

Zionism in Palestine

The Colonial Process



A Palestinian village with a part of its orchards and terraced agriculture before the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. European Zionists planned to settle in Palestine without regard for the rights of the existing Palestinian Arab population.

I. ZIONISM AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

To some people there seems to be a terrible moral incongruity in classifying Zionism as a form of colonialism. How, they ask, can one denounce as colonialism the response of the Jewish people to anti-semitism, whose horrors in the last hundred years have ranged from pogroms to death camps?

There are those who answer this question with another: by what morality should the Palestinian people pay for the crimes of Europeans against Jews? Neither moral question, however, probes the heart of the matter, for colonialism is not essentially a moral category, but a political and economic one, not a subjective classification but an objective one.

The entire phenomenon of colonialism, and settler colonialism in particular, cannot be reduced to a moral evaluation of the colonist. It is easy enough, for example, to indict the wealthy French planter on a tea plantation in Indochina, or some archetypal British colonist in a pith helmet searching for mines in Africa. But who is ready to utter a facile moral rejection of some poor soul who left a British prison for a new life in Australia? Or

the debtors who settled in Georgia? Or the masses of miserable people who left Europe for the United States?

While on an individual level, the colonist may elicit sympathy, the effects of colonialism cannot be ignored: the British ex-prisoner was involved in the virtual annihilation of the Aborigine people, the debtor may have prospered and bought an enslaved African, and the wretched immigrants from Europe decimated the Native American people of the U.S.

Only an objective view of colonialism can yield a program of political action. Such an appraisal shows that colonialism was not the result of a wrong ethical decision in Europe, but of the fundamental laws of capital development. Colonialism did not grow out of the free and malicious choice of masses of people in Britain and Europe to oppress the people of the third world; rather it developed from the necessity of capital to expand, and for it to expand, once it reached the stage of monopoly, internationally. Rising capitalism also dispossessed the peasantry from their land, and sought to hold them in wage slavery, resulting in the massive emigration from Europe to the Americas, Asia and Africa.

Roots of Zionism

Let us look objectively, then, at the roots of Zionism. Zionism arose in the latter part of the nineteenth century from the crisis faced by the Jewish population of Europe and Russia. As feudalism crumbled, the Jews were displaced from the function allotted to them by the feudal order: the handling of trade and finance in predominantly agricultural, barter-based economies. This function had not made all the Jews wealthy—on the contrary, many barely eked out a living. Moreover, it had provided a material basis for the anti-Jewish prejudices of the time, for there is a general pattern of mistrust among the peasantry in pre-capitalist societies not only for the financier and the merchant, but even for the poor peddler. This anti-Jewish prejudice of the feudal period, often cloaked with religious legitimacy by the Catholic Church, expressed itself in pogroms and other acts of brutality.

Modern anti-Jewishness was far more virulent, however, than the feudal form. With the rise of capitalism, the old economic function of the Jews was destroyed, and Jews found themselves most often unsuccessful in competition with the ascendant national bourgeoisie. This had two consequences: first, the destitution of large sectors of European Jews, and second, the emergence of the Jews as a "scapegoat." Reactionary rulers, most notably Hitler, claimed that the evils of the society—which in fact were the results of capitalism—were the fault of the Jews, a "foreign element" in the nation. This modern anti-Jewishness culminated in fascist genocide.

Some Jews reacted to this crisis by joining the struggle for socialism, others by emigrating from the Pale in Russia and from Eastern Europe. Theodore Herzl, a Hungarian journalist, proposed in his essay, *The Jewish State* (1895), that the crisis be dealt with through establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. It was a solution obviously borrowed from colonialism, then in its heyday. Herzl himself understood this, to the extent of writing to Cecil Rhodes, the major figure in white settlement of "Rhodesia," to request Rhodes' endorsement for what Herzl frankly called his "colonial program."

Though Zionism, objectively speaking, arose from this historical crisis, it was overlaid with the religious mystique of the Chosen People and the Promised Land. The mere adoption of a religious myth hardly makes Zionism unique among forms of colonialism. In fact, the religious myth is almost typical of colonialism: the Boers claimed that God had called them to South Africa and the conquistadors cast their bloody conquests as a Christian mission.

What does set Zionism apart, however, is the claim, which was formulated both in religious and secular versions, that the Jewish settlers were not merely going to Palestine, but returning. There was, however, no material connection between the Jews of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe and the actual land of Palestine. Underscoring this fact, the Zionists also considered settling in Argentina, Uganda, Cyprus and Sinai.

