



Palestine

history of
a colonisation

Palestine: History of a Colonisation

Roberto Fanjul and Gabriel Zadunaisky

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Foreword to the 2019 English Edition

In 1973, the world silenced the resistance of the Palestinian people to the genocide and eviction from their lands perpetrated by the invasion of their lands by Zionism. Imperialism and much of the left defined the invaders as “an oppressed people fighting for their liberation”. The victims, the Palestinian people, and their Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) were ignored and their struggle slandered as “relentless terrorist actions”.

Roberto Fanjul and Gabriel Zadunaisky (both members of the PST and part of the magazine editorial staff) published in *Revista de América* No 12, December 1973, an extensive and meticulously researched article. Their investigation showed the true role of victimizers of the Zionist movement and imperialism that invaded and occupied Palestinian lands and evicted their people. At the same time, it showed the legitimate Palestinian resistance, led by PLO, and a political/programmatic proposal of solidarity with its struggle.

Ediciones El Socialista published a second Spanish edition in 2008 when it reissued it on paper with the title *Palestine: History of a colonisation*. The first English edition, based on the 2008 Spanish edition, was published in 2013 and it included three short texts by Nahuel Moreno on the same subject (these and other writings by the same author can be found at www.nahuelmoreno.org) and also a fragment of an open letter from the MAS to Partido Obrero (Workers Party) in 1984 criticising its positions of capitulation to Zionism.

We now publish a Second English edition with improved translation. Also, we now had access to English originals of many documents, including Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-Settler State?*; Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism*; Fawwaz Traboulsi, *The Palestine Problem: Zionism and Imperialism in the Middle East*, Jon Rothschild, *How the Arabs Were driven out of Palestine*, Tony Cliff, *Middle East at the Crossroads*; Peter Buch, *Burning Issues of the Mid-East Crisis*; Michael Bar-Zohar, *The Armed Prophet: A Biography of Ben Gurion*. Thus, we have quoted from these documents rather than translating from the Spanish edition to English.

The Editors

July 2019

Foreword to the 2008 Spanish Edition

Sixty years ago, on 14 May 1948, the Zionist movement institutionalised the State of Israel in the Palestinian territory. So they consummated an operation of eviction of nearly a million native inhabitants, mostly simple peasants. The hundreds of thousands who remained were transformed into “second-class citizens”, pariahs in their own land. Still very fresh in the memory of the world, memories of the slaughter of millions of Jews suffered at the hands of Hitler and the Nazis. The propaganda of Zionism, with the complicity of virtually all imperialist governments and the USSR subjugated by Stalin, allowed the installation of a myth: “a land without people for a people without a land”. The voices of condemnation were almost inaudible.

The Palestinians never gave up, never stopped resisting. And in the 1960s they began to be heard. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) arose, led by legendary Yasser Arafat (1929–2004). The Six Day War in 1967, when Israel extracted new territories from neighbours Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, confirmed the aggressive and expansionist character of Zionism. The Palestinians did not frighten. In 1969, while they were denounced as “terrorists” in a ferocious global campaign, they made their call to the world: “For a secular, democratic, and non-racist Palestine.”

In December 1973, the [Argentinian] PST (Socialist Workers Party) published this work reissued today: *Palestine: Story of a Colonisation*, in their *Revista de América* No 12. It was part of their campaign in support of the struggle of this oppressed people. It was well-documented research, which, with the evidence available then, exhaustively showed the invasive and pro-imperialist character of Zionism and its offspring, this enclave “country” installed with blood and fire in Palestine.

Governments and the various sectors of the Arab bourgeoisie wavered between their capitulations to imperialism, and Israel itself, and their sporadic measures of rejection, such as the 1973 war. The oppressed Palestinian people endured all kinds of suffering within the borders of the invader and the various Arab countries that gave them refuge. There was neither leadership nor steadfast allies to allow a solid answer and this gave respite to Israel.

In 1978, the Egyptian Government gave a decisive step towards betrayal, when negotiating with the US and Israel at Camp David, it signed with President Jimmy Carter the recognition of the existence of Israel, through the pro-Zionist and pro-imperialist utopia of the “two states”. Before the completion of the twentieth century, in 1993, Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, continued on that path. A vain attempt to give the invader an impossible recognition. The oppressed people never stopped fighting...

In the twenty-first century, the permanent mobilisation and the suffering by the people of Gaza and the West Bank have been increasingly taking centre stage. In the Middle East and around the world the crisis, the weakening, and discrediting of Israel are growing. The Palestinian cause wins growing support.

There is currently a movement that promotes the economic boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel. The war against Lebanon in 2006, when Israel bombed Beirut to near destruction, was a tremendous defeat and a new blow to its false legitimacy. And the everyday images of Gaza and West Bank citizens bombed, repressed, without food, without water or electricity, are the clearest demonstration that in Palestine there is a genocidal invader. This is “the problem” of the Middle East. For this reason, there has been no peace in this region for 60 years (and actually much longer).

These facts make the voices denouncing Zionism and Israel more numerous and strong. Consider two examples. After decades of being virtually ignored, the strong movement against Israel and Zionism by Jewish religious sectors, which they denounce as totally opposite to their tradition (see Yakov Rabkin, *A Threat from Within: A Century of Jewish Opposition to Zionism*, Zed Books, 2006) has been spreading since 2004. In the opposite corner, we can mention the last book of a historical friend of Israel, former President Jimmy Carter. In 2006, he published *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, where he says: “The situation in Palestine now, the confiscation of their land, the inability of its people to protest what happens, the construction of the ‘wall’ within its territory, and the complete separation of Israelis from Palestinians are, in many ways, conditions far worse than apartheid in South Africa.”

It is within this context that an idea begins to recover and it is increasingly getting stronger, that to “solve” the problem of the Middle East it is necessary to achieve “a secular and democratic Palestinian state”.

To update the research of 1973 and provide information on many of these items mentioned, we publish now other texts, and finally a chronology of the rise of Zionism and the Palestinian struggle, from 1897 to 2008.

Buenos Aires, June 2008

Palestine: History of a Colonisation

Roberto Fanjul and Gabriel Zadunaisky

Preface

The central theme of this work is the character of the State of Israel, from the origins of the Zionist movement up to the role it fulfils today in the social and political landscape of the Middle East. We have thus confined ourselves almost exclusively to the story of Zionism in Palestine.

Regarding the current situation in the Middle East, it is not possible to take a correct position without previously having clarified the nature of the State of Israel and its current role. Given the monumental collection of fables, half-truths or outright lies on this issue that the imperialist press serve us daily, we found it necessary to go back to the origins of the colonising power that resulted in the founding of Israel and has led to over 30 years of strife and bloodshed in this vital area of the planet.

Prior to considering the trajectory of Zionism, especially of Zionism in Palestine, it is necessary to say a few words about the specific situation that hit the Jews in Europe since the middle of last century, since the Zionist movement is born in this historical context.

Perhaps there is not such a historical fable as the problem of “survival” of the Jews through the centuries. Idealist “historians”, priests, rabbis, etc., have tried to explain this phenomenon by appealing to various myths: from the characteristics of the Hebrew religion, even racist fables (i.e., that Jews make up a “race” with special characteristics that would keep them immutable in any historical circumstance).

Marxism has cleared this entire mythological tangle. Studies by Karl Marx, first, and especially later those of the great Marxist Abraham (Abram) Leon,¹ have scientifically established material and historical causes of the “originality” of the Jewish people. These reasons are earthy and have nothing to do either with Jehovah or with a supposed racial “essence” immutable through the ages, as posed by both Zionists and anti-Semites.

The secret of Jewish survival is very simple: in pre-capitalist societies, the Jews constituted a social class, or rather a people-class. They are not the only example in history: the Gypsies, for example, were also a people-class.

1 Abraham (Abram) Leon was one of the top leaders of the European “left” Zionism until the eve of the Second World War. By that time, Leon came to the conclusion that his Zionist party, Hashomer Hatzair (The Youth Guard), has been serving British imperialism. He breaks completely with Zionism and enters the Fourth International. Following the German occupation, he reorganises the Belgian section, publishes underground newspapers, and promotes the organisation of the resistance in various sectors of the labour movement. When going to Charleroi, with a mission to help the reorganisation of the miners’ council of union delegates, which was being led by the Trotskyists, he is arrested by the Gestapo. He died in the Auschwitz concentration camp.

In incredibly difficult conditions, under German occupation, Leon writes *The Jewish Question*, the most important Marxist study written on the subject. There, he formulated the theory of “people-class”. He also made a prediction: if you create a Jewish state in Palestine, it will be “a state placed under the complete domination of English or American imperialism” (Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question*, Pathfinder, New York, 1970, p. 252).

In pre-capitalist societies, Jews represented “prehistoric” forms of capital, both in the ancient world as in the feudal world. In feudal society, for example, we have the following classes: feudal lords (nobles or priests) and the serfs of the soil. These serfs worked the land and had to give part of the proceeds to the feudal lord. Almost everything produced was directly consumed or used, either by the Lord and the priests or by the serfs. The product was not produced to sell or exchange in the market and make a profit. It was essentially a society producing use-values and not exchange values, as is our present capitalist society. Trade and money, however, did exist. But trade was the exception, not the rule. The dealing and lending of money were developing relatively on the margin of the mode of production of these societies producers of use-values. So it was exercised by “foreigners”, by people-traders (Phoenicians, Jews, Lombards, etc.). People-class, as Marx used to say, existed in the pores of a society producing use-values. The Jews are the survival of an old merchant and financial pre-capitalist class.

On these material relationships rose the institutional and ideological superstructure: Community authorities, a “special” religion, and the myth of considering themselves descendants of the original Hebrew people inhabiting Palestine at the beginning of our era, and so on. This superstructure helped to maintain the cohesion of the people-class but, at the same time, distorted the true nature of its existence. This phenomenon of false consciousness is, moreover, common to all ideologies.

The role of the Jews as a people-class not only explains their survival but their assimilation as well. Abraham Leon proves with an enormity of data that, in places and times where Jews lost that character of people-class, eventually their ideological and institutional superstructure collapsed and they ended up assimilating. This also explains why there is no racial unity among Jews — throughout the history of pre-capitalist societies, there are numerous cases of conversion, sometimes massive, to Judaism. Hidden under this ideological-religious cloak, happened the phenomenon of the incorporation of individuals or entire groups to the people-class. This explains why there should have been Jews of Mongolian “race” in Dagestan, black Jews (the Falasha) in Ethiopia, Arabic Jews in the Islam and Jews of Slavonic origin in Eastern Europe. The myth of common descent from Abraham or the inhabitants of Palestine at the beginning of our era does not stand to scrutiny.

With the development of capitalism, the old Jewish pre-capitalist merchant class had the material bases of their existence as a people-class gradually dissolved. In Western Europe, especially in England, where the capitalist mode of production developed earlier, the Jews began to assimilate naturally. This process would have been generalised — with the logical delay imposed by the religious and family remoras, etc. — if capitalism worldwide had remained progressive. But before the end in all Europe of this process of natural assimilation, a process that had barely begun in backward Eastern Europe, capitalism became imperialism. In other words, it ceases to be progressive and began its stage of decomposition at the global level. The era of revolutions opens, an era of transition from capitalism — already condemned by history — to the new socialist society. Capitalism, on entering its senile age, cannot solve the problems it failed to solve in its youth. Not just the Jewish problem but many others; in its final stage of decay, capitalism not only cannot solve them but it usually worsens them. Capitalism began, for example, raising the national problem, raising progressive bourgeois democratic slogans of independence and national sovereignty. But capitalism finished organising the most monstrous system of imperialist domination, of denial of national and democratic rights for the majority of humanity living in colonial and semi-colonial countries. Capitalism began raising abstract “equality” between men and ended imposing the most aberrant discriminations. So we can go on listing problems, including the problem of the European Jews.

In Eastern Europe, the Jewish masses began to face, since the mid twentieth century, a very difficult situation. On one hand, capitalist development, as we have noted, was destroying their old way of existence as a people-class. But, on the other hand, European capitalism was already unable to assimilate the Jewish groups to the bourgeoisie and to the middle class, in a natural way, as it had happened in England, for example. The development of modern European anti-Semitism, culminating in the Nazi regime, has partly to do with this problem. It goes beyond the framework of this essay to analyse this monstrous eruption of racism. We note only that modern anti-Semitism —

although resuming medieval myths — had a very different content: it was part of the policy of some imperialist regimes, to which it was convenient to use the Jews (also Gypsies, to a lesser extent) as a target to confuse and divert the desperation of the middle class and even backward sections of the working class.

Faced with this dramatic situation, the Jewish masses in Europe, especially in Eastern Europe, had various political options. Marxism, which exercised a great attraction on them, raised the solution of the Jewish problem in terms of the struggle for socialism.

Socialism, and within socialism especially revolutionary Marxists, called the oppressed Jewish masses of Eastern Europe to merge with the working class and their struggles. For the wretched Jewish masses of Warsaw or Kiev, the path followed by their more fortunate Jewish fellows of England or France was already closed: the path of assimilation as bourgeois in the framework of capitalism. But they could and should assimilate to the workers in the struggle for socialism. While the Tsarist empire encouraged clashes, Russians against Poles or Ukrainians, or of these against the Jews, while the Austro-Hungarian Empire did the same in the mosaic of peoples it dominated, revolutionary Marxists called for the unity of all workers (of any language, nationality or “race”) to fight against all these regimes and against the European imperialist bourgeoisie. The end of capitalism in Europe and the establishment of socialism would not only end the exploitation of one class by another but also all forms of oppression, whether national, sexual, racist, etc. Socialism would extinguish the Jewish problem that capitalism could not solve.²

Thus there were many workers, students and intellectuals of Jewish origin who entered the socialist ranks and became assimilated into the workers of their countries. Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Radek, Leo Jogiches, are just a few names among hundreds of thousands.

But the old people-class, as we have already noted, under the conditions of modern capitalism was becoming less homogeneous. If, on one hand, many proletarianised Jews, poor students, and intellectuals merged with the workers’ and revolutionary movement, on the other hand, there were gentlemen like the Rothschild, Baron Hirsh, and other multimillionaires twinned with the imperialist bourgeoisie of the various European countries. From one end to the other, the different layers were staggered — the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, semi-proletarian, etc. This was the basis of class for other political options which, of course, had nothing to do with revolutionary socialism. They rather were its mortal enemy. Among the solutions to the Jewish problem, the most important were Bundism and Zionism.

The Bundists³ emerged in Russia and other Eastern European countries as a branch of social democracy. The Bund, supposedly socialist and theoretically revolutionary, was indeed a reflection of bourgeois nationalism in the bosom of the Jewish proletariat. They were part of the whole current

2 Zionists argue today that this solution was utopian, that revolutionary struggle failed to save the six million European Jews slaughtered by the Nazis and, moreover, in the USSR and other socialist countries anti-Semitism traits persist. Hence, they conclude that anti-Semitism is an “eternal” phenomenon, common to all societies and peoples. The Zionist conclusion is false from head to toe. Anti-Semitism remained alive in Europe after the Russian Revolution precisely because socialism could not triumph throughout the continent. The revolution was defeated in the main European countries and especially in its key country: Germany. The survival of capitalism and the counter-revolutionary course opened since 1923 would finally lead to the victory of fascism in Germany and the bureaucratic deformation of the USSR to Stalinism. Contrary to the Zionists’ claims, this painful historical experience confirms the thesis of revolutionary Marxism: racism, as well as national or woman oppression is an outgrowth of societies where there are privileged classes or layers.

Anyhow, as a separate issue, it would be interesting if Zionists gentlemen would answer the following question: on which side of the barricades were they in the European revolutionary process that began in October 1917? Did the Zionists, for example in Germany, fight alongside Rosa Luxemburg? All the information we hold show the opposite: that Zionism aligned with the European imperialist bourgeoisies against the revolution advancing from the east. And the triumph of the revolution in Europe would have prevented a Hitler in Germany and Stalin in the USSR. Of course, this also would have made impossible the State of Israel.

3 **Bund:** General Jewish Labour Bund of Lithuania, Poland and Russia, was founded in 1897. Initially it was part of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). Upon the division of the RSDLP, the Bund always aligned itself against the Bolsheviks. In 1917, it supported Kerensky against Lenin and Trotsky. The Bund remained very strong in Poland until the Second World War.

of European social democracy which capitulated to their respective bourgeoisies. Under the slogan of supporting the “national culture”, they argued that the Jewish workers had to organise themselves apart from Russians, Poles, etc. The Bund was playing into the arms of the bourgeoisie dividing workers from each factory or city according to their national or ‘racial’ origin. It is the same as if here [in Argentina, **Editor**] in construction sites (where there are many foreign comrades), in a dispute against the bosses they raised to organise a strike committee of the Paraguayans, another for Bolivians, another for Argentine, another for Chilean, and so on. All this, under the pretext, for example, that the Paraguayans comrades will not forget their Guaraní language; and Bolivians will better preserve their indigenous cultural values threatened by the mixing or “assimilation” with Argentines of European descent. Lenin and Trotsky strongly condemned Bundism.

