland would not harm the interests of the Arab majority. The Zionists seized upon this statement, interpreting it to mean support for a Jewish state. At the time of the Balfour Declaration, Jews constituted less than 10 percent of the population and owned 2.5 percent of the land in Palestine.
The problem of building a Jewish society amid an overwhelmingly non-Jewish majority came to be known as the "conquest of land and labor." The Zionists formed a corporation, known as the Jewish National Fund (JNF), which acquired land in the name of the Jewish people. They leased this land only to Jews, who were not allowed to sublet it. Leases from the JNF specifically prohibited the employment of non-Jewish labor on JNF plots. In some cases, when land was bought from absentee landlords, the Arab peasants who resided on and worked the land were expelled. The effort to establish a Jewish monopoly extended to industry, and the Zionists formed an institution, the Histadrut, to organize Jewish workers and exclude Arabs from competing with them in the labor market.

Despite these policies, and the encouragement of the British government, in the thirty years following the Balfour Declaration the majority of the world's Jews showed no interest in settling in Palestine. In the years between 1920 and 1932, only 118,000 Jews moved to Palestine, less than 1 percent of world Jewry. Even after the rise of Hitler, Jews in Europe did not choose Palestine. Out of 2.5 million Jews who fled Europe between 1935 and 1943, scarcely 8.5 percent, about 200,000 persons, went to Palestine. Almost two million went to the Soviet Union, 182,000 to the United States, and 67,000 to Britain—in spite of strict quotas on admissions in the latter two countries.

U.S. and British limitations on the number of Jews admitted coincided with Zionist policy, as enunciated by David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel: "If I knew that it would be possible to save all the children in Germany by bringing them over to England, and only half by transporting them to Erez Yisrael [the Land of Israel], then I would opt for the second alternative. For we must weigh not only the life of these children, but also the history of the People of Israel" (Brenner 1983, pp. 149–150). The policy of attaching more importance to the establishment of Israel than to the survival of the Jews (which was consistent with the Zionist rejection of assimilation) led the Zionists to collaborate with the Nazis (with whom they shared the belief that Jews were a racial community based on blood) in promoting Jewish emigration to Palestine.

THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL

The triumph of Zionism was made possible by the millions left homeless in Europe at the end of World War II, the continued restrictions on immigration to the United States and Britain, and the sympathy Jews had won as victims of Nazi persecution. After Britain announced its intention in 1947 to relinquish its control over Palestine, the United Nations voted to divide Palestine into Arab and Jewish states—awarding the Jewish state 54 percent of the territory, notwithstanding the fact that Jews owned no more than 7 percent of the land. Although 75,000 Jews had moved to Israel between 1945 and 1948, Jews still were a minority in the country. Even before the proclamation of the State of Israel, the Zionists had begun driving out Arab residents. The attack on the Palestine village of Deir Yassin in April 1948, in which Zionist paramilitary forces under the command of the future prime minister Menachem Begin massacred more than 250 Palestinian civilians, thereby sending a message to others that they should depart, is the best-known example of how this population transfer was brought about. Some fled bombing attacks from British planes directly aiding the Israelis. In the war that ensued, the Zionist forces, trained and equipped by Britain and with additional arms from other countries, were easily able to defeat the outnumbered and outgunned forces of Jordan, Egypt, and four other Arab states, whose rulers already had accepted the partition of Palestine.

The war ended with the Zionists in control of 80 percent of Palestine; more than 750,000 Arabs were driven from their homes. Some went to neighboring countries; others became refugees in their own country. These people and their descendants make up the Palestinian refugee problem—one
fourth of the total number of refugees in the world. Although the United Nations has repeatedly demanded they be allowed to return, the Israeli government has refused.

The founding of the State of Israel meant the destruction by the Zionists of nearly 400 Arab villages. In a famous speech before students at the Israeli Institute of Technology in Haifa in 1969, Moshe Dayan, the Israeli defense minister from 1967 through 1974, stated:

Jewish villages were built in place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exist. Not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahal arose in the place of Mahlul; Kibbutz Gvat in the place of Jibta; Kibbutz Sarid in the place of Huneifs; and Kebar Yehusha in the place of Tal al-Shuman. There is not a single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population (Davis 1987, p. 108).