For more than 2000 years, the majority of Jews had lived outside of Palestine. For a relatively brief period over two millennia ago, the Jews had lived in Palestine and the Jewish religion developed there. But even before the destruction of the Second Temple in 72 AD a majority of the Jewish population had left Palestine to live as traders in many parts of the Roman Empire. Throughout the succeeding centuries, the Jewish sector of pre-capitalist society performed the trading and financial function earlier described. This sector of society was bound together within various areas by its economic function, and its ties were expressed in its culture, particularly in religion.

These ties did not, however, link the Jews of the whole world together, nor did they tie them to Palestine. Distinctively European, Arab, African and other Jewish cultures emerged. The Jews of Europe spoke languages based on German and Spanish, while the Jews of North Africa spoke an Arabic dialect. By the nineteenth century, Jews resembled in race the other peoples of the geographic area in which they lived. A Russian Jew looked no more like an Ethiopian Jew than any other

Russian resembled an African, no more like a Yemeni, Indian or Chinese Jew than a Russian Orthodox believer resembled a Yemeni Moslem, an Indian Hindu or a Chinese Confucian.

Quite simply, Jews who dropped the special economic function tended to assimilate, over the course of generations, into the societies in which they lived; non-Jews who adopted that special economic function integrated themselves into the Jewish community. The clearest evidence exists that the Jews of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (excepting parts of the very small Jewish community which remained in Palestine) were not the actual descendants of the ancient Hebrews; no Jewish rights to Palestine were somehow transmitted by blood through the centuries.

II. ZIONISM AND THE PALESTINIANS

Palestine Refugees

The first Zionist settlers who went to Palestine in the nineteenth century found themselves in a Palestinian Arab country. Even in 1914, after settlers had been trickling into Palestine for many years, the population of the country was over 93 percent Christian and Moslem Arabs. Of the 7 percent of the population which was Jewish by religion, many were Arabs by nationality, sharing the same language and culture as their Moslem and Christian compatriots. Others were religious European Jews, living on the remittances of the pious in Europe.

The new settlers established plantations not unlike those being founded contemporaneously in Kenya and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). They employed Arab workers, and as colonists the world over, developed a racist attitude toward the indigenous



Palestinian peasants harvesting oranges near Jaffa in 1902.



Palestinian demonstration during the British Mandate for the right to self-determination and against Zionist settlement.

people. In 1891 Ahad Ha'Am, a European Jewish writer, reported from personal observation that the Zionist settlers, "treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause, and even boast of these deeds; and nobody among us opposes this despicable inclination."

After the First World War settlement began in earnest. Although in exchange for their uprising against the Turkish Empire the British government promised the Arabs an independent state, a British Mandate was imposed on Palestine, and the British colonial government adopted measures to encourage Zionist settlement.

The economic pattern of Zionist settlement during the Mandate, when substantial colonization began, differed quite markedly from the previous decades. Rather than attempting to extract the maximum profit from the employment of Palestinian Arab workers at low wages, the Zionist organizations successfully implemented a boycott of Arab labor in Jewish agricultural and other enterprises. The organization responsible for settlement, the Jewish Agency, affirmed in its constitution that, "The Agency shall promote agricultural colonization based on Jewish labor and in all works or undertakings carried out or furthered by the Agency, it shall be deemed to be a matter of principle that Jewish labor shall be employed."

The Jewish National Fund, which bought land and then let it to settlers, wrote a clause into its leases stipulating that "the lessee undertakes to execute all works connected with the cultivation of the holding only with Jewish labor." For the first two offenses of employing Arab workers the JNF imposed a fine, and for the third offense it seized the land.

Zionism's reason for flouting the profit principle in this period was astute and political. Decades later David Ben Gurion would write that "the reason Hebrew labor [that is, the boycott of Arab labor] won out during the Second Aliya [period of immigration from 1905-14] and Mandate period is that every loyal Zionist understood that without Jewish labor there would be no Jewish state." Only by excluding Palestinian Arab workers from employment on land acquired by the Jewish National Fund and from enterprises owned by Zionists could jobs be created for new Jewish immigrants. And only by preventing competition from Arab workers could a separate and artificially high standard of

living be maintained for Jewish workers who were subsidized by foreign contributions to the movement. These subsidies allowed a high standard of living necessary to attract and retain immigrants used to European levels of consumption. In 1936, for example, the per capita income of Jews in Palestine was 44 Israeli pounds, and that of Arabs about 17 Israeli pounds.