The social base of the Bund was craft sectors, semi-proletarian or workers of small workshops, especially in the garment and fur industries. It was a vast sector with one foot in the old ghetto and another in the modern industrial proletariat. This was reflected in the ideology of the Bund, which claimed, on one hand, to be Marxist and revolutionary and, on the other, refused internationalism by erecting barriers among workers of different origin. This contradictory nature (reflecting an actual contradiction of its social base) determined that despite their capitulation to bourgeois nationalism, the Bund did not raise that Jewish workers had to separate from the struggle of classes and join their bourgeoisie to colonise Palestine or some another territory. This “honour” was reserved for Zionism.

The Zionist movement

In the same year (1897) in which the Bund was founded, the founding congress of the Zionist Organisation took place in Basel (Switzerland). This had its prehistory, Abraham Leon says: “The rapid capitalist development of the Russian economy after the reform of 1863 made the situation of the Jewish masses in the small towns untenable. In the West, the middle classes, shattered by capitalist concentration, began to turn against the Jewish element whose competition aggravated their situation. In Russia, the association of the “Lovers of Zion” was founded. Leo Pinsker wrote *Auto-emancipation*, in which he called for a return to Palestine as the sole possible solution of the Jewish question. In Paris, Baron Rothschild, who like all the Jewish magnates viewed with very little favor the mass arrival of Jewish immigrants in the Western countries became interested in Jewish colonisation in Palestine. To help ‘their unfortunate brothers’ to return to the land of their ‘ancestors,’ that is to say, to go as far away as possible, contained nothing displeasing to the Jewish bourgeoisie of the West, who with reason feared the rise of anti-Semitism. A short while after the publication of Leo Pinsker’s book, a Jewish journalist of Budapest, Theodor Herzl, saw anti-Semitic demonstrations at Paris provoked by the Dreyfus Affair. Soon he wrote *The Jewish State*, which to this day remains the bible of the Zionist movement.”⁴

Although the Zionist Organisation was to dispute the same clientele as the Bund and even revolutionary socialism, its class character was markedly different — it appeared as the program of a sector of the big Jewish bourgeoisie, sector that would end up being dominant within it.

Zionism apologists try to obscure this fact, arguing that, in the beginning, most of the great Jewish bourgeoisie was assimilationist and did not support Zionism. And this is true but it only proves that — as it always happens with any new idea or movement of any social class — at first it is the only patrimony of a minority. What one needs to ask oneself is whether historically — i.e., long-term — Zionism ended up being the ideology and politics of the whole Jewish big bourgeoisie. Simply put: it is true that, for example, Baron Edmund de Rothschild had tactical differences with Herzl; but today, with whom is the Rothschild family? With Zionism or anti-Zionism? This is how the question must be posed.

Moreover, it is argued that the pioneers of Palestinian colonisation were artisans, poor shopkeepers, people, in brief, of whom you may say anything but that they had a bulging bank account. Thus they try to convey — as we shall discuss below— a “plebeian” and even “worker” and

4 Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question*, op. cit., p. 244.

“socialist” image of Zionism. They present the figures of Pinsker, as a humble dreamer; of Herzl, a simple journalist who becomes the second Moses; of Borochoy, “socialist” and “Marxist”, etc.

Of course, it was not in the plans of Baron Edmund de Rothschild, and other gentlemen like him, to move personally to cultivate the land in Palestine. But this does not mean anything in terms of class characterization of Zionism. The key is: to whom it suited that humble and desperate tailors, peddlers, and unemployed of Warsaw or Lublin were chartered for the Holy Land? This is precisely what Abraham Leon points out.

If there is any doubt of what this meant in relation to the European political situation, it is Herzl himself who is responsible for clearing it — one of its obsessive themes is that the emigration of Jews to Palestine is the only guarantee they will not be recruited by the “subversive parties”. Herzl meets with William II, Emperor of Germany. What do they talk about? “Herzl presented his project in general terms. Then they talked about the Jewish problem, the Dreyfus affair, the influence of Germany in the East and the benefit that could be extracted of the solution to the Jewish question, which, if not solved, — as Herzl did not fail to stress— would push the Jews to the subversive parties. The Kaiser seemed convinced.”⁵

Herzl speaks before the First Zionist Congress: “If, finally, the Russian government remains neutral, Jews are unprotected in the existing regime and pass on to the subversive parties... Zionism is simply the peacemaker.”⁶

This feature of Zionism as a “peacemaker” and obstacle to the Jews “passing to the subversive parties” is what allows Herzl to reach agreements with the most sinister characters of the empire of the Tsars, such as von Plevhe, Count Witte or Ivan von Simonyi, all notorious anti-Semitic and pogroms organiser. Herzl wrote on 4 March 1896: “My most ardent supporter so far is the Pressburg anti-Semitic, Ivan von Simonyi...”⁷ Subsequently, at the gates of the first Russian revolution, Herzl arrives in Petrograd and makes a deal with Plevhe, minister of the Tsar: “I celebrated very much the opportunity offered to me”, Herzl reports later to the Sixth Zionist Congress, “to come into contact with the government of that country [Russia], and I can say I found some understanding of Zionist aspirations, also listening to demonstrations of good will to do something decisive for us... As for the Zionist movement, major promises were made to me. I can tell you that the Russian government has no intention of obstructing Zionism, so long as it retains its peaceful and legal character. In addition, the Russian government is willing to contribute to the expenses of a migration led by us, Zionists.”⁸ What class character, what interests could represent a movement as the Zionist which, in the full bonfire of the Russian Revolution was achieving the miracle to be allowed by the tsarist government to function without “obstacles” and also “contributed to its costs”? In Russia, not even the good and pacific bourgeois of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadet) achieved this miracle. And this is what Zionism was getting from a government that was marked by the permanent slaughter of Jewish citizens! To explain this political miracle one can naturally appeal to Divine Providence, the Holy Trinity, or Jehovah, according to taste; we, materialists, offer another explanation: the Tsar (“bastion of the European reaction”, according to Lenin) and Zionism could reach an agreement because they agreed in their class interests. Both, each in their own sphere and with different methods, reflected the most reactionary and counter-revolutionary interests of the imperialist bourgeoisies of Europe.

That is what Zionism meant in the context of the European class struggle. If it had been reduced to this, it would have gone down in history as one of the ultra-jingoistic and reactionary parties that were swarming especially in the Centre and the East of the Old Continent. Few today would know of its existence. But the Zionist program was not limited only to alienate the Jewish masses from the class struggle in Europe (and therefore from “subversive parties”), its other face was to move these masses out of Europe to make up a Jewish State.

5 Preliminary study by Alex Bein of Theodor Herzl’s book, *El Estado judío y otros escritos* (The Jewish State and Other Writings), Ed Israel. Buenos Aires, 1960, p. 56.

6 Theodor Herzl, *El Estado judío y otros escritos*, op. cit., p. 199.

7 André Chouraqui, *A Man Alone, The Life of Theodor Herzl*, Jerusalem, Keter Books, 1970, p. 106, quoted by Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-Settler State?*, Monad Press, New York, 1973, p. 102.

8 Theodor Herzl, *El Estado judío y otros escritos*, op. cit., p. 213.

The story of Zionism according to the Zionists

Advocates of Zionism, especially its “left” apologists, vindicate precisely this other face. They accept that Herzl and the Zionist movement were not exactly a progressive factor in European politics, but they argue that this is secondary to an essential fact — Zionism would be the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. A national movement similar, ultimately, to those which achieved the independence of Algeria or India, of the countries of black Africa or Indonesia, etc.

These national movements are not usually led by the proletariat nor its political organisations are Marxist revolutionary but Leninism poses they should be supported. Thus, Lenin and Trotsky supported, for example, the struggle for national independence of Turkey, despite being led by the bourgeoisie and anti-Communists as Kemal Ataturk spearheading it. In the same vein, they supported Afghanistan’s fight against British imperialism, even though their leadership was not even bourgeois but feudal. The Zionists raise: was the feudal Emir of Afghanistan more progressive than the bourgeois Theodore Herzl? Moreover, the Zionist argument continues, after Herzl, the leadership of the Zionist movement in Palestine was taken by the pioneers, former craftsmen and petty bourgeois of the ghetto, turned into workers and peasants in their own land. Dov Bar-Nir, leader of APAM, a party of the Zionist “left”, says: “Zionism, sociologically speaking, was a movement of the impoverished petty bourgeoisie, which, by its very nature and its activities, in fact, had two objectives: the proletarianisation of the Jewish masses and the organization of their productivity. Come to Israel and look: you will see a million Jewish workers, with their families a million and a half, who left the business, descend to the mines, handle the hammer, and toil the land. Is this ‘bourgeois’? When the widely democratic Zionist movement creates a coalition of parties (which have nothing to do with Israeli Government coalitions), will this be a ‘collusion’ with the bourgeoisie, in a moment where in the ‘united fronts’ of the Third World they do not recognise ... social differentiation? ... Let us not forget that since the 1930s, the world Zionist movement is under workers hegemony...” (referring that it is led by the labour party MAPAI). And he adds further on: “Mao Tse Tung himself did not disdain or reject, in the hour of national liberation, the help of the parties usually called bourgeois... In the particular case of modern nations, discriminated or oppressed, the process seems to be as follows: who says oppression, says national liberation movement; who says national movement, says national coalition; and who says national coalition, progressive and not reactionary, says indispensable hegemony to the working class and peasantry. This was, in broad outline, the story of Zionism.”⁹

Let’s see in more detail how it would have been, always according to the Zionists, the story of this “national liberation movement”: the Jewish people, dispersed by the Roman occupation of Palestine, would constantly want to return to that land, to which they have more right than anyone else, as underlined by the biblical texts.¹⁰ There is no explanation why for two thousand years they did not try to return, despite the fact they had a good chance to do so, especially during the Middle Ages, when Jews enjoyed a privileged position in the Arab world and got along very well with Islam. Be that as it may be, in the second half of the twentieth century, motivated by the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, Zionism materialises as a “national liberation movement”. It began to organise the emigration to Palestine. This country, according to the Zionists, was in a deplorable state, empty or almost empty: “vast regions of the country remained unexplored and belonged to absent feudal lords. Infested with malaria and, apart from some scattered Bedouin tents, were uninhabited and consequently, available.”¹¹ “Hobnobbing in the Holy Land there were heterogeneous groups, Muslims (Shi’ites and Sunni), Cherquizes, Maronites, Christians, Greek Orthodox. In fact, some Jewish peasant families had never left the country after the destruction of the Second Temple and kept two traditional villages

9 Dov Bar-Nir, “Os judeos, o sionismo e o progresso” (The Jews, Zionism and Progress), in the compilation by Jean Paul Sartre, *Dossier do conflictio israelo-arabe*, Inova, Portugal, 1968.

10 “It is not the British Mandate but the Bible which is our right on this earth.” R J Swi Werblowsky, “Israel and Eretz Israel”, *Dossier do conflictio israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 402.

11 Dov Bar-Nir, “The Jews, Zionism and Progress”, *Dossier do conflictio israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p.486.

in Galilee. It was for a land without people that slowly, towards the end of the last century, began to move a people without a land.”¹²

According to the Zionists, these people were returning to their land to work and by no means they were thinking to exploit, as settlers do, Arab labour: “... in a colony, the native works and does not own, while the settler owns and does not produce; in the State of Israel the Jews own the land and cultivate it themselves, while Arabs also own their land and equally cultivate it themselves.”¹³

In 1917, the British government, in return for the scientific services rendered by the great Zionist chemist, Dr Weizmann, issued the Balfour Declaration, which recognised the right to establish in Palestine a “national home” for the Jewish people. According to Dr Weizmann, this was “a unique act of global consciousness”.¹⁴

However, British imperialism soon regretted this “act of conscience”, rare in them and, under the mandate of the League of Nations, Palestine became a colony. Zionism developed, then, an anti-imperialist struggle which culminated in an “anti-British war of liberation”. “The State of Israel arose... out of a British mandate, and not of an Arab state.”¹⁵ “The struggle of the Jews against British colonialism was an anti-imperialist struggle, aided by the Soviet Union.”¹⁶ In this struggle, according to Zionists, an “army of national liberation” or “people’s militia” was forged — the Haganah.

Regrettably, the Arabs were thrown against the Zionists and it was necessary to fight against them as well. Why did this happen? According to the Zionists, the Arab people were under the influence of their feudal lords and arch-reactionaries governments which were mobilised by British imperialism and also Nazism. “The Arab society was semi-feudal, ruled by land owners and religious chiefs. The Jewish population represented a factor of modernisation, introducing economic and social capitalist structures and, at the same time, elements of Socialist tenor.”¹⁷ In addition, it brought trade unionism in the form of the great labour union, Histadrut. According to the Zionists, when buying land from the great Arab landlords they were producing an agricultural revolution: “Are we going to take sides with the old Arab feudalism, and regret that there has not been an Arab revolution, but a Jewish revolution, what peacefully destroyed feudalism?”¹⁸ The unfortunate fact is that agitated by the reactionary propaganda of the feudal Lords supported by British imperialism, the Arabs opposed the UN resolution that imposed in 1947 the partition Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel, on the one hand, and an Arab Palestinian state on the other. Civil war broke out and Israel was also invaded by five Arab States. Israel could beat them, among other things, with the help of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries that had supported the partition. They supplied weapons to Israel. “The 1948 war was waged by the feudal and reactionary Arab regimes to prevent social progress in the region.”¹⁹

Israel defeated the feudal lords but, unfortunately, the refugee problem was created. Many Palestinians, blinded by the propaganda of Arab governments, left the country hoping to return behind the victorious Arab armies. When these armies were defeated, they could not return. Moreover, the Arab states took over most of the territory that would have corresponded to the Palestinian state, which, because of them, could not be created. Since then, refugees live in squalid camps in Jordan,

12 Ephraim Tari, “The meaning Israel”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 560. The famous slogan “a land without a people for a people without land” was raised by one of the early leaders of the Zionist movement, Englishman Israel Zangwill. Take note that for Mr Tari, Muslims and others he names are not “a people” (for him Palestine was “without people”) but just “heterogeneous cores” almost to the level of the mosquitoes that infected the swamps of this “land without people”

13 Robert Misrahi, “La coexistence ou la guerre”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 584.

14 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 46.

15 Robert Misrahi, “La coexistence ou la guerre”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 584.

16 Yosef Shatil, “Las ideologías en el conflicto árabe-israelí” (Ideologies in the Arab-Israeli Conflict), in *Antología Israel, la liberación de un pueblo* (Israel Anthology: The Liberation of a People), AMIA, Buenos Aires. 1968, p. 316.

17 Simha Flapan, “Dialogue between Arab and Israeli Socialists Is a Historical Necessity”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 608.

18 Robert Misrahi, “La coexistence ou la guerre”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 585.

19 Yosef Shatil, op. cit., p.316.

Lebanon, etc. “It is true that the Arab refugee camps are a scandal and a shame, stigma of the violence used against civilian populations but they are a shame to the Arabs, not the Jews. They [the camps] are unjust violence that has dragged on for 20 years but is imposed on the Arabs by Arabs, not by the Jews.”²⁰ How come Arabs are so bad with their countrymen? Because, answers Misrahi, “they need martyrs”.²¹ “Actually, do Arabs lack territory? Do they lack the land to enable them to integrate refugees...?”²² Zionists conclude that, if they do not do it, it is because they do not want to.

Thus, according to the Zionists, since 1948, Israel is building an almost socialist society, of very singular socialism, if you will, but socialism nevertheless. “Socialism is a project in the Arab countries, and a reality in Israel.”²³ The Kibbutzim (collective farms) are the greatest example of that march to socialism. “The kibbutzim use no wage earner outside the kibbutz, so as not to exploit any worker.”²⁴ The key role played by the powerful labour union (Histadrut) would also witness what the Zionists say.

Unfortunately, this peculiar socialism cannot be built on peace. Arabs insist on maintaining a permanent state of war: “The ‘progressive’ anti-feudal revolutions of the Arab countries, rather than recognising their common interest with Israel in the progressive development, followed and hardened the chauvinist procedures of the feudal regimes.”²⁵ Thus, in 1956, incursions by Palestinian guerrillas “forced Israel to invade the Sinai”, at a time when Nasser had just nationalised the Suez Canal. Israel had to ally at this time with Britain and France to attack Egypt, but not out of imperialist motives (such as the channel going back into the hands of the Anglo-French company that Nasser nationalised), but to destroy the nests of guerrillas. Something similar happened in 1967: 100 million Arabs getting ready to fall down on 2.5 million Israelis and “throw them into the sea”. And the miracle of David defeating Goliath repeated itself!

