

## Zionist Colonialism in Palestine (1965)

### FAYEZ SAYEGH

*Fayez Abdullah Sayegh (b. 1922 – d. 1980) was born in Kharraba, Syria, where his father was a Presbyterian minister. Starting his studies at the American University of Beirut, he moved to the US and earned a PhD in philosophy from Georgetown University in 1949. He subsequently taught at the American University of Beirut, Yale, Stanford and Macalester College. Publishing widely on numerous topics pertaining to the Arab world, and the question of Palestine in particular, he became one of the foremost intellectuals and diplomats representing Palestine internationally. In 1965, he founded the Research Center of the Palestine Liberation Organization and served as a member of its Executive Committee. In this capacity, he edited and cultivated the main intellectual output of the 1960s revolutionary period in the Palestinian national movement, and was a foundational member of the diplomatic leadership of the movement. He served as the Chargé d’Affaires of the Arab States Delegations’ Office at the United Nations. His most lasting legacy came on 10 November, 1975, when, as a delegate of Kuwait, he jointly authored and presented United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3379, which determined Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination. This Resolution would be revoked in 1991 by UN General Assembly Resolution 46/86, a precondition set by Israel for its participation in the Madrid Conference.*

*The following excerpts are from of his ‘Zionist Colonialism in Palestine’, which is possibly one of the clearest and most concise descriptions of its generation to discuss the organisational set-up of the Zionist settler colonial movement, its diplomatic strategies, as well as the ideology and structural features underpinning it. As a document of its time, it places Zionist settler colonialism in the context of European colonialism, and yet it distinguishes the Zionist project from other settler colonial movements. Sayegh does so by highlighting Zionism’s aspiration to racial self-segregation, its rejection of any form of coexistence or assimilation, its unbending drive towards territorial expansion, and the necessary violence, structural and physical, it has to employ to achieve its goals. These phenomena are not passing features of Zionism, but, as Sayegh remarks, are ‘congenial, essential and permanent’, and consequently also manifest themselves in the policies of the Israeli state towards Palestinians and the wider Arab region.*

*Palestinian resistance to Zionism has demanded many sacrifices, but, as Sayegh argues, these were not in vain, for ‘[r]ights undefended are rights surrendered’, and while the Palestinian nation lost its homeland, it did so ‘not without fighting’. ‘It was dislodged’, he notes, ‘but not for want of the will to defend its heritage’. However, he also argues, the threat emanating from Zionist settler colonialism, and the*

## Sayegh, 'Zionist Colonialism in Palestine'

*duty to challenge it, is not only the concern of Palestinians alone. Rather, a regional response to Zionism is necessary, given its constant threat to destabilise the region and wage wars on its neighbours. Likewise, it is also a challenge to anti-colonial movements everywhere, '[f]or whenever and wherever the dignity of but one single human being is violated, in pursuance of the creed of racism, a heinous sin is committed against the dignity of all men, everywhere'. The following excerpts from Zionist Colonialism in Palestine were prepared by this issue's editors.*

**Fayez A. Sayegh, *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* (Beirut: Research Center, Palestine Liberation Organization, 1965).**

### *I. The Historical Setting of Zionist Colonialism*

The frenzied 'Scramble for Africa' of the 1880s stimulated the beginnings of Zionist colonisation in Palestine. As European fortune-hunters, prospective settlers, and empire builders raced for Africa, Zionist settlers and would-be state-builders rushed for Palestine.

Under the influence of the credo of Nationalism then sweeping across Europe, some Jews had come to believe that the religious and alleged racial bonds among Jews constituted a Jewish 'nationality' and endowed the so-called 'Jewish nation' with normal national rights – including the right to *separate existence* in a territory of its own, and the right to create a Jewish *state*. If other European nations had successfully extended themselves into Asia and Africa, and had annexed to their imperial domains vast proportions of those two continents, the 'Jewish nation' – it was argued – was entitled and able to do the same thing for itself. By imitating the colonial ventures of the 'Gentile nations' among whom Jews lived, the 'Jewish nation' could send its own *colonists* into a piece of Afro-Asian territory, establish a *settler-community*, and, in due course, set up its own *state* – not, indeed, as an imperial outpost of a metropolitan home-base, but as a home-base in its own right, upon which the entire 'Jewish nation' would sooner or later converge from all over the world. 'Jewish nationalism' would thus fulfil itself through the process of colonisation, which other European nations had utilised for empire-building. For, Zionism, then, colonisation would be the instrument of nation-building, not the by-product of an already-fulfilled nationalism.