For the Palestinian people, one of the most significant aspects of this boycott of Arab labor was that it was being conducted on land which generally had been farmed by Palestinians for generations back into dim history. One example of how the Zionists "bought" this land will provide an interesting illustration. Early in the Mandate period the Jewish National Fund in a single transaction gained title to a huge tract of land in the Vale of Esdraelon, among the most fertile areas in Palestine. The Ottoman Sultan had awarded legal ownership of the entire area in which this land was located, including twenty villages, in 1872 to the wealthy Sursock family in Beirut, for a remarkably low price and, apparently, some special financial favors to the Sultan. The land continued to be tilled by the Palestinian peasantry, who turned over a portion of their crop to the landlord Sursock. When the absentee owner sold the land to the Zionists, 688 families, or some 3500 people, were dispossessed from their homes and fields. While the old feudal landlord had benefited from having the peasantry continue to live on the land as tenants, the new Zionist order expelled them from the land which rightfully belonged to the people who had farmed it for so many years.

The pattern of Zionist settlement during the Mandate shows a direction towards building in Palestine an exclusively Jewish state—"a state as Jewish as England is English," according to the traditional Zionist slogan.

By the beginning of 1948, the Zionists were facing a considerable problem, for the population of the area that was shortly to become Israel was more than half Arab, and most of the land was in Arab hands. Carefully documented accounts are available which show that the Zionists used terror tactics to force the Palestinian Arabs to flee in fear, particularly in the months before May 15, 1948, the day on which the state of Israel was formally established and the Arab armies entered Palestine in their charade of assistance to the Palestinians. After May 15, the Israeli army employed direct forcible expulsion of the



Zionist soldiers capture a Palestinian village near Ramle in 1948.

Palestinians from their homes.

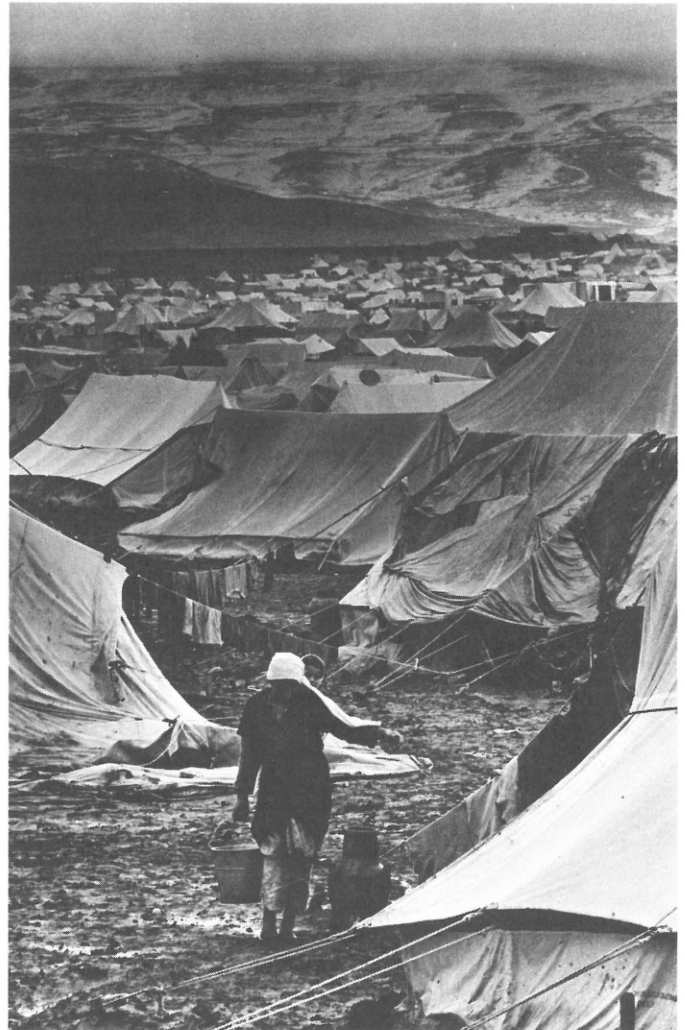
The massacre of Deir Yassin was the dominating event of the pre-May 15 period. There, 250 villagers were killed by the Zionist paramilitary organization, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, and their corpses mutilated. The news of the atrocity was then deliberately spread by the Zionists to encourage panic and flight: loudspeaker vans from the Haganah, the official Zionist army, toured Jerusalem warning Arab residents, "Flee, or the fate of Deir Yassin will be yours." By the repeated use of terror, the Zionists were able to drive some 300,000 Palestinians from their homes before May 15.

