

Zionism: The Ideological Cover-up to Jewish Colonization of Palestine

By [Rima Najjar](#)

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The benign-sounding term “settler” or “settlement” is used so often in the news without reference to Jewish colonization of Palestine that the world often loses sight of the immoral nature of the Zionist project in Palestine. The term is used to describe Jews moving illegally to the West Bank, and commandeering land that belongs to Palestinians. Waves of Jews moving to Israel are no longer called colonists or even settlers in the news media, but rather immigrants.

Palestine is the [only and last](#) active act of settler colonialism. Since the creation of the UN, “more than 80 former colonies [including several in the Arab world] comprising some 750 million people have [gained independence](#) since the creation of the United Nations.”

Why the exception in the case of Palestine? Because the ideological driving force behind the process, Zionism, is the most virulently and insidiously powerful force on the planet. Over the course of the past one hundred years—i.e., since the Balfour Declaration, Zionism has successfully manipulated imperial powers, first Britain and now the United States, and also [instrumentalized](#) Christianity, as well as Judaism, to serve its political purpose.

As John Berger [put it](#):

“Certain voices across the world are raised in protest [against the Jewish state]. But the governments of the rich, with their world media and their proud possession of nuclear weapons, reassure Israel that a blind eye will be cast on what its soldiers are perpetrating.”

Colonialism justifiably has a bad name. When Third World Quarterly published an article titled “The Case for Colonialism”, [voices](#) rose sharply demanding “retraction, to fire the journal editors, even to fire author and to revoke his PhD.” In that piece, Bruce Gilley argues controversially that Western colonialism was, “as a general rule, both objectively beneficial and subjectively legitimate in most of the places where it was found.”

Because of the moral questions raised by Western colonialism, the truth about the colonial nature of the Zionist project in Palestine has long been suppressed—consider, for example, the [repulsion](#) generated when a course was proposed at UC Berkeley titled “Palestine: A Settler Colonial Analysis”.

But despite the strong veil of Zionist hasbara that shielded the moral degeneracy of Zionism from view, the paradigm of Israel as a settler-colonial project did gain traction. When that happened, the attitude among pro-Israel and Zionist voices took on the same point of view as that expressed in the Third World Quarterly article.

“Settler colonialism conveys an unarguable sense of delegitimization, racial exclusion and financial exploitation”, wrote Arnon Degani in a Sep 2016 Haaretz opinion [piece](#), titled: “Israel Is a Settler Colonial State—and That’s OK.”

...arguing for the comparability of Israeli history to that of the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, pulls the rug from under the agenda of singling out Zionism and its deeds as particularly evil... Israel, though, is probably heading more towards an arrangement similar to that of South African settler colonialism: a consolidation into a democratic republic in which the Whites are recognized as sons of the land and yet still enjoy many of the privileges they accumulated during Apartheid. In Israel, from the left (Haaretz’s own Gideon Levy and Rogel Alpher) and right (President Reuven Rubi Rivilin, MK Yehuda Glick), there is growing sentiment in favor of pursuing this particular one state settler colonial road.

The case being made here by Degani and his ilk is that Israeli Jews will still come out on top if Israel pursues the “one state settler colonial road”. They will be recognized as “sons of the land”, just as white settlers are in the U.S. or Canada, etc. have been, and “yet still enjoy many of the privileges they accumulated during Apartheid.” Clearly, this is a contention filtered through a Jewish supremacist ideology that is dismissive of the human rights of non-Jews.

BDS, on the other hand, is aimed at ending the three-tiered regime of injustice that has ruined Palestinian society since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948: 1) the military occupation and colonization of the Palestinian—and other Arab—territory occupied by Israel in 1967; 2) the system of institutionalized and legalized racism within Israel against non-Jews, and 3) the persistent denial of the internationally-sanctioned rights of the Palestine refugees, especially their right to return to their homes of origin and to reparations.

As Omar Barghouti [observes](#),

“Moral reconciliation between conflicting communities is impossible if the essence of the oppressive relationship between them is sustained.”

And, in the case of Palestine, not even recognized.

And as long as the fundamental racism and moral blindness of Zionism continues to be obscured – [as in](#) negative references to “right-wing Zionism” rather than to plain Zionism or Jewish supremacy – the monumental ideological cover-up to Israel’s crimes against Palestinians will endure.

Rima Najjar is a Palestinian whose father’s side of the family comes from the forcibly depopulated village of Lifta on the western outskirts of Jerusalem. She is an activist, researcher and retired professor of English literature, Al-Quds University, occupied West Bank.

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