The improvised process of Jewish colonisation in Palestine which ensued was hardly a spectacular success, in spite of lavish financial subsidies from European Jewish financiers. By and large,

Jews were more attracted by the new opportunities for migration to the United States or Argentina than by the call for racial self-segregation as a prelude to state-building in Palestine. The objective of *escape* from anti-Jewish practices prevailing in some European societies could be attained just as well by emigration to America; the objective of *nation-building* – which alone could make the alternative solution of large-scale colonisation in Palestine more attractive – was still far from widespread among European Jews in the late nineteenth century.

\* \* \* \*

The failure of the first sporadic effort to implant a Zionist settler-community in Palestine during the first fifteen years of Zionist colonisation (1882-1897) prompted serious reappraisal and radical revision of the strategy. This was accomplished by the First Zionist Congress, held at Basel in August 1897 under the leadership of Theodor Herzl.

Haphazard colonisation of Palestine, supported by wealthy Jewish financiers as a mixed philanthropic-colonial venture, was from then on to be eschewed. It was to be supplanted by a purely nationalistic program of organised colonisation, with clear political goals and mass support. Hence the over-all objective of Zionism formulated by the Basle Congress: '*The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law*'.<sup>1</sup> [...]

In addition to defining the ultimate objective of Zionism, the Basel Congress made a diagnosis of the special character and circumstances of Zionist colonisation in Palestine, and formulated a practical program suited to those special conditions. Three essential features in particular differentiated Zionist colonisation in Palestine from European colonisation elsewhere in Asia and Africa, and called for Zionist innovations:

- (1) Other European settlers who had gone (or were then going) to other parts of Africa and Asia has been animated either by economic or by politico-imperialist motives: they had gone

either in order to accumulate fortunes by means of privileged and protected exploitation of immense natural resources, or in order to prepare the ground for (or else aid and abet) the annexation of those coveted territories by imperial European governments. The Zionist colonists, on the other hand, were animated by neither impulse. They were driven to the colonisation of Palestine by the desire *to attain nationhood for themselves*, and to establish a Jewish state which would be independent of any existing government and subordinate to none, and which would in due course attract to its territories the Jews of the world.

- (2) Other European settlers could coexist with the indigenous populations – whom they would exploit and dominate, but whose services they would nevertheless require, and whose continued existence in the coveted territory they would therefore tolerate. But the Zionist settlers could not countenance indefinite coexistence with the inhabitants of Palestine. For Palestine was fully populated by Arabs, whose national consciousness has already been awakened, and who had already begun to nurse aspirations of independence and national fulfilment. Zionist colonisation could not possibly assume the *physical proportions* envisaged by Zionism while the Arab people of Palestine continued to inhabit its homeland; nor could the Zionist *political* aspirations of racial self-segregation and statehood be accomplished while the nationally-conscious Arab people of Palestine continued to exist in that country. Unlike European colonisation, therefore, the Zionist colonisation of Palestine was essentially incompatible with the continued existence of the 'native population' in the coveted country.
- (3) Other European settlers could, without much difficulty, overcome the obstacles obstructing their settlement in their chosen target-territories: they could count on receiving adequate protection from their imperial sponsors. But the prospective Zionist colonisers of Palestine could count on no such facilities. For, in addition to the *Arab people of Palestine*, certain to resist any large-scale influx of settlers loudly proclaiming their objective of dispossessing the 'natives', the

Zionists were likely to encounter also the resistance of the *Ottoman authorities*, who could not view with favour the establishment, on an important segment of their Empire, of an alien community harbouring political designs of independent statehood.

\* \* \* \*

It was in order to counteract these peculiar factors of its situation that the Zionist Movement, while defining its *ultimate objective* at the First Zionist Congress, proceeded to formulate an appropriate *practical program* as well. This program called for action along three lines: *organisation, colonisation, and negotiation*:

- (1) The *organisational* efforts were given supreme priority; for, lacking a state-structure in a home-base of its own to mastermind and supervise the process of overseas colonisation, the Zionist Movement required a quasi-state apparatus to perform those functions. The World Zionist Organization – with its Federations of local societies, its Congress, its General Council, and its Central Executive – was established at Basel in order to play that role.
- (2) The instruments of systematic *colonisation* were also promptly readied. The 'Jewish Colonial Trust' (1898), the 'Colonization Commission' (1898), the 'Jewish National Fund' (1901), and the 'Palestine Office' (1908) were among the first institutions established by the Zionist Organisation. Their joint purpose was to plan, finance, and supervise the process of colonisation, and to ensure that it would not meet the same fate which the earlier experiment of haphazard colonisation had met.
- (3) While the instruments of colonisation were being laboriously created, diplomatic efforts were also being exerted to produce *political conditions* that would permit, facilitate, and protect large-scale colonisation.