Following that date, the Israeli army physically expelled people from their homes. Over 75,000 people were forced to walk from the towns of Lydda and Ramle to the Transjordanian lines, after Israeli troops under Moshe Dayan captured the two towns. In total, some three-quarters of a million Palestinians were driven out of their homeland.

Thus the first phase of Zionism, settlement leading to the establishment of a Jewish state, created the first aspect of the Palestine problem, the Palestinian refugees. In addition to the 750,000 forced to flee in 1948, 400,000 more became refugees during the war of June 1967. In 1948 some of the refugees fled to the Gaza Strip or the West Bank, both of which were overrun by the Israelis in 1967: in 1972 there were 324,567 Palestinians in Gaza officially registered as refugees, and an additional 278,255 in the West Bank. In 1969, some 53 percent of all Palestinians, however, were living outside Palestine, the results of Israeli expulsion.

A tiny fraction of the refugees were able to bring capital out of Palestine, and integrated themselves into the bourgeoisies of the adjacent countries: in Lebanon, Palestinian capitalists were active in banking, and in Amman, in construction, import and other fields. Another sector has been able to maintain itself in

various professions and small businesses. The vast majority—80 percent in 1948—were dispossessed peasants or unskilled workers; together with the ruined petit bourgeoisie, they have been relegated to the misery of the refugee camps or slums, supplementing the UN rations with poorly paid, often casual, labor or at best with the remittances of a son who has left the area to work. The masses of Palestinians have never relinquished their hopes and determination of returning to Palestine.



Palestinian refugees lived in miserable camps after 1948.

The following figures, from an article by Edward Hagopian and A.B. Zahlan in the summer, 1974 issue of *Journal of Palestine Studies*, show the distribution of Palestinian population in 1969:

East Bank	900,000
West Bank	670,000
Gaza Strip	364,000
Arabs of	
Israel	340,000
Lebanon	240,000
Syria	155,000
Kuwait	140,000
Egypt	33,000
Saudi Arabia	20,000
Arabian Gulf	15,000
Iraq	24,000
Libya	5,000
U.S. (1972)	25,000

Palestinians in Israel

A second phase of Zionist colonialism began with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Approximately 90 percent of the Arab population of the territory appropriated for the new state were exiled.

The Palestinian Arabs who managed to remain in Israel had about 50 percent of their land confiscated by the state within a few years, through a variety of legal stratagems, generally for Jewish settlement. In many cases the lands, or the most arable part of them, which belonged to an Arab village were seized and given to a neighboring kibbutz or moshav.

The Palestinian Arabs have tended to be forced into the subproletariat and have been subjected to a variant of the apartheid system. As a landless class, newly expanded by the expropriations, they were forced to leave the villages to find work, usually returning to the village at night or for the weekend. These Arab workers tended to be concentrated in agriculture and construction, in which they constituted 23.4 and 20.3 percent of the workforce in Israel in 1969. They are very underrepresented in industry, where they made up only 6.8 percent of the workers in Israel in 1969. They are frequently found in the least skilled, most menial and most poorly paid positions: an Arab man in Israel received on the average only 62 percent of the wages paid to a Jewish male worker. The number of Palestinian Arabs who are able to enter the middle class of professionals is quite small, especially relative to the Jewish population.

The Palestinians who remained as farmers in the villages found that the Israeli government took vigorous measures to bring modern technology to Jewish agriculture, and very little action to improve Arab agriculture. Statistically, the results can be seen in the fact that only 5 percent of the land cultivated by Arabs in Israel was irrigated in 1967, while 47 percent of the land farmed by Jews was irrigated. The same point was made more visually by an Arab resident of the Galilee who recently showed a *Jewish Post* reporter that "the glistening channel of the National Water Carrier, which bisects the Beit Netufa Valley, provides no water to irrigate Arab lands in the valley."

Socially and politically the Arabs of Israel live under a kind of apartheid system. Of the 400,000 Palestinian Arabs in Israel in 1971, only about 12 percent lived in mixed Arab-Jewish cities, and then generally in dilapidated ghetto areas. The Arab population is concentrated in 102 villages and the two towns of Nazareth and Shafa 'Amr: 60 percent are in the Galilee and 20 percent in the Triangle (Central District).

