

# 44th Conference APEAA 2024

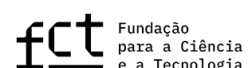
## Transitions: Freedom & Conflicts

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### – BOOK OF ABSTRACTS –



Image: Lee Miller, Irmgard Seefried, Opera singer singing an aria from 'Madame Butterfly,' 1945. © LEE MILLER ARCHIVES, ENGLAND.



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### Some Berlinian thoughts on the creation of the state of Israel

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**Abstract:** Amidst the contemporary challenge of reconciling individual liberty and sovereignty, particularly highlighted by the recent and still ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, it is relevant to bring to the fore of discussion Isaiah Berlin's thoughts on the origins of the state of Israel and on the story of Jewish slavery and emancipation. Rooted in the core assumption that Jews possessed history rather than territory, Berlin claims that the foundation of the Israeli nation should be seen as a rectification of that abnormal circumstance. Being a unique combination of people and of religion, mainly since the 19th century onwards, the Jews have demanded an extraordinary solution to their equally peculiar description, culminating in the creation of the State of Israel in Palestine in 1948. Berlin endorses Palestine as the natural choice for an Israeli nation, primarily due to spiritual ties, despite the contentious territorial disputes with Arab communities which the author mentions in passing.

Drawing from two texts authored by Berlin – "Jewish Slavery and Emancipation" and "The origins of Israel" – published in 1951 and 1953, respectively, as our primary research corpus, alongside supplementary letters ("Enlightening-Letters 1946-1960", 2009) and essays on the topic, namely "Chaim Weizmann's Leadership" (1992), as well as other considerations penned in "Unfinished Dialogue" (2006) or "Conversations with Isaiah Berlin" (1992), we aim to delve into Berlin's portrayal of the process of the foundation of Israel composed of 'bits and pieces from everywhere' characterised by a convergence of diverse influences from various origins, having, against all odds, 'burst into green leaf'. Furthermore, we endeavour to analyse Berlin's arguments regarding the defence of the creation of the state of Israel put forth in the 1950s, but grounded in the power of typically nineteenth-century liberal ideas and human idealism, assessing whether, within this time frame, they are still valid today.

**Keywords:** freedom, self-determination, liberalism, humanism, conflict.