At the beginning, these efforts were focused mainly on the Ottoman Empire, then in control of the political fortunes of Palestine. Direct approaches to the Ottoman authorities were made; lucrative promises of financial grants and loans were dangled before the eyes of the Sultan; and European powers were urged to intercede at the Porte on behalf of the Zionist Organisation, in order to persuade the Sultan to grant the Organisation a Charter for an autonomous Zionist settlement in Palestine. Other efforts were exerted to induce the German Emperor to endorse the creation of a Chartered Land Development Company, which would be operated by Zionists in Palestine under German protection. Still other attempts were made to obtain permission from the British Government to establish an autonomous Zionist settlement in the Sinai Peninsula, as a stepping-stone towards colonisation in Palestine. But none of these efforts bore fruit.

\* \* \* \*

In 1907/1908, therefore, a new phase of Zionist colonisation was inaugurated, without prior 'legalisation' or sponsorship by a European Power. It was more consciously nationalistic in impulse, more militantly segregationist in its attitude towards the Palestinian Arabs, and more concerned with strategic and political considerations in its selection of locations for its new settlements. But, for all its enhanced dynamism and sharpened ideological consciousness, the second wave of Zionist colonisation was not appreciably more successful than the first, as far as its magnitude was concerned.

By the outbreak of the First World War, therefore, the Zionist colonisation of Palestine had met with only modest success in over thirty years of action. *In the first place*, Zionists were still an infinitesimal minority of about 1% of the Jews of the world. Their activities had aroused the fear and opposition of other Jews, who sought the solution of the 'Jewish problem' in 'assimilation' in Western Europe and the United States, not in 'self-segregation' in Palestine. *In the second place*, Zionist colonisation had proceeded very slowly. After thirty years of immigration to Palestine, Jews were

still under 8% of the total population of the country, in possession of no more than 2 ½% of the land. And, *in the third place*, Zionism had failed to obtain political endorsement from the Ottoman authorities controlling Palestine, or from any European Power.

The war, however, created new circumstances which were destined to improve considerably the fortunes of Zionist colonisation in Palestine. For the War set the stage for an alliance – concluded in 1917 – between British Imperialism and Zionist Colonialism, which, during the following thirty years, opened the gates of Palestine to Zionist colonisers, facilitated the establishment of a Zionist settler-community, and paved the way for the dispossession and expulsion of the Arab people of Palestine and the creation of the Zionist settler-state in 1948.

Whereas *unilateral Zionist colonisation* failed, in the thirty years preceding the First World War, to make much headway, *the alliance of Zionist colonialism and British imperialism* succeeded, during the thirty years following the First World War, in accomplishing the objectives of both parties. [...]

## ***II. The Alliance of British Imperialism and Zionist Colonialism***

Britain lost no time in creating the appropriate conditions for Zionist colonisation. It appointed a Zionist Jew [Herbert Samuel] as its first High Commissioner in Palestine. It recognised the World Zionist Organisation as a representative 'Jewish Agency'. It opened the gates of Palestine to massive Zionist immigration, despite Arab protests. It transferred state lands to the Zionists for colonisation. It protected the institutions of the fledgling [Jewish] 'National Home'. It permitted the Zionist community to run its own schools and to maintain its military establishment (the Haganah). It trained mobile Zionist striking forces (the Palmach), and condoned the existence of 'underground' terrorist organisations (the Stern group and the Irgun). No wonder that, by the mid-thirties, a British Royal Commission had come to describe the Zionist settler-community in Palestine as a 'state within a state'. In the meantime, the Arab majority – while constantly assured that Britain would see to it that its rights would not be 'prejudiced' by the rapid growth of the Zionist

settler-community – was denied analogous facilities and deprived of the means for self-protection. [...]