By law, no non-Jew may lease land belonging to the Jewish National Fund, and virtually no non-Jew may lease land from the State. The implications of this discrimination are awesome when one realizes that together the JNF and the State hold 92 percent of the land in Israel. Furthermore, by law no non-Jew may even work on that land. Although the law is often flouted, the government takes steps to prosecute individuals and settlements who do not heed these regulations.

Because new towns and settlements are ordinarily located on land held by the JNF or by the State, Arabs are prevented from living there. In the Galilee, for instance, where the Arab population is concentrated, not a single Arab has been allowed to live in the Jewish town of Upper Nazareth, located on lands seized from the Arab people of Nazareth, or in the Jewish town of Carmiel, built on land taken from the villagers of Ba'ane, Dir al Assad and Nahf.

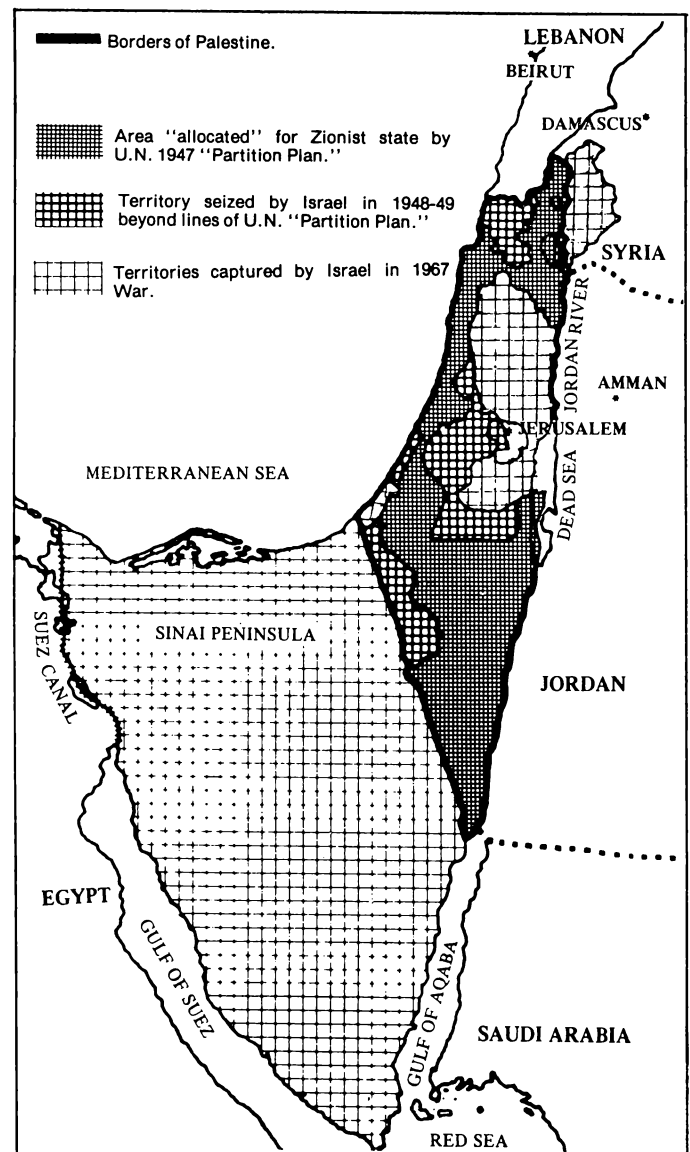
Legally and administratively, Arabs are put in a category separate from Jews, and are even further subdivided by religion. Arabs of the Druze faith, an offshoot of Islam, are subject to compulsory military service, Christian Arabs may enlist at their option, and Moslems are barred from the army. There is no civil marriage in Israel, so no Arab, Christian, Moslem or Druze, may legally marry a Jew.

Each agency of the government has its own separate Arab department: even "Arab health" and "Arab agriculture" are administered by special offices, and in the annual reports, the

immunizations administered to Arabs and Jews and the totals of tomatoes produced by Arab and Jewish farmers are tallied in separate columns. Needless to say, the Arab departments are generally run by Jews: from the Prime Minister's Arab Advisor Shlomo Toledano, down to lesser offices.

Unlike Jews, the Palestinian Arabs in Israel were put under military government rule which was not abolished until 1966. During that time special passes—like in South Africa—were required for Arabs traveling outside their usual residence. Now, although they are no longer under martial law, the weight of political repression falls most heavily upon them and many Arab nationalists and dissidents are confined to their villages and allowed to leave only with a pass.