According to the Zionists, all actions of the Israeli army have always had the same character: they are defensive or “preventive”. Incursions into Palestinian camps have the same reason, although “Fatah does not comprise more than a few hundred reckless persons.”²⁶ They claim to represent a “Palestinian people”. But can one really speak of “Palestinian people”? “From a legal standpoint, there are no Palestinian people. From a sociological point of view, I am not a specialist, but I’m not sure it would be so... I seriously cannot imagine the concept of ‘Palestinian people’...”²⁷

Finally, let’s say that for the Zionists it is false that Israel is the bridgehead of the US in the Middle East. Israel was born essentially supported by the USSR, and not by the US. If Israel has had later to be supported by the US, it’s because, according to the Zionists, the USSR began to flirt with the Arab regimes after 1950.

The strange beginnings of a “national liberation movement”

So far we have seen the story of Israel narrated by Zionism, or, rather, by the Zionist “left” as the right wing, a General Dayan, for example, does not take the trouble to go through “anti-imperialism”. This is the story we get served by the big newspapers which — how strange! — defend a small “socialist” country against a colossal coalition of “feudal kinglets”, “fascist generals”, and “mercenaries of Al Fatah”. Such a unanimous position of the big business media is not something

20 Robert Misrahi, “La coexistence ou la guerre”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 583.

21 Ibid.

22 Shimon Peres, “Near days and far distant days”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, ibid. p. 558. When writing this article, Mr Peres was general secretary of the Rafi Party, founded with Ben Gurion and General Dayan, as a scission of MAPAI.

23 Robert Misrahi, “La coexistence ou la guerre”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 590.

24 Ibid.

25 Yosef Shatil, op. cit., p.316

26 Simha Flapan, op. cit., p. 641.

27 Professor Benjamin Akzin, “Llegó el momento de tratar cuestiones concretas” (It’s Time to Deal with Concrete Issues), in *Antologia Israel...*, op. cit., p. 296.

you see every day! We should have to start revising Marxism if such beauty were true. Fortunately, it is unnecessary to do so, because the Zionist “story” of Palestine only proves a thing: that the capacity for lying is infinite.

Let’s return to the beginnings of the Zionist movement, i.e., the second half of the nineteenth century, when the emigration to Palestine begins and the ideology, politics, and organisation of Zionism are shaped. Since the introduction, the reader will have noticed that it is entirely mythological to talk about “Zionism” before this date, although some delirious say that Zionism had been founded —believe it or not — by Moses in person when he came out of Egypt!²⁸ Of course, this cannot be taken seriously. This is one of many nationalist myths, like Romulus and Remus in Italy, for example. However, we have quoted it, not to laugh, but for a very serious reason: behind legends like these someone wants to hide the real historical framework in which Zionism starts, the colonial expansion of Europe in Asia and Africa.

Lenin says: “We saw above that the development of pre-monopoly capitalism, of capitalism in which free competition was predominant, reached its limit in the 1860s and 1870s. We now see that it is *precisely after that period* that the tremendous ‘boom’ in colonial conquests begins, and that the struggle for the territorial division of the world becomes extraordinarily sharp. It is beyond doubt, therefore, that capitalism’s transition to the stage of monopoly capitalism, to finance capital, [i.e., the imperialist phase, **AN**] is *connected* with the intensification of the struggle for the partitioning of the world.”²⁹

What has this to do with Zionism? How is it possible to relate the colonial expansion of European imperialism to the hopes of the humble craftsman, or the poor student in the ghettos of Eastern Europe who began to dream of having a country where they were not humiliated and persecuted? When we speak of European colonial expansion, the images we make are those of the powerful British fleet “mistress of the seas”, the guns of the Kaiser’s armies, the Foreign Legion of “free France” dedicated to hunting Arabs in North Africa, or the Tsar’s Cossacks expanding in Asia. It is difficult, in principle, to relate this to the small trader in Kiev who lived trembling at the prospect of a pogrom. But there was an objective element, as Rodinson says, one small, seemingly unimportant detail: Palestine was occupied by other people.³⁰

Reading the “bible” of Zionism, *The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl, one can see very well the “little detail” that Rodinson talks about — everything is in there, from how to establish the schedule and work shifts, to how dwellings will be, the colour of the flag, etc. But there is a word not present in Herzl’s book, the word “Arab”.

This European intellectual of the end of the century solved meticulously in his book all the problems he was foreseeing for the foundation of the new State and its functioning. Is it by chance he has forgotten to deal with the problem that Palestine was inhabited (and not by Jews), and that these inhabitants could have something to say on this matter? If Palestine had been, at that time, the centre of a major imperialist power, would Herzl have raised the problem of its inhabitants as the main problem? Or, if the state he was thinking of founding, instead of settling on the banks of the Jordan, was made on the banks of the Thames, wouldn’t Herzl have raised as a central issue the presence of the English?

“The ideology of a society is the ideology of its ruling class.” The European imperialist bourgeoisie had infected the drunkenness of the colonial expansion to all classes of society and even much of the workers’ movement. Except for a minority of the workers’ movement for the rest of Europeans (even for many of the poorest and most oppressed) the map of the world was “blank” outside “civilized” areas of Europe and the US. When Herzl does not even mention the Arabs or

28 “Let’s underline, first of all,” says Dov Bar-Nir, “that there has not been a Zionism, but many. Three were ‘achieved’: The Exodus from Egypt, exodus from Babylon, and the exodus from the Diaspora” (Dov Bar-Nir, “The Jews, Zionism and Progress”, *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 447). Mr Bar-Nir calls himself Marxist (?) and he was one of the founders of Hashomer Hatzair and MAPAM.

29 VI Lenin, “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”, *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol 22, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 255.

30 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 38.

when later Zangwill launches its famous slogan (“a people without a land for a land without people”), they knew, of course, of the existence of the Arabs. It was not a “reporting error”. What they came to say, simply, is that Palestine was a land without... European peoples!³¹ And in this Zionism invented nothing; they were merely copying, or rather, adapting to the ideology and conceptions crowning the colonial expansion of Europe.

Within this general conception, we will see now more clearly the role reserved for the desperate Eastern European Jews. In the European colonialism of the end of the century, even the most miserable masses also had an assigned role. Lenin continues to emphasise this by quoting Rhodes, the creator of the African colony of Rhodesia [Today, Zimbabwe, **TN**] and one of the theorists of imperialism’s colonial stage: “And Cecil Rhodes, we are informed by his intimate friend, the journalist Stead, expressed his imperialist views to him in 1895 in the following terms: ‘I was in the East End of London [a working-class quarter] yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for ‘bread! bread!’ and on my way home I pondered over the scene and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism... My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population...’.”³²

How is this different from Herzl’s proposal? Let us replace the words “social problem” with “Jewish problem”, “tragic civil war” with “go over to subversive parties” and note that Mr Rhodes does not bother to mention the native inhabitants of these “new territories” (which were also “land without people”!). Let us do that and we will have almost completed the conception of Herzl that we saw pages earlier. We say almost completed because Herzl lacked an objective element that we will see later.

And colonial expansion lifted thus its philanthropy loincloth — because, who, except people like Lenin and Trotsky, could object to the hungry of the East End leaving their slums to get a new life on the grasslands of South Africa? And really they gained in the change, a pity that at the expense of the blacks. And who, except “subversives” as Lenin and Trotsky, could oppose the poor Eastern European Jews coming out of the darkness of their ghettos to bask in the sun of Palestine? And really they gained in the change, a pity that at the expense of the Arabs. And this, in any language, is called colonialism.

Zionism in search of a good party

For didactic reasons, we have begun the analysis of the Zionist colonisation of Palestine by its general concepts and ideology. Let’s go down now to its politics.

We said that Herzl lacked an objective element that Rhodes, more fortunate, had — his own imperialism; in the case of Rhodes, British imperialism. That is why the politics of Herzl (and of his successors)) will have this problem as an axis, i.e., to mesh or to marry some imperialist power. This explains why the main activity of Herzl was his approaches to the different European imperialist powers, seeking to insert Zionism as part of their colonial policy. With this purpose, he approaches the Kaiser, its junior partner, the Sultan of the Turkish Empire, and finally Britain. At that time, Palestine was in the hands of Turkey.

31 Lenin pointed out that “at the end of the nineteenth century the British heroes [and also of the whole of Europe, **AN**] of the hour were Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain, who openly advocated imperialism and applied the imperialist policy in the most cynical manner!” (“Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”, op. cit., p. 256.) Let’s Imagine what would be this mentality in the founders of the Zionist movement when (not in the nineteenth century but today) such a “leftist” gentleman who writes in *Les Temps Modernes*, a leftist magazine run by the equally leftist Jean Paul Sartre, says that Palestinians were not a people, but “heterogeneous cores” (see note 12) and that Palestine was “without people”. Or when an “eminence” of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Professor Akzin is “not sure that there are a Palestinian people” (see note 27). Fatah seems to have not yet convinced this “professor”! We hope they do so soon!

32 Lenin, “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”, op. cit., p. 256–257.

“If His Majesty the Sultan”, Herzl writes to him, “were to give us Palestine, we would undertake to regulate Turkey’s finances. For Europe, we would constitute a bulwark against Asia there, we would be the advance posts of civilization against barbarism. As a neutral state, we would remain in permanent touch with all of Europe, which would guarantee our existence.”³³ Commenting on this, Rodinson notes: “It would have been difficult to place Zionism any more clearly within the structure of the European imperialist policies.”³⁴

Herzl also proposes to the Kaiser “a chartered company under German protectorate”.³⁵ What was a chartered company? The classic of Zionism, Nahum Sokolow takes charge of clarifying it: “All the great achievements of British peaceful conquests (sic) encouraged the Zionist Movement with its trusts and funds. Cecil Rhodes [once again Mr Rhodes shows up, AN], with only one million pounds, created Rhodesia, which has an area of 750,000 square miles. The British North Borneo Company had a capital of £800,000 and now dominates over 31,000 square miles. The British East African Company, which administered 200,000 square miles began with the same amount as the Jewish Colonial Trust [founded by Herzl for these purposes], namely, £250,000.”³⁶ That is, Herzl proposed the Kaiser a colony under German protectorate and asked him to pressure the Sultan.

The Kaiser did not give help to Herzl and, as for the Sultan of Turkey, a country imperialist in relation to the Arab peoples that dominated but, in turn, dependent of German imperialism, he replied thus: “The Turkish Empire does not belong me, but rather to the Turkish people. I cannot distribute any piece of it. Let the Jews save their millions! When my Empire is divided up, they may get Palestine for nothing. But what is up divided will only be our cadaver. I will not allow a vivisection.”³⁷

Faced with the refusal of the sultan, the reaction of Herzl is significant — he expects to get the chartered company, i.e. the colony, “after the division of Turkey”.³⁸ Who was the candidate to operate the “vivisection” or sharing of the Turkish corpse? Britain. Herzl moves towards it but it was too soon. The new re-distribution of the colonial world would take place only in the war of 1914, the imperialist First World War. Herzl died in 1904.

The first marriage of Zionism: The Balfour Declaration

“Divine Providence has placed Syria and Egypt in the very gap between England and the most important regions of her colonial and foreign trade, India, China, the Indian Archipelago and Australia... Hence the providential call upon her [i.e., Divine Providence, TN], to exert herself energetically for the amelioration of the condition of both of these Provinces. Egypt has improved greatly by British influence, and it is now for England to set her hand to the renovation of Syria, through the only people whose energies will be extensively and permanently in the work,— the real children of the soil, the sons of Israel.”³⁹ These words, by the mouth of Colonel George Gawler, former governor of South Australia, were spoken in the English Parliament at the early date of 25 January 1853. And they are not unique.

The fact is that from the middle of the century, the empire was expanding at full steam. So their statesmen dealt with any kind of skulduggery to set foot on every continent. One of the most ingenious and frequent was to use, import, or invent conflicts in backward countries in which Britain intervened to “pacify” or “defend the rights” of some party. Thus, for example, when the possibility to build the canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific, not through Panama, but through Nicaragua was

33 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 43.

34 Ibid., p. 44.

35 Alex Bein, Preliminary study of Theodor Herzl’s book *El Estado judío y otros escritos*, op. cit., p. 57.

36 Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism*, Longmans, Green & Co, London, 1919, Vol II, p. XLVII, quoted by Yuri Ivanov, *La burguesía sionista (The Zionist Bourgeoisie)*, Nuevas Masas, Buenos Aires, 1973, p. 49.

37 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p.105.

38 Alex Bein, Preliminary study of Theodor Herzl’s book *El Estado judío y otros escritos*, op. cit., p 65.

39 Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism*, op. cit., Vol I. p. 138.

speculated on, Britain presented itself stating that in the Atlantic coast there is the “Kingdom of the Mosquito Indians”, and that at the request of the king of Mosquitia, it had signed a treaty to “protect” this “nation” from... Nicaraguan imperialism. “Coincidentally” this operetta kingdom was in the mouth of the proposed canal. Such were the methods of His Gracious Majesty.

The idea of carrying out the mandates of “Divine Providence”, that is, to use the Jews as cannon fodder to colonise “holy land”, was always floating in London, long before Zionism existed. Lord Shaftesbury, in a letter to Lord Palmerston, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, suggests that this method is “the cheapest (sic) and safest mode of supplying the wants of those depopulated regions”⁴⁰ again Palestine is the “land without people”, **AN]**

The subjective conditions for the first “marriage” of Zionism were given, then, for quite a while. Herzl’s efforts in London were well received but, as we have said, they had an objective “inconvenience” — Palestine was in the hands of Turkey. Herzl is offered to colonise momentarily Uganda or the Egyptian Sinai. This does not gel. There was also another objective problem — Zionism was not very strong among the Jewish masses. Those who wanted to emigrate were doing it massively to the US, little few to Palestine. And a good portion of those remaining was influenced by the damned “subversive parties” that kept Herzl awake and were therefore anti-Zionist. This was to change later, with the brutal rise of anti-Semitism in Europe.

The courtship between British imperialism and Zionism would end in marriage in 1917. The First World War had sounded the hour of the “distribution of Turkey” as foreseen by Herzl. To speed that “vivisection” or “autopsy” of the Turkish Empire, Great Britain uses the Arab national movement that had begun to awake some years before. It gives them vague promises of independence to get them to fight against the Sultan and made agreements with some Arab leaders, like Hussein, Sharif of Mecca, and his son Faisal.

Britain, though not averse to use Arab blood to defeat the Turkish Empire, had no intention of letting them conquer their national independence. So, while making those promises, it signed a secret agreement of distribution of the area with France (the Sykes-Picot Agreement) and issued the “Balfour Declaration” (2 November 1917), very justly qualified as the “wedding ring” between Zionism and British imperialism. It read:

“Dear Lord Rothschild,

“I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”⁴¹

With the “Balfour Declaration” began the second stage of Zionism, stage culminating in the creation of the State of Israel. It fulfilled the dream of Herzl — finally Zionism was mated to the colonial policy of a great power!

The road to the creation of the State of Israel thus opened with the following features:

- Because of a unilateral declaration of a major imperialist power.
- This Declaration imposed a fate to a region of Asia that never had belonged to, nor belonged to England. Britain gave generously to Lord Rothschild the territory of a foreign nation.

40 Ibid., Vol II, p. 230. Lord Shaftesbury is the real father of Zangwill’s slogan. In 1854, Shaftesbury launches the slogan “country without a nation, nation without a country” (cf. Fawwaz Traboulsi, “The Palestinian Problem” in the compilation “The Palestinian revolution and the Arab-Israeli conflict”, *Cuaderno de Pasado y Presente* No. 14, Cordoba, 1970, p. 60. [**Translator’s note:** For the English edition, all quotes from *The Palestinian Problem* come from a pdf document in English supplied by its author.]

41 Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/text-of-the-balfour-declaration.

- It did not take any account of the wishes or the will of the Palestinian people, which was 93 per cent Arabic in 1917.
- This 93 per cent of Arabs were reduced to the status of “non-Jews” in a “Jewish national home”, that is, of foreign or almost foreign in their own land! To save face, they talked about their “civil and religious rights” while simultaneously they were denied the number one right of every colonised and oppressed people: the right of self-determination, the right to determine for itself and democratically their country’s destiny, without interference from anyone, much less a major imperialist power.

If there is any doubt left that what Zionism did was simply to graft itself in the overall policy of British imperialism, we give the floor to Dr Weizmann, head of the Zionist Organisation and agent of the statement: “in submitting our resolution”, he addresses the British Cabinet, “we entrusted *our national and Zionist destiny to the Foreign Office and the Imperial War Cabinet*, in the hope that the problem will be considered in the light of imperial interests.”⁴² It is impossible to speak more clearly.

The Balfour Declaration and the marriage with Zionism, besides giving the British a valuable aid to establish a future protectorate over Palestine and an essential weapon, as we shall see, to crush the Arab national movement, had other more general motivations — the war policy of British imperialism and the struggle against the Russian Revolution.⁴³

Palestine under occupation and the British Mandate (1918-1948)

After the First World War, the Allies (Britain, France, Italy, the USA, etc.) showed how millimetrically accurate was Lenin’s opinion on them: it was an imperialist bandit gang that fought against another imperialist bandit gang (Germany, Austria, etc.) for the distribution of colonies and “spheres of influence” of their monopolies. After the war, all the promises of “peace with justice” or “peace without annexations” were forgotten and the victors divided the spoils, but not without the quarrels typical of any gang of gangsters. And what a booty! “The billion colonial slaves” that Lenin talked about.