But Britain had not entered into the partnership with Zionism in Palestine solely in order to serve the purposes of Zionist colonialism; it had expected the partnership to serve, equally, the purposes of British imperialism as well. Whenever Zionism sought to accelerate the process of state-building (which would eventually render Britain's continued presence in Palestine neither necessary nor desirable in Zionist eyes), Britain pulled in the opposite direction to slow them down. The Second World War precipitated the showdown, which in the end brought about the dissolution of the Anglo-Zionist alliance. [...]

In the mid-forties, therefore, the Zionist colonisation of Palestine, sheltered and nursed for thirty years by British imperialism, was ready to look for a more powerful and more militant supporter to see it through the forthcoming struggle for outright statehood; and the United States was available as a willing candidate that admirably fitted the requirements of Zionism. [...]

But, for all the means of survival it manages to acquire, now from one Western power and now from another, the Zionist settler-state remains *an alien body* in the region. Not only its vital and continuing association with European imperialism, and its introduction into Palestine of the practices of Western colonialism, but also its chosen pattern of racial exclusiveness and self-segregation renders it an alien society in the Middle East. No words could better describe the essentially alien character of the Zionist settler-state than the following passage, written by its veteran Prime Minister:

The State of Israel is a part of the Middle East only in geography, which is, in the main, a static element. From the decisive aspects of dynamism, creation and growth, Israel is part of the world Jewry. From that Jewry it will draw all its strength and the means for the forging of the nation in Israel and the development of the Land; throughout the might of world Jewry it will be built and built again.<sup>2</sup>



### ***III. The Character of the Zionist Settler-State***

Apart from its vital link with Imperialism and its inescapable status as a total stranger to the Middle East, in the heart of which it has chosen to plant itself, the political embodiment of Zionist colonialism (namely, the Zionist settler-state of Israel) is characterised chiefly by three features: (1) its *racial complexion* and *racist conduct pattern*; (2) its *addiction to violence*; and (3) its *expansionist stance*.

#### ***A. Racism***

Racism is not an acquired trait of the Zionist settler-state. Nor is it an accidental, passing feature of the Israeli scene. It is congenial, essential and permanent. For it is inherent in the very ideology of Zionism and in the basic motivation for Zionist colonisation and statehood.

Zionism is the belief in the national oneness of all Jews – who are identified as such in terms of their supposedly common *ancestry*. Neither *religion* nor *language* comprises the alleged 'national bond' of Jews, according to the Zionist creed: for relatively few Zionists are in fact believing or practicing Jews; and the Hebrew language was resuscitated only after the birth of Zionism [...].

Zionist *racial identification* produces three corollaries: *racial self-segregation*, *racial exclusiveness* and *racial supremacy*. These principles constitute the core of the Zionist ideology.

By its very nature, racial self-segregation precludes integration or assimilation. From Herzl to Weizmann, from Ben Gurion to Goldmann, the leaders of Zionism have all believed and preached that the chief enemy of Zionism is not Gentile 'anti-Semitism' but Jewish 'assimilation'. 'Anti-Semitism' and Zionism thus agree on the basic premise: that all Jews are one nation, with common national characteristics and a common national destiny. The difference between them is that, whereas 'anti-Semitism' disdains the alleged 'national characteristics' of Jews and delights in Jewish suffering, Zionism idealises those fancied characteristics and strives to bring all Jews together into a single Jewish state, to which even moderate Zionists attribute a 'special mission'.

According to the Zionist creed, 'assimilation' is the loss of 'Jewish identity'; it is the prelude to the 'dissolution' and 'elimination' of the 'Jewish nation'. Self-segregation is the Zionist retort to the call for 'Jewish assimilation' [...]; 'self-segregation' is envisioned as the only pathway to national 'redemption', 'salvation', and 'fulfillment'.

By the same logic, by virtue of which it uncompromisingly repudiates the assimilation of Jews into non-Jewish societies, the fundamental Zionist principle of racial self-segregation also demands *racial purity and racial exclusiveness* in the land in which Jewish self-segregation is to be attained. As such, the Zionist credo of racial self-segregation necessarily rejects the coexistence of Jews and non-Jews in the land of Jewish regrouping. [...]

The Zionist ideal of racial self-segregation demands, *with equal imperativeness*, the departure of all Jews from the lands of their 'exile' and the eviction of all non-Jews from the land of 'Jewish destination', namely, Palestine. Both are essential conditions of 'Zionist fulfillment' and Jewish 'national redemption'.

It is only in such a condition of thoroughgoing self-segregation that 'Jewish superiority' can at last manifest itself, according to the teachings of Zionism: the 'Chosen People' can attain its 'special destiny' only when it is *all together* and *all by itself*.