The first census of the state of Israel, conducted in 1949, counted 650,000 Jews and 150,000 Arabs. The legal foundation for a racial state was laid down in two laws passed the following year. The first, the Law of Return, permitted any Jew, from anywhere in the world, the right to immigrate to Israel and acquire citizenship. The second was the Absentee Property Law, which confiscated the property of Arabs no longer residing on the land over which they held title. Arab refugees living inside Israel were termed “present absentees” and prohibited from returning to their property. Those who attempted to do so were termed “infiltrators,” and some were shot in the attempt. Confiscated lands have since become Israel Lands, leased only to Jews and accounting for the vast majority of new Jewish settlements.

The state of Israel does not belong, even in theory, to those who reside on its territory, but has been held by Israeli courts to be the “sovereign state of the Jewish people,” wherever they may exist. Consistent with this self-conception, the state has never defined its borders or even declared the existence of an Israeli nationality.

JEWS PRIVILEGES IN ISRAEL.

Under Israeli law, anyone born of a Jewish mother is Jewish, unless such a person converts to another religion. The rationale for this departure from the Judaic code is that such persons weaken Jewish national identity because of their tendency to intermarry. At the same time, the State of Israel, eager to increase the numbers of loyal residents, has extended the Right of Return to persons who lack a Jewish mother but have an affiliation with Jewish identity by marriage or inheritance through the male line. Such persons are registered as “under consideration.” In addition, a few individuals have gained Jewish status by converting to Judaism and having their conversion officially approved.

Jew in Israel is an assigned identity. Among the privileges attached to it, in addition to immigration and land acquisition, are citizenship, housing preferences, education and employment opportunities, political participation, and preferred treatment within the justice system.

Citizenship. Jews who immigrate to Israel become citizens automatically. Arabs seeking citizenship must meet a series of requirements, with final discretion resting with the minister of the interior. This applies also to Arabs born in what is now Israel but who resided elsewhere for any period of time. Arab noncitizens who marry citizens receive only residency status, not citizenship. As one scholar has stated, “citizenship is almost never granted to non-Jews” (Adalah 1998, pp. 24–28).

Housing. The government of Israel openly discriminates in housing. The Supreme Court has ruled that an Arab seeking to buy a home in a Jewish district could legally be barred from doing so on the grounds that the apartments were intended to help Jews overcome the effects of discrimination under British rule. Rates for government-subsidized mortgages are at least one-third lower for Jews than for non-Jews. The authorities restrict the development of Arab towns by denying them expansion permits, while permits are granted to Jewish towns with smaller populations. Building licenses are routinely denied to Arabs, and obstacles are placed in the way of Arabs when they seek to build homes. Of 429 localities designated as National Priority A Areas under the National Planning and Building Law, only four are Arab. As a result, Arabs have been forced into overcrowded areas in mixed cities and into unrecognized towns lacking such basic services as running water, sewers, and electricity. Residents of these areas live under constant threat of being evicted and having their homes demolished.

Education and Family Policy. The country operates what is essentially a segregated school system. Significant gaps exist between Jewish and Arab schools at every level from early childhood to higher education. The Ministry of Education exercises control over the curriculum for Arab schools and secular Jewish schools, while granting autonomy to Jewish religious schools. The curriculum, even in Arab schools, stresses Jewish history and culture and ignores the history and culture of the indigenous Palestinians. Because Arabs do not serve in the armed forces, they are not eligible for financial benefits, including scholarships, loans, and child allowances available to those who serve. The Supreme Court has ruled, however, that paying subsidies to Jewish students who study in religious schools and are exempt from military
service, while denying them to Arab students who do not serve, is not discriminatory.

Employment. The Histadrut was born as a combination labor union and cooperative society for Jewish workers. For many years it was the dominant institution in Israeli society and served as the mass base for the governing Labour Party. In recent years, as the Israeli economy has evolved, the Histadrut has faded in importance, but its legacy remains, as Jewish workers dominate the advanced sectors of the economy and Arab workers constitute a low caste. Further, Arab workers are increasingly being displaced by Thais and Filipinos, partly in response to the growth of the Palestinian resistance.

Political Participation. No party that denies the existence of Israel as a Jewish state is permitted to contest elections. It is against the law even to display symbols and sing anthems of anti-Zionist groups. Furthermore, the major parties have made it clear that no governing coalition can depend on the support of the Arab community (which makes up 20% of the population), and no important decision relating to the future of the Jewish state can be taken without a Jewish majority in parliament. Thus, the non-Jewish minority is prevented not merely from seeking to overturn its second-class status through parliamentary means, but even from throwing its weight on the scale when Jewish opinion is divided.