The winning gang had decided to become institutionalised under the form of the “League of Nations”, a worthy predecessor of the current United Nations. It was to give a “legal” veneer to the

42 Quoted by Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 47. Zionist leader Herbert Samuel would comment in his memoirs: “It will be in this way we will build in the vicinity of Egypt and the Suez Canal a Jewish state in British obedience.” Dossier do conflicto israelo-arabe, op. cit., p. 247. Is it necessary to add anything else?

43 Rodinson makes the following analysis, after recalling that Britain, at that time, was embarked in a deadly war with the Central Powers (Germany, Austria, and Turkey). “The major motives for the declaration lie in the desired propagandistic impact on the Jews of the Central Empires and Russia, and the hope of developing a claim in the future liquidation of the Ottoman Empire. The Jews of Germany (where the headquarters of the Zionist Organization had been located until 1914) and of Austria-Hungary had been won to the war effort largely because it involved fighting against Czarist Russia, persecutor of the Jews. In conquered Russian territory, the Germans had given the appearance of being protectors of the oppressed Jews and their liberators from the ‘Muscovite yoke’. [Here Rodinson quotes proclamations of the German Chiefs of Staff.] The Russian Revolution reinforced defeatist tendencies in Russia. An important role in the revolutionary movement was attributed to the Russian Jews. It was crucial to give them reasons to support the Allied cause. It is by no means coincidental that the Balfour Declaration preceded by five days the fateful date of November 7 (October 25 on the Julian calendar) when the Bolsheviks took power. One of the aims of the Declaration was to support Kerensky. Thought was also given to the weight of the Jews in the United States, a country that had just joined forces with the Allies. A maximum effort on its part was needed at a time when it was more inclined toward pacifism. The German and Austrian Zionists, who were carrying on negotiations to obtain a kind of ‘Balfour Declaration’ from the Turkish government had to be brought along.” With regard to Palestine, Rodinson points out the links of this statement with the agreements with the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein, and with France (Sykes-Picot): “It was not a bad prospect for England to have at its disposal in the Near East a population tied to it both by recognition and need. (...) To make a special question of Palestine and to grant Great Britain a particular responsibility for it, was to provide itself a sound basis for making demands during the partition that would follow the war.” (Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 47 and 48). Rodinson makes this analysis based primarily on documents of the British War Cabinet, issued since. It is hardly necessary to clarify there is no trace of the so-called “gratitude” for the inventions of Dr Weizmann. This is another historical myth of Zionism.

parcelling out. And, as previously agreed, Britain received Palestine under “mandate of the League of Nations” because by then it was ugly to say they received it as a colony. The promises made to the Arabs were betrayed.

But the Arabs were not ready for ridicule. The War of 1914 not only had generated a group of imperialist victors but also, for the first time in history a workers’ state emerged, the Soviet Union, which repudiated colonial conquests and which was calling for those “billion slaves” to expel the settlers.

In addition, throughout the colonial or semi-colonial world, from Mexico to China and India, from Turkey to black Africa, a powerful wave of anti-imperialist struggles began. The “billion colonial slaves” began their march. And the Arab world was by no means an exception.

Within this Arab world, the Middle East will be the area which will bring the most important struggles against the British and French imperialisms that dominated there. Between the two world wars, there were numerous mass insurrections. Palestine was the focus of this anti-imperialist struggle, especially during the massive uprising of 1936–1939, which, to be suppressed, demanded half the strength of the whole British Empire’s army; army which, at that time, was one of the most powerful in the world.⁴⁴ This revolt began with a general strike that lasted six months.⁴⁵ It must be the longest general strike in the history of class struggle.

Thousands of Palestinians were killed, arrested and sentenced to the gallows or long prison terms. In 1939, the heroic Palestinian people were defeated after that terrible bloodbath. This is the main key of the relative ease with which in 1947-1948 the State of Israel could be settled.⁴⁶

The Palestinian defeat is explained mainly by three factors:

- An extremely unfavourable balance of power with imperialism. This has to do with the world situation — the 1930s is the stage of the most serious defeats not only for the European workers’ movement but also for the masses of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. It’s the time of the triumph of Nazism in Germany, fascism in Spain, the consolidation of Stalinism in the USSR; it’s the time of the “Infamous Decade” in Argentina, of the Abyssinian War, the annexation of Manchuria by Japan, the defeat of the guerrilla forces in China that forced Mao Tse Tung to take the “long march”, etc. Meanwhile, Britain was still the strongest colonial empire in the world, it was the imperialism that had best recovered from the crisis of 1929-1930, and also it did not have big problems in its “internal front” to prevent them from moving towards the repression of the colonial masses.

- The leadership of the Arab national movement. Fawwaz Traboulsi, the Arab writer, says: “The slim choice that remained was between the pro-British Nashashibi clan and the Husseinis led by the notorious Mufti — once a British puppet who turned towards the Axis powers in the mid-’thirties. This is the leadership that sold out the 1936 uprising when, under pressure from the rulers of Iraq, Transjordan and Saudi Arabia, it called off the General Strike to negotiate with Britain. The large class of displaced landless peasants made its presence felt by the continuation of a violent guerilla war which was defeated at the outbreak of the Second World War. After that, the Palestinian Arabs — defeated, demoralized and betrayed by their leadership — awaited the outcome of the conflict between the Zionist settlers and the British.”⁴⁷

The flaws of leadership suffered by the Palestinian national movement, not only had to do with the classic hesitation (or directly betrayals) of “feudal”,⁴⁸ bourgeois or petty bourgeois chiefs of

44 Jon Rothschild, “How the Arabs Were driven out of Palestine,” *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 11, No. 38, New York, 1973, p. 1208.

45 Nathan Weinstock, *The truth about Israel and Zionism*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1970, p. 5.

46 Professor Y Baner of Jerusalem, in “The Arab Revolt of 1936”, *New Outlook*, Jul-Aug-Sep. 1966 concludes: “... the conditions for the victory of 1948 were created during the Arab Revolt” (quoted by Nathan Weinstock, *ibid*, p. 5).

47 Fawwaz Traboulsi, *The Palestinian Problem*, *op. cit.* p. 77.

48 We place “feudal” in quotes because the existence of feudalism in the classical European sense is arguable in the Muslim world. When speaking of “feudal” Arabs, we refer to the old ruling class, with roots anterior to the penetration of modern capitalism, owner of vast tracts of land, but also with interests in trade and usury (which existed despite the prohibition by the Koran). The forms of land ownership and extraction of the surplus product from farmers in

the national movements of any colonial or semi-colonial country. In Palestine, there was a peculiar aggravating element which, according to Fawwaz Traboulsi and other authors, was instrumental: the process of disintegration and marginalization of Arab society collectively, a process in which Zionism, as we shall see, would be the cause. Missing, or extremely weak, was the radicalised bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie which was to become in other Arab countries the support of Nasserism, Ba'athism, and other nationalist movements that preceded them. The Palestinian bourgeoisie was a shadow of bourgeoisie compared with that of other regions of the Arab world.

A similar phenomenon of marginalization would also take place with the nascent proletariat and the peasantry. But here the leadership problem was suffering a new aggravating circumstance: the collapse of the Communist International, the only faction with global strength to penetrate and dispute leadership. Regrettably, the Communist International, which began (in the time of Lenin and Trotsky) denouncing Zionism as a world example of colonialism⁴⁹ would end up, with Stalin, supporting Zionism. This course of degradation goes through the support and alliance with “democratic” imperialism in the 1930s, just as the Palestinian masses do their utmost to finish with the “democratic” imperialism which oppressed them. Thus, the Palestinian Communist Party is isolated from the Arab masses, and it goes from setback to setback and from crisis to crisis until, in 1948, ends up supporting the partition of the country and the creation of the State of Israel.

• The third and final factor, but not the least important, was the action of Zionism. No need to clarify that in all the struggles between the Palestinian masses and British imperialism, Zionism always aligned with imperialism. But its action was not merely “political”, it was one of disintegrating and alienating the whole society and the whole people, that 93 per cent of Palestinian Arabs that existed in 1917, so that in 1949 (one year after creating the State) they were reduced to 16 per cent⁵⁰ in Israel. And the rest, living in squalor in refugee camps outside their country and their land. Let's see how this process unfolded.

The economic liquidation of the Arab population

“When we occupy the land (...) we must expropriate gently the private property on the estates assigned to us. We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring

Islam were very varied and complex depending on the place and time in history. There is today a whole debate among Marxists over how to characterize the mode (or modes) of production and the socioeconomic structure of Islam before the penetration of modern capitalism with centre in Europe. If the characterization of feudal (in the classical sense) seems to be inadequate, there are also objections to the label of “Asiatic mode of production”, at least according to the characteristics that Marx studied for the case of India. On this discussion, the authors of this article have not elements to declare themselves. For additional information see Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*, University of Texas Press, 1966, particularly at p. 47 ff. But, regardless of this, there is a political problem: the obsession of rushing to put the stamp of “feudal” to the Arab world is about two ideologies, colonialism and Stalinism. To the colonialist mentality, to speak of “feudal” is the same as saying “the dark night of history to which we must bring the light of civilization” (and the oil companies). Zionism puts the “Marxist” t-shirt to this old colonialist “tagline” when it says it represents “progressive” capitalism (or socialism) in the struggle against “reactionary” feudalism. Thus they try to justify the oppression of one backward people by another advanced. As for Stalinism, the situation is different: in its struggle against Trotskyism and to justify its deals with all bourgeoisies (“democratic” and the others), Stalinism denied the possibility of combinations or jumps of historical stages. And thus, necessarily, all people had to go, or have gone, through the stages of primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism. History ignored Stalin's decrees but, instead, the poor Soviet historians were forced to find “feudalism” and “slavery” in the past or in the present of all people; failure to do so meant to be considered “Trotskyist” and treated as such. In his bureaucratic delirium, Stalin went so far as to outlaw Marx's writings on the “Asiatic mode of production” since they destroyed his schemes. We make this digression, given that in 1947–1948 both ideologies (the colonial-Zionist and Stalinist) will merge to fabricate “scientific” arguments that justify the creation of Israel.

49 “A glaring example of the deception practised on the working classes of an oppressed nation by the combined efforts of Entente imperialism and the bourgeoisie of that same nation is offered by the Zionists' Palestine venture (and by Zionism as a whole, which, under the pretence of creating a Jewish State in Palestine in fact surrenders the Arab working people of Palestine, where the Jewish workers form only a small minority, to exploitation by England) (“Thesis on the National and Colonial Question adopted by the Second Comintern Congress”, 28 July 1920, *The Communist International 1919–1943 Documents Selected and Edited by Jane Degras*, Vol I 1919–1922, p. 144).

50 Estimated share based on statistics in *Antología Israel...*, p. 344.

employment for it in the transit countries while denying it any employment in our own country. (...) Both the process of expropriation and the removal (!!!) of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.”⁵¹ This note of Theodor Herzl in his diary not only proves he really did not ignore the existence of natives in the place where he wanted to create the Zionist state; it constitutes in itself a whole program. If we dress this program with a few “socialist” phrases such as refusing to employ Arabs “not to exploit them”, that taking the land from the Arabs is to “end feudalism”, etc., we will have the program implemented by Zionism in Palestine and which allowed the creation of the State of Israel. With a small difference: that the “expropriation ... [and] spiriting of the penniless” could not be accomplished “discreetly and circumspectly” but by brute force since these penniless had the bad occurrence to oppose them.

Jon Rothschild tells us: “The gradual strengthening of this displacing [of Arabs] colonialism went on under three slogans, which were the pillars of the Zionist movement in Palestine from the beginning of the colonisation through the establishment of the Israeli state and beyond.

“The slogans were: *kibush hakarka* (conquest of the land), *kibush haavoda* (conquest of labor), and *t’ozteret haaretz* (produce of the land).

“Behind the fine-sounding words lay a rather more grim reality. Conquest of the land meant that as much land as possible had to be acquired (legally or otherwise) from its Arab owners and that no land owned by Jews could be sold or leased or otherwise returned to Arabs. Conquest of labor meant that Jewish-owned factories and farms should exclusively employ Jewish labor insofar as possible. Arab labor was boycotted. In fact, the Histadrut, which today masquerades as a ‘trade union’ in Israel, was formed for the purpose of creating a Jewish working class by imposing a boycott of Arab labor. (...)

“Produce of the land meant in practice the boycott of Arab production by Jewish settlers, who were supposed to buy produce only from Jewish-run farms and stores wherever possible.”⁵²

The effect of this policy on the Palestinian people was catastrophic. The Zionists were a minority but a minority in constant growth. Moreover, although minority they had an economic power, which is what counts decisively, much higher than that of the Arabs. And this, without taking into account their close ties with imperialism, of which we will discuss later.

Naturally, the first victims of this strange “socialist” policy of Zionism were the Arab workers and peasants, reduced to the status of unemployed workers and landless peasants, sunk in misery and despair.

The other side of the “socialist” kibbutz

The situation of the Palestinian peasant, of the *fellah*, already was bad. Zionism took charge of taking it to the extreme.

“According to the **Report of a Committee on the Economic Conditions of Agriculturists in Palestine** commonly called the **Johnson-Crosbie Report**, only 23.9 per cent of all produce of the *fellah* remains in his hands, while 48.8 goes in taxes to the government, rent to the landowner,⁵³ and interest to the usurer. In order to understand how low the standard of living of the Arab cultivator is as a result of the backwardness of his economy, his exploitation by different parasites (who constitute the main hindrances to the development of the economy) I have made the comparison between the diet of a *fellah* and that which the government is supposed to give to convicts (though naturally a large part of this goes into the pockets of the prison officials). I assume

51 *The complete diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Vol I, Thomas Yoseloff Publisher, 1960, p. 88, quoted by Fawwaz Traboulsi, op. cit., p. 131.

52 Jon Rothschild, ob. cit., p. 1207.

53 This same author notes that half of the land of Palestine was in the hands of 250 families who were, at the same time, strong usurers.

that a *fellah* and his wife are in prison, and that four of his children are in a ‘Boys Reformatory School’:

	Family in prison	<i>Fellaheen</i>
Wheat and millet	£15.1	£10
Olives and olive oil	£3.8	£3
Beans, lentils and dairy produce	£12.9	£4
Rice, sugar and other products bought by the <i>fellah</i> outside his plot	£4.7	£1
Meat	£6.7	Almost nothing
Total	£43.2	£18

(As prices in Egypt are much lower than in Palestine, the figures cannot be used as a basis for comparison between Egypt and Palestine.)

Cliff concludes: “Although this calculation is by no means precise, it nevertheless gives some indication of the terrible conditions endured by the masses of the *fellaheens* in Palestine.”⁵⁴

And, as if this were not enough, along came Zionism. The latter bought land from the landowner/ usurer and entire villages were thrown into the streets. Of course, the Arab was too “barbaric” and “ignorant” to take comfort thinking the land the grandparents of his grandparents had worked had now an advanced “socialist” kibbutz with settlers from Europe installed. Not being able to appreciate so enormous “progress”, they lost their temper and caused rebellions like those of 1936-1939. And here troops of Her Gracious British Majesty and Haganah (unofficial army of Zionism) would intervene to make him see reason. Thus was Zionism “conquering the land.”

No need to clarify that such a process is the opposite of agrarian reform or revolution. Zionists opposed tooth and nail to any initiative in this regard, even the timid projects that sometimes the British administration took. A genuine agrarian reform, that is, to give the land to the *fellah* and to rid him of parasite landlords and usurers would have meant the end of Zionism.

The pretension of the Zionist settlers to be related to Emiliano Zapata, Hugo Blanco, or any other agrarian revolutionary would be laughable if it did not give indignation.

The other side of the “socialist” Histadrut

This Arab evicted from the land was heading to the city. There the situation was not very different in shops and factories. The Arabs were expelled or denied work in Zionist owned or foreign capital companies (dealerships), which were usually run by Zionist managers. To understand what this means, consider the following statistics according to the “according to the 1939 census of industry”.⁵⁵

	Value of capital investment	Horsepower of engines
Arab and other non-Jewish	6.5%	2.2
Jewish	40.3%	22.0
Concessions	53.2%	74.9

54 Tony Cliff, “Middle East at the Crossroads”, *Fourth International*, Vol. 6, No. 12, December 1945. Cliff lived in Palestine.

55 Ibid.

Where would an Arab find work then? We already saw the “other side” of the “socialist” kibbutz. Now we know the other side of the “socialist” Histadrut because this alleged “union” was not created for the struggle of all workers (whatever their nationality, language, or supposed “race”) against the bosses but for the “conquest of labour”, to expel the Arab workers from their jobs. The Ku Klux Klan and the “white unions” do the same in the US without staining the word “socialist”; they also try to prevent poor blacks from being exploited by white capitalists, especially by expelling them from skilled employment. If what Zionists did, and do, is not racism, what should be called racism?