\* \* \* \*

Herein lies an important difference between Zionist racism and other forms of European racism familiar, since the advent of Colonialism, to the peoples of Asia and Africa. *Race-supremacist European settlers elsewhere in Asia and Africa* have, by and large, found it possible to express their 'supremacy' over the other strands of 'lesser people' and 'inferior races' within the framework of 'hierarchical racial coexistence'. Separate and unequal, the European colonists and the 'natives' have on the whole coexisted in the same colony or protectorate. Though they have openly disdained the 'natives', ruthlessly suppressed them, and methodically discriminated against them, European colonists have as a rule deemed the continued presence of the indigenous populations 'useful' for the colonists

themselves; and, as such, they have reserved for the 'natives' all the menial functions and assigned to them inferior in the settler-dominated societies. Not so the Zionists! *Race-supremacist Zionist settlers in Palestine* have found it necessary to follow a different course, more in harmony with their ideological system. They have expressed their fancied 'supremacy' over Arab 'natives', first, by isolating themselves from the Arabs in Palestine and, later on, by evicting the Arabs from their homeland.

Nowhere in Asia or Africa – not even in South Africa or Rhodesia – has European race-supremacism expressed itself in so passionate a zeal for thoroughgoing racial exclusiveness and for the physical expulsion of 'native' populations across the frontiers of the settler-state, as it has in Palestine, under the compulsion of Zionist doctrines. (Perhaps this divergence of Zionism from the norm of European colonisation may be explained in terms of the fact that conscious dedication to the racist doctrines inherent in the ideology of Zionism has preceded, stimulated, inspired, and at every stage guided the process of Zionist colonisation in Palestine – at least since the inauguration of the new Zionist Movement in 1897).

So long as they were powerless to *dislodge* the indigenous Arabs of Palestine (the vast majority of the country's population), Zionist colonists were content with *isolating themselves* from the Arab community and instituting a systematic boycott of Arab produce and labor. Accordingly, from the earliest days of Zionist colonisation, the principle was established that only Jewish labor would be employed in Zionist colonies. The 'Jewish Agency', the 'Jewish National Fund', the 'Palestine Foundation Fund', and the 'Jewish Federation of Labor' vigilantly ensured the observance of that fundamental principle of Zionist colonisation.

Contentment with *boycotting* the Arabs of Palestine instead of *evicting* them from their country was, however, only a tactical and temporary suspension of the Zionist dogma of racial exclusiveness. It was forced upon Zionism by the circumstances surrounding the early stages of Zionist colonisation. And it was viewed as a necessary evil, to be endured only so long as a more rigorous application of the racist doctrines of Zionism was prevented by extraneous factors beyond the control of the Zionist Movement. The ultimate aim of ousting the Arab inhabitants of Palestine in order to make possible

the incarnation of the principle of racial exclusiveness, though momentarily suspended, was never abandoned, however. [...]

If *racial discrimination* against the 'inferior natives' was the motto of race-supremacist European settler-regimes in Asia and Africa, the motto of the race-supremacist Zionist settler-regime in Palestine was *racial elimination*. *Discriminatory treatment* has been reserved by the Zionists for those *remnants* of the Palestinian Arab people who have stubbornly stayed behind in their homeland in spite of all efforts to dispossess and evict them, and in defiance of the Zionist dictum of racial exclusiveness. It is against these remnants of the rightful inhabitants of Palestine that Zionist settlers have revealed the behavioural patterns of racial supremacy, and practiced the precepts of radical discrimination, already made famous by other racist European colonists elsewhere in Asia and Africa.

In fact, in its practice of racial discrimination against the vestiges of Palestinian Arabs, the Zionist settler-state has learned all the lessons which the various discriminatory regimes of white settler-states in Asia and Africa can teach it. And it has proved itself in this endeavour an ardent and apt pupil, not incapable of surpassing its teachers. For, whereas the Afrikaner apostles of *apartheid* in South Africa, for example, brazenly proclaim their sin, the Zionist practitioners of *apartheid* in Palestine beguilingly protest their innocence!

The remnants of Palestine's Arabs who have continued to live in the Zionist settler-state since 1948 have their own 'Bantustans', their 'native reserves', their 'Ghettoes' – although the institution which they encounter in their daily lives is given by the Zionist authorities the euphemistic name, 'security zones'. [...]