Through this period (1948-67) the growth of the Israeli economy was restricted by the Arab boycott, under which the Arab countries refused to trade with Israel. Thus Israeli industries were unable to export their manufactured goods to the markets of the nearby Arab states, nor were they able to import raw materials from these countries. Lavish subsidies of foreign aid, particularly from the U.S., maintained the Israeli economy.



Palestinians Under Military Occupation

A third phase of Zionist colonialism was initiated by the occupation of territory seized in the June 1967 war. More than a million Palestinian Arabs came under Israeli military rule. Since then, Israel has been practicing a classical form of colonialism in the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli Ministry of Defense itself has candidly acknowledged that "The [occupied] areas are a supplementary market for Israeli goods and services on the one hand and a source of factors of production, especially unskilled labor, for the Israeli economy on the other." The settler colonial society, which had been nurtured by a boycott of Arab labor, had now developed to the point where it could turn to the more usual colonial pattern of capitalists' profit from the cheap labor of the oppressed.

By 1973, half the labor force of the West Bank and Gaza was employed in Israel, generally in the lowest echelons of the proletariat. Their wages were only half of that earned by Israeli workers. This inequity of pay was set forth with remarkable candor in a circular distributed by the Area Council of Eshkol, representing a group of Zionist settlements on the edge of the Gaza Strip. Their circular stipulated:

"Fixed Prices:

One Hour's Labor 12.50 Israeli pounds

One Hour's Arab Labor 5.00 Israeli pounds."

The new form of racism which this super-exploitation of the Palestinian Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza bred among the Jewish population of Israel was expressed quite blatantly in a letter written to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* in 1969, when Golda Meir, then Prime Minister, was hesitating on the question of employment in Israel of workers from the occupied areas:

"If Mrs. Meir wants to see Hebrew workers sweating away on hot summer days, if it gives her pleasure, this is her own business. But it cannot become the national criterion on which to

convince the public that we should not integrate the economy of the West Bank.

"Every Jewish mother wants her son to finish high school and university, and to become a chemist, a technician, engineer, or at least a trained plumber. Who is training the young [Jewish Israeli] people of today for the simple tasks, carrying buckets of cement or asphalt for road making? In the course of time we shall in any case need Arab workers for building, agriculture and even industry. Immigrants are more and more people whose professions are far from these simple tasks."

In addition to exploiting the labor of the Palestinians of the occupied areas, the Israeli ruling class is using the West Bank and Gaza as a captive market for their manufactured goods, as states traditionally do with their colonies. The Military Government issues licenses for import of manufactured goods from abroad only when there is no similar Israeli article available. By 1973 the occupied areas had become the second largest market for Israeli exports (excepting polished diamonds), following only the U.S. and coming before Great Britain.

The opening of a market in the region is a major breakthrough for Israeli capitalism. One of the basic considerations behind the "open bridges" policy, under which the occupation authorities permit visitors and trade to cross the bridges to Jordan, is the design of using the West Bank as an entry into the market of the surrounding Arab countries. Already Israeli goods are showing up as illegal imports into the Jordanian East Bank.

This third phase of Zionist colonialism has produced a third aspect of the Palestine problem: over 1 million Palestinians living as colonial subjects of Israel, denied the right to self-determination and to the integrity of their national culture, and economically exploited as cheap labor.

At the same time, Zionism has preserved intact the two aspects of the Palestine problem created during the previous phases of its colonialism. The Palestinians driven out in 1948 and 1967 are still not allowed to return, except in insignificant numbers under the "family reunion scheme." The Palestinian Arabs living in Israel are still deprived of the lands plundered from them after 1948, and still being subjected to further land expropriations and to a Zionist brand of apartheid. The national problem of the Palestinians is now one of a single people living under three forms of national oppression, a people who all share a desire for repatriation of the refugees and for self-determination in a democratic Palestinian state.

III ZIONISM AND IMPERIALISM

Zionism differed at least at its outset from most forms of colonialism in one characteristic, the nature of the relation to state power in a metropolitan country. Ordinarily colonialists were the subjects of a single state, whose government backed their ventures as part of its imperial policy. The Zionists, however, were citizens of many countries, and had to actively search out a power to sponsor their efforts.