Needless to say, this monstrosity to pit workers against each other using their “racial” differences has nothing to do with socialism. Needless to say, this disgusting racism is totally and absolutely incompatible with Marxism. No one has the right to call oneself Socialist, and even less Marxist, if one does not defend a minimal internationalist principle, that is, if one is not for the union of all workers, irrespective of their nation, “race”, or language.

“Workers of the world unite!” With this slogan Marxist socialism was born and lives. “Jewish worker fight against the Arab worker, join the Zionist or English boss to throw him out of the job, do not admit him in your union, the Histadrut!” Those were the slogans of Zionist “socialism”. Marxism and Zionism are completely incompatible.

When the “socialist” Histadrut could not prevent that somewhere Arabs and Jews work together, they had brotherly relations and fought together against the bosses, then other Zionist organisations like the Irgun and the Stern Gang intervened to “convince” them.

A famous case was the Haifa oil refinery, which happened on 31 December 1947, where there had been joint struggles of Arab and Jewish workers against the imperialist bosses. Of course, this did not please the Zionists or the Arab reactionaries, even less the company and the British government. On that date, an Irgun commando threw bombs and strafed a queue of Arab workers at the door for work. Six were killed and dozens wounded. Taking advantage of this, agent provocateurs among Arabs incited Palestinian workers to attack their fellow Jews. This unleashed then a fratricidal struggle within the refinery with hundreds of dead and wounded.⁵⁶

The working class and student activists who read us know of the priceless value of class solidarity, either by their struggle in their factory or by the strikes and disputes they have supported from the outside. We ask them to stop here for a moment and ponder on this example of Zionist “socialism”.

The other side of the “produce of the land”

The third slogan, (*t’ozteret haaretz*) “produce of the land”, closed the circuit. Zionism imposed by force a boycott of all Arab produce. Alas for the *fellah* who dared to take his vegetable cart to a neighbourhood dominated by the Zionists! Pity the Jewish housewife who some band of thugs of Histadrut discovered buying half a dozen eggs from an Arab!⁵⁷

56 Cf Jon Rothschild, *ibid*, p. 1209.

57 To demonstrate these three slogans reflected the daily practice of the Zionist movement in Palestine, it is enough to quote David Hacoheh, leader of Golda Meir’s party, who was a member of the Israeli parliament for many years and who fulfilled the function of Chairman of its Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. In a letter published in the newspaper *Haaretz* on 15 November, 1969, he addressed the secretariat of the MAPAI party as follows: “I remember being one of the first of our comrades to go to London after the First World War ... There I became a socialist ... When I joined the socialist students — English, Irish, Jewish, Chinese, Indian, African — we found that we were all under English domination or rule. And even here, in these intimate surroundings, I had to fight my friends on the issue of Jewish socialism, to defend the fact that I would not accept Arabs in my trade union, the Histadrut; to defend preaching to housewives that they not buy at Arab stores; to defend the fact that we stood guard at orchards to prevent Arab workers from getting jobs there. ... To pour kerosene on Arab tomatoes; to attack Jewish housewives in the markets and smash the Arab eggs they had bought; to praise to the skies the *Kereen Kayemet* [Jewish Fund] that sent Hanlon to Beirut to buy land from absentee *effendi* [landlords] and to throw the *fellahin* [peasants] off the land — to buy dozens of *dunams* from an Arab is permitted, but to sell, God forbid, one Jewish *dunam* to an Arab is prohibited; to take Rothschild, the incarnation of capitalism, as a socialist and to name him the “benefactor” — to do all that was not easy. And despite the fact that we did it — maybe we had no choice — I wasn’t happy about it.” (Taken

Although the Zionists were a minority (when the State of Israel was proclaimed they made up only one third) their purchasing power was greater. These measures, linked as we will discuss later to the action of British imperialism, were an en bloc attack on Palestinian society as a whole because the ultimate goal was to expel them from their country. Since Zionists and imperialism handled the key economic levers, since imperialism joined to Zionism overwhelmingly outnumbered the Arabs in all stages of the economic cycle, from production to consumption, and in almost all branches of production, this triple boycott of the Arabs (in the field, at work, and in production and trade) tended to convert all Palestinians in a marginalized mass and uprooted from all economic activity. The final step would be to push them out of Palestine.

This *en bloc* attack and this “molecular” disintegration” of Palestinian society hindered, as we anticipated, the emergence of an Arab leadership that would match the situation. Although those who suffered most were the workers of the city and the countryside, after the appearance of this colonial aggression directed against the whole of the Palestinians it became very difficult a differentiation of classes that would displace the old traditional families of the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement. It became difficult, if not impossible, for new leadership to emerge, let alone a revolutionary Marxist leadership, but at least a radicalised petty bourgeois leadership as is the present leadership of the Palestinian resistance. And outside Palestine matters were not better. As “spokespersons” of the Arab world would appear characters of the ilk of King Farouk of Egypt, or King Abdullah of Jordan, puppets of British imperialism, who would consummate the betrayal of the Palestinian people.

The other side of Zionism as a “national liberation movement”

“We cannot be oblivious to the many interests which Britain has in the Mediterranean. Fortunately for us, British world interests are essentially the preservation of peace, and therefore in the strengthening of the British Empire, it is not we alone who see an important guarantee for the strengthening of international peace. England will have bases of defense on sea and on land in the Jewish State and in the British corridor. For many years the Jewish State will stand in need of British military protection and protection entails a measure of dependence.”⁵⁸

These words of Ben Gurion, a patriarch of the Zionist state, expressed in his report to the 19th Zionist Congress in 1935, reflected quite well the “marriage” between Zionism and British imperialism during the years of its “mandate” in Palestine. However, this passionate declaration of love included the future grounds for divorce and remarriage of Zionism, this time with US imperialism. Let’s see what happened.

Zionism is hooked to the English colonisation of Palestine since the Balfour Declaration. But, let us be clear, Zionism is engaged as a junior partner: Tony Cliff notes: “Here imperialism calls to mind a weapon which it has used for more than twenty years to subjugate the population of one of the Arab countries and which it now desires for much larger-scale purposes. Zionism occupies a special place in imperialist fortifications. It plays a double role: first directly as an important pillar of imperialism, giving it active support and opposing the liberation struggle of the Arab nation, and second as a passive servant behind which imperialism can hide and towards which it can direct the ire of the Arab masses.”⁵⁹

Let’s see some examples of how this double role was combined. “An English Electric Company which builds an enterprise in Palestine nominates a Jew as general manager. The result is that while in every colony a struggle having an anti-imperialist character is being conducted — with strikes, demonstrations and boycotts — against the foreign concessionary companies, in Palestine the boycott

from *Haaretz*, Israeli daily, 15 November 1969, and quoted by Arie Bober, *The Other Israel. The Radical Case Against Zionism*, Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, New York, 1972).

58 Quoted by Peter Buch, “Burning Issues of the Mid-East Crisis”, *International Socialist Review*, Vol.30 No.2, March-April 1969, pp.1-30.

59 Tony Cliff, “Middle East at the Crossroads”, op. cit.

declared by the Arabs against the Palestine Electric Company wears another guise — anti-Jewish demonstrations. (...) Another example will make this even clearer. While in Syria and Lebanon there were demonstrations, even bloody ones, which were crowned with victory, against the establishment of the Steel Bros. truck company there, in Palestine the ‘Socialist’ Zionists, the General Federation of Jewish Labour (Histadrut) put themselves, for some petty recompense, at the service of Steel Bros. and assured the company’s firmly planting itself in the country. (...) If the British army during the years 1936–39 killed thousands of Arab partisans (in the same way as Italians killed Abyssinians, or the Japanese, Dutch and British the Javanese today) it did not do so in order to maintain its position — God forbid! — but to protect the Jews!” In this way “Zionism frees imperialism from the responsibility for any act of spoliation and oppression.”⁶⁰

In this policy played a large role the Haganah, the “unofficial” army that Zionism formed in Palestine during the British mandate and with which they expelled in 1948 most of its Arab inhabitants. Within the mythology of Zionism as “national liberation movement”, the Haganah is often compared with Castro’s guerrillas, with the Vietcong, etc. The Haganah would have developed a heroic struggle against the British occupation army.

It is a shame that the “left” apologists of Zionism are belied by the same Zionists. Take, for example, the book *Antología Israel*, published in Buenos Aires by AMIA (Argentine Israelite Mutual Association) — which practically means to say “official Zionist version” — and see what this “National Liberation Army” was and what was doing.

There Mr Moshe Pearlman begins his story of the Haganah with the following words: “It is clear that the British military authorities always acknowledged the existence of the Haganah. They knew their purpose (sic). They had extensive experience in relation to their use as a defensive force in internal Palestinian affairs. (...) During this period, the British military authorities worked openly with the Haganah, never sparing praise for jobs well done.”⁶¹ Strange “national liberation army” this one is!

But what were these “internal Palestinian affairs” and these “jobs well done” to deserve such praise? Mr Pearlman says later: “One might have expected the (British) administration to have the courage to legalise Haganah after its record during the 1936–39 years of the Arab disturbances.”⁶² Is it clear now, Gentlemen Liars of the pro-Zionist “left”, what the Haganah was and what it was for?

In 1939, the British Army and its junior partner, Haganah, had a crushing victory over the Palestinian guerrillas. But, by that date, the friction starts between Zionism and the Britons. Earlier a Zionist minority had split, the “revisionist” wing led by Jabotinsky,⁶³ who would then establish the terrorist organisations Irgun and Stern Gang which attacked Arabs and the British. The fight that would end up in divorce revolved around the restrictions which in its 1939 White Paper the British government imposes on the purchase of land and Zionist emigration to Palestine.⁶⁴

60 Ibid.

61 Moshe Pearlman, “Historia de la Haganá” (History of Haganah), reproduced in *Antología Israel*, op. cit., p. 63. [English version quoted from Moshe Pearlman, *The Israeli Army*, Philosophical Library, 1950, p. 55. TN]

62 Ibid, p. 84 [p. 56].

63 In order to characterize the “revisionist” current of Jabotinsky, Rodinson recalls the testimony of Leon Dennens in his book *Where the Ghetto Ends* (New York, A.H. King, 1934, p. 233): “... fashionable Jewish-Polish parading in brown uniforms and throwing rocks through the office windows of left-wing newspapers: ‘Germany for Hitler! — Italy for Mussolini! — Palestine for us! Long Live Jabotinsky!’” (Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 108). Of these elements. Irgun and Stern Gang organisations will emerge.

64 At that time a large number of European Jews, victims of Nazi persecution, wished naturally to leave Europe. But Zionism did not support in any way to go to another country other than Palestine. Thus, when the “democratic” England and the more or less “democratic” US closed the doors of their metropolitan territories to refugees, Zionism refused to make the slightest protest. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the US organised, for example, major campaigns to urge Roosevelt to avail himself of the refugees. Zionism refused absolutely to do anything. Why? As explained by Rabbi Wise, head of Zionism in the U.S at the time, the problem of the State was being negotiated with Roosevelt, and therefore they tried to disturb it as little as possible. (Cf Peter Seidman, *Socialists and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism: An Answer to the B’Nai B’Rith Anti-Defamation League*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 19 ff.). But the underlying reason was explained at the time by Ben Gurion: the issue was to create the State and not to save Jews in Europe: “Britain is trying to separate the issue of the refugees from that of Palestine... If Jews have to choose

Why does British imperialism do that?

“Zionism wants to build a strong Jewish capitalist state. [British] imperialism is indeed interested in the existence of a capitalist Jewish society enveloped by the hatred of colonial masses, but not in order that Zionism should become too strong a factor. So far as this is concerned, it is ready to prove its “fairness” towards the Arabs, and its readiness to give in to their just demands at the expense of Zionism. In order to gain the service of the Zionists as direct supporters in any anti-imperialist insurrection, and what is even more important, as a buffer, imperialism does not necessarily have to let Zionism flourish. A Zionist population of six hundred thousand can satisfactorily enough fulfil such a task.”⁶⁵

More importantly, in 1939 the British Empire was facing a new world war, it should get a new global policy for the whole of the Arab and colonial world it dominated to keep “peace” while fending with German imperialism. For that, England had the collaboration of Abdullah and other Arab puppets and with the advantage of having crushed the most serious threat: the Palestinian uprising.

They had to give some concessions to make the British butchers of Palestine appear as “protectors of the Arab peoples”. And the lesser partner, Zionism, paid the costs of the operation.

But the “fight” that would ensue between Zionism and the British administration was anything but an anti-imperialist struggle.⁶⁶ It was the classic contradiction between global and general interests of the empire and the particular interests of a sector of settlers. It is the same contradiction that existed between the French settlers in Algeria and the government of De Gaulle or between white settlers of Rhodesia and South Africa on the one hand, and British imperialism on the other; contradiction that led to the “independence” of these British colonies. But will there be some chutzpah who dares to claim they were “anti-imperialist struggles”?

The “new Moses” shows up

“I feel that the president [of the USA] will be the new Moses who will lead the children of Israel out of the desert.”⁶⁷ These “prophetic” statements of a US congressman out of a meeting with the US President were recorded with satisfaction by the *Jerusalem Post* of 6 March 1944. “Divine Providence”, this time embodied in the US, is getting ready to unleash a new “miracle”, which abound in the story of Zionism. And, as always, at the Arabs expense.

between the refugees, saving Jews from concentration camps, (...) mercy [for the refugees, AN] will have the upper hand and the whole energy of the people will be channelled to save Jews from various countries. Zionism will be stuck off the agenda not only in world public opinion, in Britain and the USA, but elsewhere in Jewish public opinion. If we allow a separation between the refugee problem and the Palestinian problem, we are risking the existence of Zionism.” (Ben Gurion, letter of 17 December 1938 to Zionist Executive, quoted. by Peter Seidman, *ibid* p. 20). For Ben Gurion it was preferable to risk the lives of millions of Jews who sought refuge and not the existence of Zionism in Palestine. Zionism had “no mercy”. What mattered was getting settlers and not to “channel the energy of the people to save Jews from various countries”.

To encourage settlement, we have seen that Zionism had no qualms in admitting without protest the closure of immigration in the USA and England. Nor had it trouble to emulate the Herzl-Plehve agreement, signing pacts with Hitler, as the “*Haavara* (‘transfer’) Agreement” between Hitlerist Reich and the Jewish Agency. (Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 103).

65 Tony Cliff, “Middle East at the Crossroads”, op. cit.

66 Tony Cliff points out: “Even at this hour they did everything to prove that they were not the enemies of imperialism but on the contrary its allies. Thus, for instance, in the arms trial that took place on November 28, 1944, Epstein, a member of Hashomer Hatzair, the ‘Revolutionary Socialist’ Zionist party, said to the judges:

“You who come from England will surely know how to appreciate the difficulties and dangers involved in development and colonisation undertakings in backward countries. No colonising undertakings in the history of mankind have taken place without being met by the hatred of the natives. Years, and sometimes generations pass till these men (the natives – T.C.) become capable of appreciating and understanding the blessing inherent in the undertaking also for their future. But the British people did not recoil from developing these backward countries (imperialist conquest – i.e. “development” – T.C.) knowing that by doing so you were fulfilling an historical and humanitarian mission. The best of your sons you sacrificed on the altar of progress” (Tony Cliff, “Middle East at the Crossroads”, op. cit.)

67 Quoted by Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p.109.

What had happened? Listen again to Ben Gurion: “Our greatest concern [at the start of the Second World War] was the fate of Palestine after the war (...) It already appeared evident that the British would not keep their Mandate. While there was every reason for believing that Hitler would be defeated, it seemed equally obvious that Britain, even though victorious, would be considerably weakened by the war. (...) For my part, I had no doubt that the centre of gravity of our political efforts had shifted from Great Britain to America, who was making sure of being the world’s leading power...”⁶⁸

We have already seen how, in 1917, Zionism “entrusted his fate” to the Foreign Office and the British Imperial War Cabinet. In 1939, before the new imperialist carve up of the world, Zionism changed the Foreign Office by the US State Department. The alleged “anti-imperialist” struggle of Zionism was, simply, the change from one partner to the other.

Linked with its new “centre of gravity”, the US, Zionism marched steadily towards the creation of the State. Already during the mandate, the British had made a proposal to partition Palestine that Ben Gurion accepted immediately (Proposal of the Peel Commission of 1937). Although they were given only a quarter of Palestine, Ben Gurion was willing to take it as a basis for future expansion. At this time, Ben Gurion said: “This Jewish State now being proposed to us is not the Zionist aim (...). But this will be a decisive stage in bringing about the great Zionist aims. In the shortest possible time, it will build up the real Jewish strength that will carry us to our historic objective.”⁶⁹

Finished the Second World War, the Palestinian question began to be addressed by the United Nations. The farce of the League of Nations repeated itself. Again without any consultation of the Palestinian people, again in a violation of the grossest way of their rights to self-determination and to dispose of their country and of themselves, the great powers were preparing to give legal “status” to the colonial situation created in the course of British domination. Thus, on 29 November 1947, they voted the partition of Palestine into two states — one Zionist and the other Arab.