The agricultural lands and homes of the Arabs of the Zionist settler-state are subject to confiscation by administrative decree, under a succession of drastic laws, introduced by the state between 1948 and 1953, which deny aggrieved owners the ability to seek redress through the courts. Whole Arab villages have been expropriated and given to Jews for the establishment of Zionist settlements. [...]

Finally, the enjoyment by Arabs of the elementary right to citizenship in their own country is curtailed by *statutory*

*discrimination*. Whereas a Jew, under the Nationality Law, is eligible for citizenship immediately upon arrival, indigenous Arabs of the Zionist settler-state are subject to a system of qualified eligibility which has left a majority of Israel's Arab languishing in the limbo of non-citizenship.

### ***B. Violence and Terrorism***

Habitual resort to force, by the military or para-military arms of the Zionist settler-state, has been directed principally against the Arabs – whose very existence in the land coveted by the Zionists rendered them automatically the primary and the ultimate target of Zionist hostility. But this addiction to violence has not been totally confined, in its manifestations, to Zionist relations with the Arabs. Towards the end of the British Mandate – when the alliance of British imperialism and Zionist colonialism, having served its purpose, was beginning to undergo the strains which finally led to its dissolution – the para-military and terrorist Zionist organisations (which Britain had respectively aided and condoned for decades) turned against the British garrison and British civil authorities in Palestine. And, after the outbreak of Zionist-Arab hostilities in Palestine, and the advent of United Nations mediators and truce observers, Zionist violence turned against the international personnel also. The assassination of the first United Nations Mediator and his military aide [Count Folke Bernadotte and André Serot], and the occasional detention of United Nations observers, have served notice that no one who stands athwart the path of Zionism is immune from Zionist vengeance.

But obviously, it is against the Arabs that Zionist violence has been most long-lasting, most methodical, and most ruthless. Prenatally and at birth, the Zionist settler-state resorted to violence as its chosen means of intimidating the Arabs of Palestine and evicting them. Such massacres as those which were perpetrated at Dair Yaseen, Ain ez-Zaitoun, and Salah ed-Deen (in April, 1948) were calculated measures in a formal program of eviction-by-terrorisation.

Since its establishment, the Zionist settler-state has turned its violence both inwardly and outwardly: against the Arabs remaining under its jurisdiction, and against the neighboring Arab states. In the Zionist-occupied territories of Palestine, *massacres and other outrages*

visited upon such Arab towns and villages as Iqrith (December, 1951), Al-Tirah (July, 1953), Abu Gosh (September, 1953), Kafr Qasim (October, 1956), and Acre (June, 1965) have been the most infamous – but by no means the only – instances of a program of racial hate elevated to the level of state policy and efficiently executed by the official apparatus of the state.

To these instances must be added the large-scale *pogroms* unleashed on the Arab population of Gaza and Khan Younis during the brief but eventful period of Zionist occupation of the area, in the wake of the Tripartite Invasion of Egypt in 1956. Systematic *military attacks* on the territories of neighboring Arab states are perhaps the most widely known manifestations of Israel's ready resort to violence – for many of these attacks were fully discussed by the United Nations Security Council. [...]

### ***C. Territorial Expansion***

No student of the behavioural pattern of the Zionist Movement and the *modus operandi* of the Zionist settler-state can fail to realise that Zionist attainments at any given moment, if they fall short of the standing objective constantly aimed at by the Zionist movement, are only temporary stations along the road to ultimate self-fulfillment and not terminal points of the Zionist journey – notwithstanding the assurances to the contrary which are solemnly given Zionist and Israeli leaders.

For example, although from 1897 until 1942 the official leaders of Zionism constantly denied in public any intentions of seeking 'statehood', emphasising that it was merely a 'home' that they were after, the internal documents of the Movement and the diaries of its leaders clearly indicate that, notwithstanding public disavowals, it was indeed statehood that was the objective of Zionism all along.

Similarly, until 1948, the leaders of Zionism were constantly assuring the world that they harboured no intention of dispossessing or evicting the Arabs of Palestine from their homeland – although evidence abounds that, in fact, they were aiming at nothing less than the thorough Zionisation and de-Arabisation of Palestine from the

very beginning; and, when the opportunity arose in 1948, Zionists wasted no time in pushing the Arabs across the frontiers. [...]