It was essential that they find a government to sponsor their colony. Marx had described the dependence of the colonist, who wanted to make drastic changes in the economy of the area in which he settled, but required for this the might of the mother country: "Where the capitalist has at his back the power of the mother-country he tries to clear out of his way by force the modes of production and appropriation based on the independent labor of the producer." For the Zionists, who wished not only to clear away the mode of peasant production, but the peasant producer as well, the necessity of securing the backing of a European state was well understood. Until that support was assured, Zionist settlement in Palestine was on a relatively small scale.

Herzl offered the imperialist powers—in return for their support of Zionism—assistance in securing their objectives at the expense of the indigenous people of the area. As he wrote: "We should form there [in Palestine] a wall of defense for Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism."

Herzl himself became a habitue of the antechambers of the



Repression is a fact of daily life under the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.



Chaim Weizmann and Lord Arthur James Balfour.



Chaim Weizmann and President Harry Truman, 1948.

elite in his quest for imperial backing of the Zionist scheme. He offered the financial support of European Jews to the Ottoman Sultan as an inducement for his support of Zionist settlement; to the Kaiser he offered help in securing German interests in the Middle East, and to the Czar, suppression of the news of the pogroms being conducted against the Jews in Russia and a decrease in the Jewish population of that country.

British Imperialism

It was not until the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire was in the offing during World War I that Zionism received the firm backing of an imperial power. During the war Britain was actively maneuvering for its pick of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, which had allied itself with Germany, defeated in the war. For a number of decades capitalists from the various European states had been involved in trade and investment in the Ottoman Empire, which had taken on a semi-colonial character and even lost some of its territory to European colonialism.

A special characteristic of European penetration of the Levant had been its relation to the various religious sects. The Ottoman Empire governed on the basis of *millets*, or religious communities, rather than by nations, and the religious sects had great definition and importance in local life. France associated itself with the Maronites, Russia with the Greek Orthodox and Britain with the Druzes and Jews.

Thus Britain was not making a radical departure from this mode of exerting imperial influence in the region through religious groups when it issued the Balfour Declaration (1917), which promised a national home for the Jews in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration had two goals. On the immediate level of inter-imperialist rivalry, Britain hoped that its connection with Zionism would help insure that it did not lose Palestine to France nor have to share it with any other imperial power. Moreover, the British imperialists saw a strong Zionist colony in Palestine as a base to guard the eastern flank of the Suez Canal, the imperial lifeline to the most lucrative British colony of India, and beyond. A colony of Europeans would be impervious to the anti-imperialist sentiments of Arab nationalism and self-determination, they theorized, and a stronghold for British control in the region.

British strategists were forced to question the direction set by the Balfour Declaration as the Zionist settlement seemed to exacerbate nationalist feeling in Palestine: Palestinian nationalist congresses were followed by declarations demanding self-determination and an end to settlement, and the declarations were followed by strikes, demonstrations and riots. The Peel Commission, sent to Palestine by the British government to investigate the situation, took testimony as nationalist Arab guerrilla warfare broke out in Palestine. Early in 1937 the

Commission issued a recommendation that Palestine be divided into two states, one Arab and one Jewish. The Jewish state they proposed had a substantial Arab population which the Commission proposed be "transferred," forcibly if necessary, to the Arab state. With that, the peasant based guerrilla war exploded with greater ferocity. For three years it raged, despite terrible repression by British and Zionist forces.

In 1939, with omens of war in Europe abounding, the British government prudently decided that it could no longer afford its aggressive support for Zionist colonization in Palestine, and beat a tactical retreat to a position calling for curtailment and eventual cessation of Jewish immigration.

Jewish immigration continued illegally and, particularly after the war, many victims of Nazism were brought to Palestine. Chiefly responsible for the creation of the situation which led to this were the capitalist Allied powers, especially the U.S., which refused to grant Jews entry visas in the necessary numbers, thus consigning people to the death camps, or to "Displaced Persons" camps after the defeat of Nazism.

The Zionism movement failed to campaign vigorously for visas to the U.S. and other countries, and instead focused on immigration to Palestine. In its most exaggerated form, their obsession with Zionism rather than rescue led to collaboration with the Nazis. In general, Zionist behavior during this period reflected the view of Itzhak Greenbaum, head of the Jewish Agency's Rescue Committee, who declared that donations to the United Jewish Appeal should not go "to rescue Jews. I say no... we have to resist that wave which puts Zionist activities in the second line." As Ben Gurion explained, Zionists needed to take measures lest "mercy have the upper hand and the whole energy of the people will be channeled into saving the Jews from various countries. Zionism will be struck off the agenda."