Summing up the significance of this vote and explaining the righteous anger that rose on the masses of the entire Arab world, Rodinson says: “For the Arab masses, acceptance of the UN decisions would have meant unconditional capitulation to a European *diktat*, no different from the capitulation of the black or yellow kings of the nineteenth century before the cannons trained on their palaces. Europe had collectively sent the colonists, whose goal was to seize a portion of the national territory. Throughout the period when an indigenous reaction could have easily kicked these colonists out, this reaction has been halted by the British police and armed forces mandated by European-American nations. This reaction had been disarmed morally by the misleading assurance that it was only a question of peacefully settling a few and harmless groups who would remain a minority. And then, when the real intention of these groups was being publicly unveiled, when the collective strength they had slowly built under the protection of the mandate was becoming clear, the European-American world, from the socialist USSR to the ultra-capitalists United States — united in spite of their internal divergences — wanted to force the Arabs to passively accept a *fait accompli*. For the Arabs, the settling of the Second World was a bitter repeat of the deceitfulness of the First.”⁷⁰

Stalin: Godfather of the second marriage of Zionism

“The Soviet Union delegation cannot but express their horror at the position the Arab countries adopted in the Palestinian issue; we were all surprised (sic) to see those States, or at least some of them, resorting to arms and giving themselves to military operations to suppress the national liberation movement that is born in Palestine.”⁷¹ Thus spoke Andrei Gromyko, Stalin’s delegate, at the meeting on 12 May 1948 of the United Nations Security Council. The USSR had not only joined

68 Michael Bar-Zohar, *The Armed Prophet: A biography of Ben Gurion*, Barker, London, 1967, p. 67. Bar-Zohar is a leading Israeli biographer of Ben Gurion.

69 Ibid, p. 61.

70 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p.69.

71 Quoted by Moshe Sneh, “Getting out of the vicious circle of hate”, in *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 672.

the US to legalise the colonial situation in Palestine but would also send weapons and aircraft to the Zionists through Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the USSR was the first power that recognised Israel; it did so even before the US.

Of course, this “certificate of national liberation movement” that Stalin signed to Zionism all that “certified” was the complete degradation of the Soviet bureaucracy. It was just one more betrayal in a Stalinist long list.

We have already noted the views of Lenin and Trotsky at the beginnings of the Zionist adventure in Palestine. Twenty-five years later, the facts had fully confirmed the pro-imperialist and colonialist character of Zionism. But this was the least important for the Soviet bureaucracy. All they cared about was the diplomatic chess game played to three points between the US, the USSR, and Britain.

The Soviet bureaucracy bears equal responsibility to the US regarding the creation of the colonial and racist state of Israel; equal responsibility in the denial of democratic and national rights to the Palestinian people.

The support of the USSR to Zionist colonialism brought much more serious consequences than the weapons and aircraft they send in 1948 to massacre Arabs. It meant, on the one hand, the isolation of Palestinians from the working masses outside of the Arab world. The Stalinists, together with the Social Democrats, were who scattered all over the world the lie of a “progressive” Israel fighting against “feudal hordes”. If this lie had been the exclusive responsibility of Mr Ben Gurion and his new consort, the US government, not many would have been convinced. But the communist parties and the Social Democrats took charge; they turned all their authority and weight of their bureaucratic apparatuses to make millions of workers, students, and leftist intellectuals swallow it. Like the Zionists, they took advantage of the world’s horror at the Nazi barbarity and slaughter of six million Jews to conceal that the Zionists in Palestine came to practice the same racism against natives and with similar methods.

Furthermore, the Stalinist betrayal covered socialism and Marxism with mud in the eyes of the Arab masses. Thus, they became easy prey to the manipulations of the most reactionary elements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, for example, or they were left in the hands of people such as King Farouk or King Abdullah.

The Fourth International was the only anti-Zionist left-wing faction

While Stalinism and social democracy fervently supported Zionism and the creation of Israel, the Trotskyists posed: “Down with the partition of Palestine! For an Arab Palestine, united and independent, with full rights of a national minority for the Jewish community! Down with the imperialist intervention in Palestine! Out of the country all foreign troops, the ‘mediators’ and ‘observers’ of the United Nations! For the Arab masses right to dispose of themselves! For the election of a constituent assembly with universal and secret suffrage! For the agrarian revolution!”⁷² And the Palestinian Trotskyist Group noted that US imperialism “... has won a direct agent — the Zionist bourgeoisie — who, by this, has become completely dependent on American capital and American politics. From now on, US imperialism will have a justification to intervene militarily in the Levant whenever it sees fit ... the inevitable consequence of this war will be the total dependence of Zionism to American imperialism.”⁷³

The 1948 war began in 1947

The Arab rejection of the partition led to a fight that would lead in 1948 to the intervention of several Arab states, mainly Transjordan (today Jordan) and Egypt, and would end in their defeat.

⁷² *Quatrième Internationale*, June 1948, p. 30.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 31 and 32.

Unfortunately here we have to dispel another myth of Zionism: the “small group of Zionists against the giant of 100 million Arabs”, “David against Goliath”, etc. In all armed conflicts since 1948, with the exception perhaps of the last war in which matters went somehow more even, the Zionists have always had a clear military superiority. In 1947–1948, while Palestinians were shattered by the defeat of the insurrection of 1936–1939, Zionism not only had the Haganah, organized, armed, and tolerated by the British even in times of greatest friction with the Zionists, but they also had “irregular” units as the Irgun and others and with several thousand trained fighters in the Jewish brigades of the British Army. General Dayan comes out of that school, for example.

In the official Zionist book, *Antologia Israel* quoted earlier, eloquent figures are given.⁷⁴ Let us do the sums:

Jewish Rural Police	2,000
Haganah	45,000
Palmach (special units trained by the British and equal to the famous and efficient commandos of the Second World War)	3,000
Irgun and other terrorist groups	3,000
Total	53,000

In addition, we must add several thousands of “volunteers” from Europe and the US, including fighter pilots, veterans of the Second World War, who joined the fray. With them, we come to between 60,000 to 70,000 Zionists fighters, the majority of high technical and/or military qualification.

Who were their opponents, the “hordes” of “millions” of Arabs? Until the intervention of neighbouring Arab states, practically the biggest organised force of the Palestinians was the “Liberation Army” of Fawzi al-Qawuqji, coming to Palestine in January 1948. They reached the frightening figure of 5,000 men.⁷⁵ There were, of course, many thousands more resisting in all Arab villages and cities. But resistance was disconnected and disorganised military and politically. For them to have imposed the superiority of their numbers against the settlers, Palestinians needed a weapon they lacked — a political and revolutionary organisation capable of mobilising the whole of the Palestinian masses and neighbouring Arab countries. No need to say, this was not the aim of Abdullah, Farouk, and other characters who were appearing as “representatives of the Arab nation”. On the contrary, they were incubating a monumental betrayal.

The phoney war of 1948 and the betrayal of King Abdullah

While the Palestinian resistance was exterminated, while slaughters were happening about which we will speak later, the reactionary Arab governments were attending conference after conference. On 14 May 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed. The next day, only after months of struggle, become involved, first Transjordan, then Egypt, and to a lesser extent other Arab countries. All the armies of the Arab states involved did not exceed 25,000 men,⁷⁶ moreover, without unity of command. Even then, the Zionist forces had an indisputable military superiority.

The only military force capable of measuring itself militarily with the Haganah was the Arab Legion of Transjordan, led by British officers. And to say this is means they were going towards defeat. Britain, for whom it was convenient to appear now as “protector” of the Arabs, actually developed a double play. While in the United Nations it had opposed the partition of Palestine, it ended up abiding the blockade and embargo of weapons and ammunition to the belligerents. This “embargo”, as in the wars in Abyssinia or Spain, only affected one of the warring parties, in this case, the Arabs.

74 Shaul Ramati, “La Haganá: las milicias populares de Israel” (The Haganah: the militia of Israel), in *Antologia Israel*, op. cit., p. 77 and 78.

75 Jon Rothschild, op. cit., p.1211.

76 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 74.

But the final blow on the Palestinians would be the secret pact between Abdullah, King of Transjordan, and Golda Meir, a representative at the time of the Israeli government. This covenant consisted simply in sharing Palestine.⁷⁷ The State of Israel extended its surface beyond the boundaries marked on the partition map of United Nations and the King of Transjordan, grandfather of the current King Hussein, seized the West Bank. King Farouk only had a bone, the Gaza Strip. A few years later, a Palestinian would execute King Abdullah but this act of justice and despair would not change the fate of his people. Thus began the tragedy of the Palestinian Arab people, stripped of their land and their right to self-determination.

How to manufacture a “land without a people”

The Zionist settlers had had time to become convinced that the slogan of “land without people” did not match the reality of Palestine. But if the “land without people” did not exist, you could instead manufacture it. We saw how, at the beginning of colonisation, economic measures and policies of Zionism tended to a slow but steady marginalization of the Arab population. Now, this process would take a leap: the eviction of the majority of Palestinians and expropriation of their property.

The Zionist leader Yosef Weitz, for many years head of the Jewish Agency’s Colonisation Department, noted in his diary in 1940: “The only solution is a Palestine, at least Western Palestine (west of the Jordan River) without Arabs... And there is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, to transfer all of them: Not one village, not one tribe, should be left.”⁷⁸ To carry out these plans worthy of Hitler there was only one method: the one that Hitler used. And it was used.

No sooner was the partition voted at the United Nations, a campaign of terror began that forced the flight of the Arab populations. Members of the Irgun, a terrorist organisation that had the advantage of being “unofficial”, stood out as main executors of this butchery. That is, when they carried out a slaughter, Ben Gurion could wash his hands. The leader of this fascist terrorist organisation was the notorious Menachem Begin, today Herut party leader, honourable Member of the Knesset (Israel’s parliament) and no less Honourable Minister in several cabinets.

It would be impossible to do an inventory of all the slaughters by the Zionist settlers. We already reported the Irgun feat in the refinery in Haifa on 31 December 1947. Let’s talk now of Deir Yassin.

The extermination of the Arab village of Deir Yassin has been rightly considered as the My Lai of Zionism, comparing to the slaughter perpetrated in that famous Vietnam village by US troops.

The basic testimonies of the massacre of Deir Yassin were given by the delegate of the International Red Cross in Palestine, Jacques de Reynier, who discovered the bodies and managed to save three seriously injured victims. His report was published in 1950.⁷⁹ In April last year [1972, TN], the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* published various documents on the massacre, including a secret report of soldier Meir Philipsky, who is now General (R) Meir Pa’el, and who at the time of the slaughter was “liaison officer” between the Haganah and the terrorist groups Irgun Zvi Leumi (ETZEL) and the Stern Gang (Lehi).⁸⁰ We can summarise the data thus:

On 9 April 1948 special units of the Haganah took the village of Deir Yassin, after defeating a weak Arab resistance. Finished the resistance, they left it in the hands of the butchers of Irgun and Stern Gang. They went house to house, exterminating all of its civilian inhabitants, most of whom were women, elderly, and children since most of the men were outside the village at the time. Throwing hand grenades into the houses and then strafing or beheading the survivors, they exterminated about 250 Arabs.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 86 and Jon Rothschild, op. cit., p. 1211.

⁷⁸ Published in the 29 September 1967 issue of *Daavar* and quoted by Jon Rotschild, op. cit., p. 1206 and Nathan Weinstock, op. cit., p. 3.

⁷⁹ Jacques de Reynier, *A Jerusalem un drapeau flottait* (In Jerusalem a flag was floating), Neuchatel, 1950.

⁸⁰ Some of these reports were translated into English and published in the journal *Middle East International*, London, April, 1973. We took them from there.

The aforementioned Philippsky tells us: “Along with a group of inhabitants of Jerusalem, “we begged the commanders to give the order to stop the killing but our efforts were unsuccessful. Meanwhile, about 25 men had been brought out of the houses; they were put on trucks and taken up triumphantly, like a Roman triumph, through the neighbourhoods of Mahaneh Yehuda and Zakhron Yosef (in Jerusalem). When the march ended, they were taken to a stone quarry that lies between Giv’at Sha’ul and Deir Yassin and killed in cold blood there.”⁸¹ The corpses of the village were thrown into wells; there they were discovered by Red Cross delegate Jacques de Reynier.

Israeli historian Aryeh Yitzhaki, commenting in *Yedioth Ahronoth* on the published documentation, highlights that Deir Yassin “followed the usual pattern of occupation of an Arab village in 1948. In the early months of the war of independence, the troops of the Haganah and Palmach conducted dozens of such operations ...”⁸²

The political objective of the massacres of Deir Yassin, Lydda, Jaffa, etc., could not be clearer: to manufacture the “land without people”, “to transfer”, as Weitz said, “all the Arabs from here to neighbouring countries...” If there are any doubts, Mr Menachem Begin, chief enforcer of these crimes, will clear them: “All the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing in panic, shouting ‘Deir Yassin’ ... Arabs throughout the country ... were seized with limitless panic and started to flee for their lives. This mass flight soon developed into a maddened uncontrollable stampede.”⁸³ Thus, at the signing of the armistice in early 1949, about a million Palestinians were expelled from their land.

The colonial state, racist and the cop of the Arab revolution

The State of Israel is the institutionalisation of colonialism. Like its peers, the States of South Africa and Rhodesia, the native population was stripped of their land and property and of their national and democratic rights, some of them were forced to emigrate and the rest were subject to the classic rules of states where a supposed “superior race” dominates an “inferior race”. The State of Israel is the instrument (armed to the teeth by imperialism) that aims to maintain that colonial situation and to pay back to imperialism for its services acting as a cop against revolutionary movements or just nationalists of the Arab world.

We will finish this study with some examples of the colonial, racist and counter-revolutionary character of the current State of Israel.

Perhaps most shocking is the mass dispossession perpetrated on the Palestinian population. We have seen with what methods around a million Palestinians were forced to flee. After the war of 1948, at the same time they were not allowed to return to their homes, the State of Israel applied a law called “absentee ownership”,⁸⁴ according to which the Arab who was “absent” lost all his assets when these were “abandoned”. Thus, land, houses, bank accounts, etc. of this million Palestinians went into the pockets of the settlers. It was the “primitive accumulation” of Zionism. This, combined with injections of billions of dollars by US imperialism, is the secret of Israeli economic development.

The law of “absentee ownership” is a “law” of theft en masse even from the point of view of bourgeois legal norms. It’s the same as if a gang of robbers enters a family home, kills half and produces, as a result, the flight of the rest. When they are held accountable, these gentlemen argue that having been “absent” and “abandoned” their property, the survivors have lost all rights to it, which has now passed into the hands of the gangsters. At the same time, at gunpoint, they prevent the return of the survivors and, each time a survivor tries to enter his home, the gangsters claim to the world they are “attacked”.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Menachem Begin, *The Revolt; Story of the Irgun*, p. 165, quoted by Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-Settler State?*, op. cit., p. 115 and by Peter Buch, “Burning Issues of the Mid-East Crisis”, op cit., pp.1-30.

84 Al-Ard Co. Ltd., “Os arabes em Israel” (The Arabs in Israel), *Dossier do conflicto israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 843.

The so-called “Law of Return” is another example of racism. Zionism shares with the Nazis and the rest of anti-Semites the myth of considering the Jews as a “race”. The members of this supposed “race” in any country in the world they may be and although their predecessors had nothing to do with Palestine, have the right to “return” (?) to Israel and become citizens. Instead, a Palestinian (who 25 years ago was driven by force) or his child, have no right to “return” or citizenship.

During the British occupation, in 1945, some “emergency laws” were enacted which Zionist leader Ya’akov Shapira described thus: “These laws have no equivalent in any civilized country, even in Nazi Germany itself. These laws apply only to an occupied country ... no authority can allow such inhuman laws enacted.”⁸⁵ Well, these laws remained in force in the State of Israel and, to complete the mockery, Mr Ya’akov Shapira shortly after would become Minister of Justice, that is, in charge of implementing them. Modifications made years later to these laws have been purely formal and intended to quell protests which arose both inside and outside Israel.

According to these “laws” currently in force in Israel, especially in the usurped territories after the 1967 war, the Arabs are under “military government”. Military authorities have the right to “transfer and drive out the inhabitants of the areas, take and retain in their possession any goods, article, or object, practice investigations and raids at all times, limit the movement of people, impose restrictions on employment and business, enact deportations, place anyone under police surveillance, impose assigned residence... to seize any land in the interests of public safety, the freely use of requisition, impose military occupation at the expense of the inhabitants, to establish a curfew, suspend postal and other public services.”⁸⁶

There are few States with similar legislation and which applies exclusively to a sector of the population, this sector being determined by “race”. Hitler’s Germany was an example of this kind of State, Rhodesia and South Africa are today [1973, TN]. This similarity is impressive, even in form, of anti-black legislation in South Africa and anti-Arab legislation in Israel. Both recognise, moreover, a common origin: British colonial law.