Territorial extent is a third element of the Zionist plan, regarding which the same stratagem of deceptive public disavowal has been utilised. It differs from the other two elements (viz., statehood and eviction of Arabs) only in that, whereas these two aims have been realised and the camouflage has finally been removed, the third aim (viz., territorial expansion) remains only partly realised, and the veil remains only partially lifted.

The perennial aim of Zionism was and still is *statehood in all of Palestine* (called by Zionists 'Eretz Israel', or the Land of Israel), *completely emptied of its Arabs*.

The minimum definition of the territorial scope of Palestine, as Zionism envisions it, was officially formulated in 1919; and it covers about double the area currently occupied by the Zionist settler-state. It includes – in present geographical terminology – the Kingdom of Jordan (on both sides of the River), the 'Gaza strip', Southern Lebanon, and Southern and south-western Syria, as well as the portions of Palestine now occupied by the Zionists. This area still falls short of the territory bounded, in accordance with the famous Biblical phrase, by the Nile and the Euphrates – which is the territory claimed as their national heritage by Zionists 'extremists'. But, even if only the minimum Zionist concept of Palestine is taken to be the real basis of Zionist planning, that will leave the road towards Zionist territorial expansion in the future wide and open. [...]

In view of the consistent behavioural pattern of the Zionist movement; in view also of the traditional Zionist concept of the territorial extent of 'Eretz Israel', of which even the 'moderate' version comprises an area twice as large as the one usurped thus far by the Zionist state; and in view of the clear warnings, voiced by the most candid and authoritative leaders of Zionism, to the effect that the Zionist state has not abandoned its determination to seize new Arab territories – in view of all this, it would be absurd to believe, ostrich-wise, that Zionism might indefinitely rest content with possessing only a fraction of the territory which, it maintains, is its 'national heritage', and which in any case it has planned all along to occupy.

Of the three essential elements of the Zionist program – racial self-segregation in a Zionist state, racial exclusiveness and eviction of Arabs, and occupation of all of so-called 'Eretz Israel' – only the third remains unrealised. It is the 'unfinished business' of Zionism. It cannot fail to be the main preoccupation of the Zionist Movement, and of the Zionist state, in the future.

For the Zionist settler-state, to *be* is to prepare and strive for *territorial expansion*.

#### ***IV. The Palestinian Response***

The response of the people of Palestine to the menace of Zionism has passed through five stages.

- (1) At the outset – when Zionists were coming in relatively small numbers and emphasising the religious or humanitarian motives of their enterprise, while concealing the political, ideological, and colonial-racist character of their movement – the Arabs of Palestine believed the immigrants to be 'pilgrims' animated by religious longing for the Holy Land, or else 'refugees' fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe and seeking safety in Palestine. Palestinian Arabs therefore accorded the immigrants a hospitable welcome. Even Herzl noted the 'friendly attitude of the population' to the first wave of Zionist colonists.
- (2) When, after the inauguration of the new Zionist Movement in 1897, the second wave of Zionist colonisation began to roll onto the shores of Palestine (from 1907/1908 onwards), Arab friendliness began to give way to suspicion and resentment. The methodical ouster of Arab farmers, labourers, and watchmen from the new Zionist colonies, and the systematic boycott of Arab produce aroused Arab anger. But the larger political-nationalist dimensions of the Zionist program remained concealed from Arab sight: it was the immediate impact of the Zionists' presence upon the Arabs directly affected by the Zionists' race-exclusivist and race-supremacist practices, that was causing Arab wrath. Inasmuch as Zionist



colonisation was still of modest proportions, however, the hostility it provoked remained more or less local.

- (3) The alliance of British Imperialism and Zionist Colonialism, concretely expressed in the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, and the British capture of Jerusalem on 9 December 1917, at last opened Arab eyes to the true significance of what was happening, and brought home the realisation that nothing less than dislodgment was in store for the Arabs, if Zionism was to be permitted to have its way. Palestinian masses instinctively recognised the events of the day as an occurrence of dire portent; and, for thirty years thereafter, Palestine was to be the scene of persistent and tireless Arab resistance to the Anglo-Zionist partnership. The period from 1917 to 1948 was the period of Arab resistance *par excellence*. [...]