The Justice System. The state does not provide comparative information on sentencing of Jews and Arabs convicted of criminal offenses, but an examination of court records shows great disparities in sentencing as well as indictments. Israeli courts, up to the Supreme Court, have consistently ruled that discrimination between Arabs and Jews is legitimate given the founding of Israel as a state for Jews. In one representative case, a Jewish settler was convicted of shooting an Arab child. The judge sentenced him to a suspended jail term of six months plus community service. In response to critics, the judge declared, "It is wrong to demand in the name of equality, equal bearing and equal sentences to two offenders who have different nationalities who break the laws of the State. The sentence that deters the one and his audience, does not deter the other and his community." (Adalah 1998, pp. 17–21).

The types of discrimination noted above apply within the so-called "Green Line"—the area of the Israeli state as set up in 1948. In 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Gaza Strip, restoring the territorial integrity of Palestine, which had been an administrative unit for centuries, first under Ottoman and later under British rule, except for the two decades after 1948. After 1967 the system of military administration first established in 1948, which had been partially lifted within Israel in 1966, was imposed on the remainder of Palestine, and the area was opened for Jewish settlement, with state subsidies for settlers.

In the early twentieth century there are 500,000 Jews residing in the West Bank. They live in fortified towns surrounded by soldiers, are served by their own services and utilities, and are connected by a network of roads for Jews only. Arab cities and towns are isolated from each other by hundreds of checkpoints and motorways on which Arabs are forbidden to travel. In 2002, the Israeli government, citing the need to maintain internal security, began building a thirty-foot-high concrete-and-barbed-wire separation barrier throughout historic Palestine. AP IMAGES.
DEMOCRACY IN ISRAEL

Since the founding of the State of Israel, its defenders have had difficulty reconciling the reality of a Jewish state with a vision of democracy. Some have dealt with the matter by rejecting democracy as a goal for non-Jews. Among this number is Ariel Sharon, who became prime minister in 2001; Sharon stated, “Our grandparents did not come here to build a democratic state. They came to build a Jewish state.” Others have denied any contradiction, insisting on both the Jewish and democratic character of the state. For these people, the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza has posed new ideological problems: If the Arabs living within the State of Israel, comprising one-fifth of the population of Israel, can be said to be second-class citizens, the 3.5 million Arabs residing in the territories occupied after 1967 must be regarded as stateless people with no representation or legal rights whatever. Under pressure from internal critics and international opinion, the Zionist authorities have accepted the principle of a separate state on some part of historic Palestine. The problem, then, has become how to maximize the area to become part of the Jewish state while minimizing the numbers of indigenous Palestinians within it. To this end, Zionist authorities have continued to expand the Jewish settlements (to strengthen their claims to additional land in anticipation of a settlement) while evicting indigenous Palestinians, destroying villages, and making life difficult for those who remain.

Zionist authorities have since withdrawn from Gaza, a six-by-twenty-eight mile strip of land that is home to 1.4 million indigenous Palestinians, mostly refugees from 1948 or 1967 and their descendants. They have removed 7,500 Jewish settlers (1.7 percent of the total number of settlers in the territories occupied by Israel after 1967), but have left the area surrounded by barbed-wire electric fences and guard towers. All traffic and commerce into and out of Gaza are controlled by Israel, as are the airspace and water resources. There are even plans for an offshore fence to provide Israel with full control of its coastal boundary.

Meanwhile, the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank continues without interruption. It appears that the dream of one of the principal architects of the Jewish state is close to being realized: As Joseph Weitz, former chairman of the Israel Land Authority, stated, “Among ourselves it must be clear that there is no place in our country for both peoples together. The only solution is Eretz Israel, or at least the western half of Eretz Israel, without Arabs, and there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, transfer all of them, not one village or tribe should remain.”

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Noel Ignatius

ZOOT SUIT RIOTS

The “Zoot Suit Riots” occurred in Los Angeles roughly June 3 to June 13, 1943. Although there were few reported serious injuries and property damage, minimal relative to other major twentieth-century disturbances, this event represents an especially vivid episode in the history of race and racism in the United States.

During the Zoot Suit Riots, white servicemen, some of whom were accompanied by civilians, attacked “zooters,” or youths wearing zoot suits. In particular, they targeted zoot-clad Mexican Americans, who were sometimes known as pachucos and pachucas. For at least 10 days, servicemen from across Southern California and some from as far away as Las Vegas, Nevada, poured into Los Angeles and roamed the streets of downtown Chicatown, Chavez Ravine, East Los Angeles, and Westlake in search of their prey. In some instances, they stopped and boarded streetcars, burst into movie houses and vate homes, and set upon people of color regardless...