This tangle of racist and colonial laws and provisions support each other and combine into a single result: oppression, theft, and exploitation of the Arab population. A common example is the following: a military authority declares a “security zone” in this or that region. No Arab, therefore, may enter or live in it. If there was any village in the area its inhabitants are evicted; if there was land belonging to Arabs they are not allowed to go and cultivate it. Immediately afterwards the law of “absentee ownership” begins to operate: the lands and villages are “abandoned” their farmers and residents have been “absent” therefore they become the property of Israel. The law of “absentee ownership” applies also to Palestinians who have moved to another place, although these Palestinians remain within Israel and although their transfer was forced by Israeli authority.

The *Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories*⁸⁷ gives a pale idea of the fascist regime that the Palestinian population is subjected to. It is a catalogue of horrors: “torture and ill-treatment”, “administrative detention” (i.e., imprisonment of thousands of Arabs in prisons and concentration camps by order of the military authorities, without trial and indefinite), “expulsion of persons from the occupied territories under so-called deportation orders”, “transfer of several thousand persons from their homes to other parts of the occupied territory”, “expropriation of property including property belonging to persons transferred from their homes”, “demolition of houses” (about 10,000 since 1967), “denial of the right to return to their homes of those persons who fled the occupied territory because of the June 1967 hostilities and those deported or otherwise expelled”. Such are the items in the report of the Special Committee of the United Nations. The report finally concludes it is not a policy “used in exceptional circumstances” but, on the contrary, it “has been arbitrarily

85 Ibid., p. 860.

86 *The Palestine Question: Seminar of Arab Jurists on Palestine*, Algiers, 22-27 July 1967, Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1968, p. 75.

87 October 1972, publication A/8828, unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/O/A7EF099B001E5B3785256A0D005382F5.

converted by Israel into a rule of conduct or definite policy”.⁸⁸ And we add, this “rule of conduct or definite policy” is the logical, fatal, and inevitable consequence of any colonial situation. Never, at any time and in any continent, a group of settlers has been able to establish and maintain its dominance over the native population without resorting to methods of this ilk. Rhodesia, South Africa, “French” Algeria, the Portuguese colonies in Africa, and Israel are there to prove it.

Since 1948, the development of the colonial and racist state of Israel has increasingly emphasised its similarity to the above mentioned experiences of colonisation. And now it is clear all the falsity of the Zionist argument that they are not colonisers because they do not exploit native labour. We have already seen that at the beginning of colonisation, this “not to exploit native labour” was the pious mantle that covered the eviction of the Arab workers and peasants of their jobs and land (neither is in South Africa a black person a bank clerk, skilled worker, or owner of his own land). But, once the displacement of the native population and the expropriation of their property were executed, the Zionists have had no qualms about exploiting the dispossessed Palestinians. Not even the angelic “socialist” kibbutzim fall short in this.

The hunger and thirst for super-profits which dominates the Zionist bourgeoisie extend also the exploitation, racial discrimination, and poverty for large sections of the Jewish population, especially of Eastern origin (Sephardic, Yemenite, etc.). Today the State of Israel is a racist pyramid, where the top is occupied by two thousand millionaires (in dollars) of Ashkenazi (European Jews) origin and intimately linked to imperialist investments; further down, a middle bourgeoisie and a privileged State and Histadrut bureaucracy, also of Ashkenazi origin; these classes and privileged layers sit on the masses of Eastern Jews and, already in the last step of the pyramid, on the Palestinian Arabs.⁸⁹ Israel is the South Africa of the Middle East.

88 Ibid.

89 A study published a few days ago in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 1973 supplement of the French newspaper *Le Monde*, takes the following x-ray of the occupational structure of the State of Israel: “The overall standard of living of the population has improved after the war of June 1967 but the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged sectors does nothing but grow year on year. (...) This phenomenon is reflected, among others, in the following figures: from 1970 to 1972 the workers share of national income fell from 80.5 percent to 74 percent. During the same period, the capitalists share increased from 19.5 percent to 26 percent. But the income gap becomes brutally clear when comparing the lifestyle of the 15 percent of Israelis who go abroad every year and have modern luxury cars and homes, with the situation of the 20 percent who struggle in vain against price hikes, seeing their precarious living standards worsen every month. An increasing share of this sector becomes a lumpenproletariat wretched and hopeless. (...) This Israeli lumpenproletariat, or rather Jewish-Israeli, had a tendency to grow in recent years and with it crime in all its forms. This phenomenon is primarily because of the transformation of the composition of the workforce. Israel, like any country on track to rapid industrialization (exports have increased by 25 percent in 1972 and investments by 20 percent) and in a situation of full employment uses the method of importing foreign labour to fill unskilled lower paid jobs while the Israeli worker has more qualified and better remunerated professions.”

“In Israel, the Arab population plays the role of unskilled ‘foreign’ labour reserves (it is necessary to add to this the seven thousand Georgian Jews recently emigrated from the USSR). The process of Arabisation of common and unskilled labour was even faster in the period from 1968 to 1973, after about seventy thousand Palestinian workers from the occupied territories gradually agreed to work in Israel. The Arab labour — more efficient and disciplined especially since it does not have the same facilities to enforce their rights — has gradually replaced the mass of unskilled Jewish workers in factories, restaurants, and even the fields. A small part of these eliminated Jewish labourers returned as supervisors, and sometimes as foremen of the Arab proletariat. But most have become a lumpenproletariat, in its potential and actual forms, who do not want to recover the jobs lost, now considered ‘degraded’ for Arabs hold them.

“An 85 percent of this lumpenproletariat is made up of Jews originating from Arab countries, for which the possibility of more skilled jobs is more or less closed. Such occupations need training they generally do not have. Having grown up in large families, they soon had to leave school for work. Thus, there is no less than 20,000 youth, in the 14-18 age bracket, who neither study nor work. Another telling figure: in the Israel of 1972, in which the military and scientific prowess surprise the world, there are 104,000 children (over 54 percent of Jewish children) in families in which the father has had only primary education. It is in the disadvantaged layers that the highest number (one in five) of underfed children, malnourished, or grown under the so-called ‘family disaster’ conditions can be seen. It is in these sectors that juvenile delinquents are recruited. The growing resentment in these thousands of eastern Jews, who wonder what it is done for them at the time that Israel is proud of its two thousand millionaires, comes to find their political voice in the vote for the Black Panthers, who got 2 percent of the votes cast in the election to the Histadrut.”

The counter-revolutionary cop

But what has been said so far is only half of the State of Israel. Its other half is its role as counter-revolutionary cop and bridgehead of imperialism in the Arab world. In this, it does nothing more than to continue the “service record” given to British imperialism before statehood.

If the Zionist tale of “socialist” Israel versus “feudal” Arabs was true, it would be inexplicable why this alleged “socialist” state since 1948 performs continuous acts of aggression against any Arab “anti-feudal” and anti-imperialist movement. It’s the same as if Cuba, Socialist state isolated in a semi-colonial Latin America, would devote itself to make permanent raids into other Latin American countries to assassinate leaders and workers and grassroots activists, bombing workers neighbourhoods and slums, etc. Or, when the Peruvian bourgeois nationalist government nationalised oil, Cuba had sent its troops, along with the US, to occupy the concessions area of the International Petroleum Company. Or, now in the recent unrest in Colombia, Cuba had mobilised its army announced that it would take part if the bourgeois pro-imperialist government was overthrown. Strange behaviour for a socialist country!

But this, and no other is the course pursued by Israel since 1948, regarding its Arab neighbours. This role of counter-revolutionary cop is combined with the pretence of the more patriotic Zionists sectors of building “The Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates”.⁹⁰ Let us see some feats of “socialist” Israel.

In 1956, the Egyptian government presided by Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalised the Anglo-French Suez Canal. It was a historic event. It is one of the most important anti-imperialist actions, not only for the Egyptian people but for all the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial world. Moreover, to Nasser’s government, like any other bourgeois nationalist government, you can make a thousand criticisms, except to say it was a “feudal” government.

The nationalisation of the Suez Canal was a wonderful opportunity for Israel to settle its confrontation with the Arab world, assuming that Israel was, let alone socialist, at least a bourgeois nationalist anti-imperialist state. Simply Israel would have declared it was supporting unconditionally the nationalisation of the canal and that it was ready to face, together with Egypt, any aggression of the ancient proprietors of the Company of Suez. Would this not have caused a 180 degrees turn in the Arab world’s attitude toward Israel? But we all know what Israel did: it joined the armies of France and Britain, attacked Egypt, and took part in the massacre of thousands of Arabs who had “dared” to challenge their former imperial masters.

The black trajectory of Israel continues with its undisguised support of France against Algerian revolutionaries who fought for independence. Later, when the French colonists break with the metropolitan government of De Gaulle who wanted to reach an agreement with the Algerians, Israel helps the fascists of the OAS (Organisation de l’Armée Secrète).

The Six Day War in 1967 repeated, with little variation, the adventure of 1956. A variation was that, for undertaking this war in collusion with US imperialism, Israel had a formidable propaganda machine to appear before the world as a “victim”, as a small and weak country threatened with annihilation by neighbours hundred times more powerful who wanted to “drive all the Jews into the sea”. Unfortunately, this myth of Yankee-Zionist propaganda was fuelled by right-wing Arab sectors. These sectors, as evidenced by the facts, are those who least struggle against imperialism and its Zionist junior partner. They disguise their capitulations by raising the issue of Israel in racial or religious terms and not in terms of social and political struggle against imperialism. Not only did they try to confuse the Arab masses but, in this way, they played into the hands of Zionism, feeding their propaganda abroad and also consolidating their internal front.

To understand the 1967 war, one should look in what international context it took place. Fawwaz Traboulsi notes: “The specific conjuncture that led to this war is the convergence of two

⁹⁰ “You must fight with enthusiasm ... By invasion or by diplomacy, the Israeli Empire will be built. It shall include all territories between the Nile and the Euphrates.” (Ben-Gurion speech at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1950, quoted in *Dossier do conflictu israelo-arabe*, op. cit., p. 248.)

trends: (i) US imperialism pursued an offensive against the nationalist regimes of the Third World and the underdeveloped countries of Europe; (ii) the need of Zionist territorial colonialism for weak, underdeveloped Arab régimes subordinated to imperialism was upset by the Nasserite régime in Egypt and the Baathi régime in Syria.

“The US imperialist offensive of the 1960’s against Vietnam, Cuba, Ghana and Indonesia reached the Eastern Mediterranean in 1967. On April 21st of that year, the army seized power in Greece in a CIA engineered coup. It became quite clear that Syria and Egypt would be the next targets. The question was to know whether the attack would come from within or from without. On May 11th, a high-ranking Israeli officer seemed to provide the answer when he threatened military occupation of Damascus in order to put an end to the raids of Al-Fatah on Israeli territory. He was followed, on the next day, by General Rabin who declared that until the Baathi régime in Syria was overthrown, no government in the Middle East could feel safe.”

“The 1960 offensive of US imperialism against Vietnam, Cuba, Ghana and Indonesia reached the eastern Mediterranean in 1967. On April 21 of that year, the military seized power in Greece in a coup led by the CIA. It became all too clear that Syria and Egypt would be the next targets. The question was whether the attack would come from within or from without. On May 11, a senior Israeli official seemed to provide the answer when he threatened military occupation of Damascus to end Fatah raids into Israeli territory. It was followed the next day by General Rabin who said that while the Ba’ath regime in Syria was not deposed no government in the Middle East could feel safe.⁹¹ Israel had her interests in mind: the division of the Arab states into a ‘progressive’ camp and an oligarchic, pro-imperialist camp offset her designs to impose her accomplished facts through the mediation of the imperialist powers or preserve the *status quo* in which she had the upper hand. Furthermore, since 1965 the Palestine commando organisation Al-Fatah had started its incursions into Israel. Refusing to admit the existence of a Palestinian people, Israel considered those acts to be perpetrated by ‘Arab terrorists’ operating from Syria. The Israeli raids in November 1966 against the Jordanian town, Samu, and in April 1967 against Syria were considered by the Israeli official spokesmen as ‘retaliation raids’ against the activities of the Palestinian commandos.”

And Traboulsi continues “The Nasserite régime in Egypt had been subjected to heavy blackmail by Arab reaction, especially Saudi Arabia and Jordan, for the passivity of its position on Palestine since 1957. The steps Nasser took in calling for the withdrawal of the UN troops from Egypt,⁹² the concentration of troops on the Israeli borders and finally barring the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping (May 15–23), can only be understood within this context. In one stroke, Nasser made a move of active solidarity with threatened Syria and effaced the last sequel of the Tripartite aggression of 1956. He thus scored a double victory and proved that Egypt still set the Arab tune on Palestine.

“Nasser had upset the Israeli-imposed *status quo* of 1956. The task was to turn his victory into defeat. On this, both the Americans and the Israelis were agreed. [US President Lyndon B.] Johnson told the Israeli Foreign minister on May 26th; ‘If we can defeat Nasser on the question of the straits, the blockade will be lifted, all the manoeuvre will collapse and even Nasser’s position at the head of Egypt will be compromised.’⁹³ Two means of inflicting this defeat were open: forcing

91 Note by Traboulsi: Rodinson, op. cit, pp. 185-6.

92 Note by Traboulsi: “To be remembered that Egypt initially called on the UN troops to evacuate their observation posts on the frontier (no mention was made of Gaza or Sharm el-sheikh) and it was only after U Thant declared that it was all or nothing that Egypt formally demanded from him on May 18th the withdrawal of UN troops from Egyptian territory. Israel never accepted the presence of UN troops on her borders, she maintained her position when asked again after the UN withdrew from Egypt.”

93 Note by Traboulsi: “Michel Bar-Zohar, *Histoire Secrète de la Guerre d’Israel*, Fayard, Paris 1968, pp. 149–50. The author — an Israeli biographer of Ben Gurion — relates that during the June war, State Department high officials used to follow Israeli diplomats with this question: ‘When will you attack Syria?’ (p. 305). Israeli victory will equally be a defeat for the USSR. Bar-Zohar: ‘Johnson understood that if he managed to neutralize the Soviets and deter them from intervening in the conflict, the Arab defeat by Israel will be interpreted by the world as a terrible defeat of the USSR ... the Arab world, defeated in the war, will feel a deep bitterness against Moscow.’ (p. 255). In fact, the reactionary elements in the Arab world capitalized on this point. Part of the huge mass demonstrations in Cairo when Nasser declared his resignation on June 9th were directed against the Soviet embassy. Attempts in the same direction failed in Beirut.”

the blockade by means of an armada of the maritime powers including Britain and the US, or an Israeli invasion.⁹⁴ The US government and army had no doubts whatsoever as to the outcome of this invasion. During the crisis, Johnson had asked the Pentagon twice to brief him on the balance of military power between the Arab state and Israel and twice he received the same emphatic answer: if war starts, Israel will achieve decisive victory in a few days through a thrust of armour and air raids against Egypt; even if Israel did not initiate the first attack, she will still win the war.⁹⁵ On June 2nd, an important Israeli personality returned from a secret mission to Washington. The following day, Eshkol received a cable from Johnson with a significant omission: the solemn exhortation to Israel to renounce any unilateral military action was dropped; the American president only mentioned his diplomatic efforts. It is after the receipt of a second message from Johnson that the Israeli war cabinet met and decided to wage war. US imperialism had decided to wage its war against the Arab peoples *by proxy*.⁹⁶ Israel was given the green light to ‘act independently’.”

And Traboulsi adds: “A word about the famous ‘genocide threat’. We have already emphasized how the hypocritical double-talk of the Arab régimes plays into the hands of Zionist propaganda. Did this threat ever exist? In fact, the US army had a prepared plan to intervene in the Middle East in case the Arab armies managed to penetrate into Israeli territory. This plan consisted of drawing up a barrier of US troops (numbering up to 100,000) between the Israelis (who would be regrouped in the centre of Israel) and the advancing Arab armies. When Johnson received Aba Eban on May 26th and assured him that the US would honour her engagements towards Israel — in accordance with an official pledge made by Dulles in 1957 to defend the post-Suez status quo — he had this plan in mind. He might have even mentioned it to the Israeli foreign minister, or reminded him of it.⁹⁷ But, what do the Israeli leaders themselves have to say about this ‘genocide threat’? In an interview to *Haeretz* (December 22nd, 1968), General Rabin, the Israeli chief of staff, admitted that Nasser did not want war, but ‘had to face a situation in which he preferred war rather than retreat.’ Moreover, Prime Minister Eshkol described the Egyptian military deployment in Sinai and the military activity in general in that area as one of ‘defensive Egyptian military disposition on Israel’s southern borders.’⁹⁸ A trapped political leadership with a defensive deployment of troops are quite a bizarre combination for the perpetration of an act of ‘genocide’.