U.S. Imperialism

The orientation of the Zionist movement changed within a few short years from Britain to the U.S. At a conference of the Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, held in 1942 at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City, the Zionists resolved that "Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated into the structure of the new democratic world." Put in less lofty terms, the conference was calling for the establishment of a Zionist state within the system of U.S. neocolonialism which replaced the hegemony of British colonialism after World War II.

Like Britain before it, the U.S. government had two goals in mind in its adoption of Zionist colonialism, embodied after May 1948 in the state of Israel. First, the U.S. used its relationship with Zionism to accelerate the shrinkage in power of its British rival in the Middle East. Second, the U.S. aimed at protection of its growing corporate interests, especially oil interests, through a client state in the Middle East.

After the dramatic Israeli victory in the June 1967 war, the U.S. government's esteem for Israel swelled. Its breathtaking military victories made it an example of the kind of regional ally the Nixon Doctrine was talking about: one which would use U.S. weapons and its own personnel to fight U.S. battles at a reduced domestic political cost. Edward Sheehan in the spring 1976 issue of *Foreign Policy* writes that it was the "conventional wisdom" of the post-June war period that "a strong Israel, militarily much superior to its Arab foes, would prevent war and serve as the surest sentinel of American interests in the Middle East."

When Golda Meir visited Washington in early 1973, she laid out an argument for Israel's strategic importance to the U.S., saying, according to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* (March 7, 1973) "that Israel is really a safeguard for the maintenance of American interests in the area, and the first line of defense for American interests in the Mediterranean basin. We are also the main safeguard for the protection of the Islamic regimes that are loyal to them in the area." As Meir pointed out, Israel was a key link in the chain of U.S. allies which Kissinger was stretching around the Mediterranean and down to the Indian Ocean. Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Israel and Jordan around the Mediterranean, and Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan around the Indian Ocean: all were strong U.S. allies.

Even in such a galaxy, Israel's star twinkled brightly, attracting admiration and aid from Washington. In the four years between 1968 and 1972, Nixon sent \$1,182 million in military and economic aid to Israel, or somewhat over the total of U.S. aid in the previous 20 years. Considered solely in terms of military aid, the boost in assistance is even more tremendous: during this period the Nixon administration sent Israel more than 20 times the military aid that had been sent in the previous 20 years.

U.S. military and intelligence strategists developed a bloated confidence in Israel, and the Israeli military themselves began to fantasize lightening strikes at Kuwait or elsewhere in the Gulf should radical nationalists threaten the oil interests of the capitalist world.

The October 1973 war revealed that the erstwhile Mideastern superman was not at all invincible. The military revelations were

a shock, but no more so than the political realizations. The U.S. government quickly learned that it could no longer conduct its relations with Israel in isolation from its relations with the Arab states as if they did not all exist in the same region, or indeed, on the same planet. Arab nationalist forces had grown much stronger; growth in strength could be traced in part to results of the June 1967 War, which inflicted a humiliating defeat on regimes which had previously contained those forces and at the same time intensified Zionist oppression with the occupation. No Arab regime, no matter how reactionary, was able to ignore the force of nationalism.

Now the question for U.S. strategists is how to integrate its reactionary allies, both Zionist and Arab, into a single regional system. It is an intricate juggling act, and there is no clear sign at this point that the U.S. government will be able to pull it off.

The major problem confronting the U.S. in its attempt at integration of the regional system of imperialist control is the Palestinians. The U.S. thus far is acting on the premise that it cannot yield to the Palestinian aspirations for self-determination since these would come at the expense of Israel, which the U.S. considers vital to its interests as a global power.

The struggle of the Palestinians, therefore, plays a crucial role in the confrontation between imperialism and national liberation in the Middle East. For over half a century now the Palestinians have been resisting the peculiar brand of colonialism which besets their homeland and the imperialist powers which have stood behind Zionism. In recent years the Palestinians have withstood a number of attempts, which were supported by the U.S., to destroy their struggle, most notably the massacre of Black September 1970 in Jordan and the successive attacks by the right wing in Lebanon.

The Palestinian struggle for self-determination has not only survived but grown stronger. It has grown stronger particularly in gaining the active participation of the Palestinian people under occupation, and stronger in gaining virtually universal international recognition for the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of its people. ●

ZIONISM IN PALESTINE, published in 1976 by the Palestine Solidarity Committee, P.O. Box 1757, Manhattanville Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10027. The PSC organizes solidarity activities and publishes educational material, including the monthly newsletter, **Palestine!** Write for a complimentary issue.

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