Palestinian Arab opposition to the Anglo-Zionist partnership was first expressed, in 1919, *in diplomatic representations and in collective declarations* of the general will of the people. The American King-Crane Commission was left in no doubt about the true feelings of the people of Palestine. On 29 August 1919, the Commission reported that:

the non-Jewish population of Palestine - nearly nine-tenths of the whole - are emphatically against the entire Zionist program [...] There was no one thing upon which the population of Palestine was more agreed than upon this [...].<sup>3</sup>

The findings of the Commission corroborated the decisions of the General Syrian Congress, consisting of elected representatives of the populations of Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. A resolution, passed unanimously by the Congress on 2 July 1919, announced:

We oppose the pretensions of the Zionists to create a Jewish Commonwealth in the southern part of Syria, known as Palestine, and oppose Zionist migration to any

part of our country; for we do not acknowledge their title but consider them a grave peril to our people from the national, economical, and political points of view, Our Jewish compatriots shall enjoy our common rights and assume the common responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> [...]

But declarations of opposition, however important as an expression of national will, were not the only means of resistance to which the people of Palestine had recourse.

In March 1920, armed hostilities broke out between Arab villagers and Zionist colonists in northern Palestine; and in April 1920, Arab-Zionist fighting took place in Jerusalem. These were followed by uprisings in 1921, 1929, and 1933, and by a country-wide rebellion in 1936, which was renewed in 1937 and lasted until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. And, from December 1947 until the withdrawal of Britain and the simultaneous proclamation of the Zionist settler-state in May 1948, Palestinian Arabs were engaged in a life-and-death battle with the British garrison as well as with the Zionist colonists. [...]

At the height of the famous rebellion of 1936, the people of Palestine launched a devastating civil disobedience movement, coupled with a country-wide strike which lasted for 174 days (perhaps the longest national strike in history) and affected all businesses, communications, and government services run by Arabs. In spite of its high cost to themselves, the men and women of Palestine persisted in their strike, resisting all efforts of the Mandatory Power to break it, and did not call it off until the rulers of the neighboring Arab States intervened and promised to initiate collective Arab negotiations with the British Government with a view to remedying the causes of Palestinian Arab grievances. [...]

- (4) In 1948, the Palestinian Arab people was forcibly dispossessed. Most Palestinians were evicted from their country. Their unyielding resistance and their costly sacrifices over three decades had failed to avert the national catastrophe.

But those sacrifices were not in vain. For they safeguarded the Palestinian national rights and underscored the legitimacy of the Arabs' claim to their national heritage. Rights undefended are rights surrendered. Unopposed and acquiesced in, usurpation is legitimised by default. For forfeiture of its patrimony, the Palestinian generation of the inter-War era will never be indicted by the Palestinian generations to come. It lost indeed – but not without fighting. It was dislodged indeed – but not for want of the will to defend its heritage. [...]

- (5) The people of Palestine, notwithstanding all its travails and misfortunes, still has undiminished faith in its future. And the people of Palestine knows that the pathway to that future is the liberation of its homeland.

It was in this belief that the Palestinian people – after sixteen years of dispersion and exile, during which it had reposed its faith in its return to its country in world conscience and international public opinion, in the United Nations, and/or in the Arab states – chose at last to seize the initiative. In 1964, it reasserted its corporate personality by creating the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Only in the liberation of Palestine, spearheaded by Palestinians prepared to pay the price, can the supreme sacrifices of past generations of Palestinians be vindicated, and the visions and hopes of living Palestinians be transformed into reality.

### ***Epilogue: The Liberation of Palestine***

The problem of Palestine, although it directly afflicts only the Palestinians, is not the concern of Palestinians alone. The Zionist settler-state, bent on expansion, is a threat to the security and territorial integrity of *the Arab states* as well. It has already invaded their lands. It still covets their territories.

As a colonial venture, which anomalously came to bloom precisely when colonialism was beginning to fade away, it is in fact a challenge to all anti-colonial peoples in Asia and Africa. For, in the

final analysis, the cause of anti-colonialism and liberation is one and indivisible.

And – as a racist system animated by doctrines of racial self-segregation, racial exclusiveness, and racial supremacy, and methodically translating these doctrines into ruthless practices of racial discrimination and oppression – the political systems erected by Zionist colonists in Palestine cannot fail to be recognised as a menace by *all civilised men* dedicated to the safeguarding and enhancement of the dignity of man. For whenever and wherever the dignity of but one single human being is violated, in pursuance of the creed of racism, a heinous sin is committed against the dignity of all men, everywhere.

## NOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism* (London: Frederick Muller Co., 1951), p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> David Ben-Gurion, *Rebirth and Destiny of Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 489.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (Beirut: Khayats, 1955), p. 449.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 441.