“A continuation of politics by other means, the June war was the defeat of prevailing Arab politics on both anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism. It was the defeat of countries of an underdeveloped region, with equally underdeveloped régimes, by an infinitely smaller, numerically inferior state representing a technically advanced, Europeanized and militarist colonising power enjoying the firm backing of the imperialist camp.

“Israeli strategy is Zionism applied to the military realm: a disconcerting ‘Blitzkrieg’ aiming at the imposition of facts, more facts and ever new facts. Throughout the war, the Israeli army commanded numerical superiority over the participant Arab armies and the strategic superiority on each and every front. It never lost the initiative once. The Arab strategy, or better its absence, reveals to the full all the contradictions and limits of the Arab régimes.”

Later, he says: “Even by standards of classical military strategy, one can safely say that Nasser led himself into a trap. The concentration of troops in Sinai was a political, not a military, move. According to the military manual of the Egyptian General Farid Salamah, a defensive position would mean troop concentration on the Suez canal; once the Egyptian army entered Sinai, it should carry on an offensive attack into Israeli territory.⁹⁹ But this trap was also political. It clearly reveals the

94 Note by Traboulsi: “The joint report of Rusk and MacNamara to Johnson on May 26th concludes with two alternatives: a multinational naval force or ‘leaving Israel to act independently’. Significantly, MacNamara, Defence Secretary, was very sceptical on the naval force forcing its way through [the Straits of] Tiran.

95 Note by Traboulsi: “Ibid, pp. 128, 139, 141.”

96 Note by Traboulsi: “Uri Dan, quoted by M. Machover & M. Haneghbi in ‘Lettre à tous les ex-braves Israéliens’, *Rouge*, January 22nd, 1969.

97 Note by Traboulsi: “Bar-Zohar, op. cit., p.128.”

98 Note by Traboulsi: “Machover and Haneghbi, op. cit.”

99 Note by Traboulsi: Eric Rouleau, ‘Le Régime Nassérien en Question,’ *Le Monde*, December 27th 1967.

wavering of the Nasserite régime in its relations to imperialism and the US in particular. The whole contradiction of the stand revolves around the relation between Zionism and imperialism. In periods of struggle against local reaction, Nasser invariably ‘used’ the Palestine problem to demonstrate that Zionism, imperialism and Arab reactions are one and the same camp. Only a few weeks before the June war, he was repeating his famous slogan ‘Israel is America and America is Israel.’ But it is precisely when both those enemies converge in an onslaught against the Arab peoples, that Nasser seeks to disassociate them. In his last press conference before the war, he used clear conciliatory language towards the US, and he even appealed to US imperialism not to intervene in the Arab-Israeli conflict in case it flared up. The last step taken before the war was the decision to send Zakaria Muhieddin, known for his pro-Western sympathies, to Washington to discuss the crisis. The war started before his departure. Moreover, the whole attitude of the petit-bourgeois régimes to imperialism is summed up in one of Nasser’s interpretations of the Arab defeat. He maintained that the US duped the Egyptian leadership; because at the eve of the war, the American ambassador in Cairo had assured Nasser that the US guaranteed that Israel would not be the first to attack.”¹⁰⁰

But where the nature of counter-revolutionary cop of the Zionist State is most tested, if it is possible, is in its constant attacks against Palestinian refugee camps and their national liberation movement, expressed in resistance organisations as Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), etc. The Zionist State allies with reactionary Arab governments, especially in Lebanon and the butcher [King] Hussein of Jordan, to suppress the Palestinian people. The fact is the struggle of Palestinian people drives the Zionists to despair. We have already seen how many settlers, such as the aforementioned Professor [Benjamin] Akzin, seek to deny the existence of the Palestinian people. But, despite 30 years of defeats, betrayals, exile, and misery, the Palestinian people mobilise and their struggle continues. This explains the anger of the big Zionist bourgeoisie, who knows they usurp their property, their land, and their national and democratic rights.

That’s why on September 1970, when Hussein unleashed repression on the Palestinian camps, slaughtering 20,000 refugees — recreating the Chile of the Middle East — Dayan assisted him by bombing camps. Let us recall how the US fleet was mobilised, how Israel staked its army over the Jordan River and announced they were ready to invade if the fight was unfavourable to the butcher Hussein and he was brought down by popular mobilisation. Let us remember that there was a Chile in the Middle East and Israel intervened to rescue its Pinochet!

Some conclusions

To conclude, we insist on what we have already been raising in this work: only a gross falsification of historical facts can hide that Israel is a colonial enclave, with similar characteristics to the “white” states of Africa, built based on the eviction, racial discrimination, exploitation, and denial of democratic and national rights of the native population. In the area where it has been implemented, this colonial enclave acts as a cop of imperialism to suppress the national and social struggles of the Arabs.

Few still swallow the pill of a “socialist” or “progressive” Israel. However, especially in Europe, among the petty bourgeois left there are still some who digest in whole or in part that fable. Why? This has to do with some original historic features of the Zionist colonisation.

We told how Rhodes and British imperialism (and also other imperialist powers) took advantage of the tragedy of the masses without food and jobless in Europe to develop their colonial adventures. But Zionism took advantage of something else, of one of the greatest tragedies and crimes of the agony stage of imperialism: of anti-Semitism and the massacres of the Nazis in Europe. After this memory, Zionism tried, and still tries, to justify applying in Palestine the same racist criteria and the same methods of Hitler’s Germany.

¹⁰⁰ Fawwaz Traboulsi, *The Palestine Problem*, op. cit.

Another confounding factor was the ideological justification of Zionist colonisation (we have seen how in this, additionally, Stalinism contributed its “grain of gold”). The Zionist ideology is a unique blend of religious, chauvinistic, and ultra-reactionary ideas with justifications and rationalisations supposedly socialist and even “Marxist”.

There is nothing mysterious or inexplicable in this. If anyone asked the American coloniser what he came to do here, he would hardly answer: “I come to slaughter the Indians and reduce those who are left alive to semi-slavery, to live off them.” In 99 cases out of 100, the answer would be: “I come to save the souls of these poor infidels.” And taken individually, most of the Spaniards were sincere. Thus, every colonialism developed in its ideology the rationalisations appropriate to its time and audience. Neither Rhodes nor company said they colonised Africa to suck the blood of blacks. Not a hope! According to them, they carried the light of civilization precisely for the benefit of the poor natives.

Zionism, colonialism late expression, appears when socialist ideas have become flesh in the broad masses of Eastern Europe. It has to dispute a sector of these masses influenced by Marxists and the Bund; it is doomed, then, to present a socialist varnish. Inevitably, the sincere colonialist Theodore Herzl was succeeded by the false “Marxist” [Dov Ber] Borochof. Of course, we speak of ideological falsification, not psychological.

But if Marxism teaches anything is that behind the veil of ideology lies a reality. And when the ideological mask of Zionism falls down the unpleasant face of the colonialist shows up.¹⁰¹

Jewish youth must repudiate Zionism

We believe this must be pondered upon especially by the Jewish youth, who are subjected to colossal ideological blackmail by the entire Zionist apparatus, which takes advantage of the last vestiges of the structure of the Jews as a people-class.

Zionism speaks, for example, of not losing the traditions. But which tradition? The young Jew has two “traditions” to choose from: one is that of Marx, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rosa Luxemburg, Abraham Leon, etc. Another is that of Theodore Herzl, the Rothschild family, or that of the rabbis. To the first tradition answer Rami Livne, Meli Lerman, Levenbraum and other young Jews arrested, tortured, and sentenced recently to long prison terms in Israel for fighting with his brothers, the Palestinian Arabs. To that same tradition answer fellow Jews in Israel who serve in the ranks of Matzpen, sympathising section of the Fourth International. Or, here in Argentina, those who are active in our party and other anti-Zionist leftist organisations. However, Dayan, Begin, Golda Meir and company are located in the other tradition, We must choose. Who answers to one tradition cannot answer to the other.

We, revolutionary socialists, like to speak clearly. So, to the young Jew torn between the fierce colonialist reality of Israel and the emotional pressures of his family, pressures from the environment, and the Zionist apparatus, we say, comrade, do not get confused, there is no Zionist “left” that allows you to stay on good terms with God and with the devil. The Zionist or pro-Zionist “left” is a complete falsehood, it is defective merchandise and for a very simple reason — because Zionism is a nationalism of the oppressors, not of the oppressed.

¹⁰¹ When the environment or the circumstances make it unnecessary to use this ideological mask Zionism appears clearer. For example, IPS and Reuter cables (published on *Mayoria*, 18 November 1973) reported that: “Together with the US, South Africa was the only country in the world during the last war in the Middle East that helped Israel without any pretence.” According to *Newsweek*, Pretoria sent Israel more than a million dollars and according to *The Daily Telegraph* sent pilots. First and foremost, it influenced the existence of a significant Jewish community in South Africa. This community which boasts over 115,000 people sent, after the US, the biggest financial contributions to Israel. The South African leaders also have their reasons for such collaboration. For Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, it is the need “to unite all whites against the hordes”. A leader of the Jewish community in the Union of South Africa was clear, Jakob Oppenheimer wrote in the *Herald Tribune*: “Our two countries have a mission to maintain Western civilization islets in the ocean of Neolithic barbarism.” The Arab countries have applied, therefore, total boycott of South Africa.

The nationalism of the oppressed peoples has big progressive seams; there it is legitimate to actually speak of “left wing”. But it is not so with the nationalism of oppressors; for example, with US nationalism, with the white settlers in Africa, or the Zionist settlers in Palestine.

One cannot speak seriously either of “left” or of “socialism” without rejecting all forms of national or “racial” oppression. And if you, comrade, are consistent with this rejection, you must automatically place yourself outside of Zionism. Unless you want to make an exception, you are against all forms of oppression anywhere on the planet ... except in Israel. If so, we would transcribe the following reflection by Maxime Rodinson: “I persist in thinking that being Jewish does not automatically oblige one to use two different sets of weights and measures. Otherwise one must be frank and state that whatever the circumstances, a given group of people, namely the group to which one belongs, is always right — in this case, using both anti-Semitic and Zionist criteria — the Jews. This kind of belief in the infallibility of one’s own ‘ethnic’ group is a frequent phenomenon in the history of human groups. It is called racism.”¹⁰²

We would finally make a warning to all Jewish youth: Zionism is a serious threat not only to the Arab masses but also for the hundreds of thousands of Jews who went to Palestine honestly believing in the Zionists promises of security and peace. In fact, at this point of the revolution of the colonial peoples, it is absolutely impossible to exercise in a “peaceful” and “secure” manner the role of the coloniser. Today the actual program of Zionism is the “war for a thousand years” spoken of daily by paranoid fascist Dayan.¹⁰³ By linking imperialism to fate the 2.5 million Jews living in Palestine, Zionism has made a dangerous move, because in the long term, historically, imperialism is doomed to weaken and decline. Although not in the immediate future, Zionist settlers have no guarantee that ultimately imperialism will not negotiate them, as happened to the French settlers in Algeria.

Faced with this prospect, fellow Jews should know that the Palestinian resistance offers them another option: “no security in the racist State, but all the security in new a democratic Palestine.”¹⁰⁴

Down with the racist and colonial State! For a secular Palestinian state, non-racist and with extensive democratic rights for all its inhabitants, Arabs and Jews!

Our party supports this democratic slogan raised by the organisations most representative of the Palestinian people. Support for the democratic slogan, whose content is similar to the constituent assembly slogan upheld by the Fourth International in 1948 does not mean, of course, we give an endorsement on the Palestinian leadership. In *Avanzada Socialista*¹⁰⁵ (24 October 1973) we explained this slogan thus:

“We understand that the most correct action is to support the creation, in the territory now occupied by the Zionist state, of a secular Palestinian state, non-racist, and with extensive democratic rights for all its inhabitants.

“Secular state means it will not be based or hold any ‘official’ religion, neither Islamic, nor Jewish, nor Christian. A secular Palestinian state will not be based either in the ‘Old Testament and the prophets of Israel’ (as in the current Zionist state), or in the Koran (holy book of the Islamic religion and which rules the constitution and the laws of several Arab states). At the same time, it will guarantee every one of its inhabitants total freedom to worship as they want or no religion if they so prefer.

102 Maxime Rodinson, *Israel, a Colonial-settler State?*, op. cit., p. 78.

103 Moshe Dayan says: “We are a settler generation, and without the steel helmet and the cannon we cannot plant a tree or build a house. Let us not flinch from the hatred enflaming hundreds of thousands of Arabs around us. Let us not turn our heads away, lest our hands tremble with. It is our generation destiny, our life’s alternative, to be prepared and armed, strong and harsh lest sword drop from our fist...” (Quoted in Jon Rothschild, “How and why the Zionist expanded its borders”, *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 11. No. 39, 1973, p. 1237). These days, he has just said that the war against the Arabs was “just beginning”. Any resemblance between Moshe Dayan and Adolf Hitler speeches are not pure coincidence.

104 Document of Fatah, *The Palestinian Revolution and the Jews*, Algiers, 1970, p. 16, mimeographed reprint.

105 *Avanzada Socialista*: weekly periodical of the PST (Argentina).

“This secular Palestinian State will eliminate privileges, racial discrimination, and the persecution that exist today in the Zionist state and will guarantee to all its citizens, whether of Arab or Jewish origin, equal democratic rights: the freedom to speak and teach in their native tongue and to publish in it its press and books, non-discrimination in public and private employment and equal wages, equality to elect and be elected to public or union office, Arabic and Hebrew as official languages, and so on.

“Some readers may consider the following objection: ‘We agree that we must finish with Dayan, Golda Meir and company. But why have the slogan of a single Palestinian state? This would guarantee, of course, the right to self-determination of the Arabs, as they might be in the majority in this Palestinian state. But does that not infringe the rights to self-determination of the Jews; we should not put them in the same bag as Dayan and his band?’

“The answer is very simple, we revolutionary Marxists defend the right to self-determination of the oppressed, not the oppressors.

“The right to self-determination is a specific problem, not a question of the majority or minority arithmetic. We defend the right to self-determination of the ‘Catholic’ Irish minority in Ulster against ‘Protestant’ English majority because the first is oppressed by the second. For the same reason, we support the black majority in Rhodesia, South Africa, and the Portuguese colonies against the white minority that enslaved them in the most savage way. What would we raise, for example, for South Africa? The self-determination of blacks and also whites who denied them even the condition to be human?

“The case of Israel is similar to Rhodesia, South Africa, or Algeria before the revolution. As in those cases, imperialism ‘imported’ a colonising minority that stripped millions of natives of their land and their national and human rights. As in South Africa, where blacks are locked up like cattle into ‘native reserves’, millions of Palestinians live in the misery of the ‘refugee camps’ in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. In addition, they are victims of massacres perpetrated by the Zionists and their Arab accomplices, the reactionary governments of Lebanon and Jordan. The Palestinians who remained in Israel are subjected to a regime of Nazi terror.

“Who, then, are the oppressors and who are the oppressed? Who has the right to self-determination? Here the matter is simple and concrete: the first and immediate question is to restore to the oppressed people their land and their national and democratic rights. At the same time, ensuring that all Jews who want to live in peace and brotherhood with the Arabs and without exploiting them, all Jews who do not want to be cannon fodder for Dayan and US imperialism, complete equality of democratic rights as citizens of a secular and not racist Palestinian state.” ●

Writings of Nahuel Moreno on Palestine

The following are three fragments of various works of Nahuel Moreno that deal with the subject.

“Palestinian democratic slogan that can make way for the workers” revolution”. Published in *Correspondencia Internacional*, September 1982. Moreno polemicized with a group of Chilean comrades who had left Lambertism and incorporated into our current (then called LIT-CI). There we can find a broad characterization of the PLO.

“Israel, a Nazi state.” Published in *First World Congress of the IWL–FI*, 1985, Ediciones Crux, p. 123–124. In one of his speeches at the World Congress, Moreno briefly referred to the definition of the State of Israel.

“Who oppresses, who is oppressed?” Published in *Conversations with Nahuel Moreno*, CEHuS, Buenos Aires, 2019, p. 7–8 (available for download from www.nahuelmoreno.org/english.html#2). In this question, Moreno delimits the accusations of “anti-Semitic”, defines the Zionist as oppressors in Palestine and ranks Arab terrorism as a result of this brutal oppression.

Palestinian democratic slogan that can make way for the workers' revolution

Dear comrades,

We have received your letter of 31 July with “summary” questions and implicit and explicit critiques to our positions on the Middle East. The key to our differences, even in what makes the method to address the problem, lies in your assertion that the policy and slogan of secular, democratic and non-racial Palestine are bourgeois and they can only be supported “if a State of these characteristics arises, in the struggle against Zionism and imperialism”.

Moreover, our differences become more specific when, at the end of the letter, you state that “naturally” you agree with us in “the characterization of the war in Lebanon, with the core anti-imperialist slogans and in making our axis the destruction of the Zionist state”. Also, when you approve our “axis” slogan of military support to the PLO and Syrian troops.

So, as a first approximation, the differences seem merely tactical. According to you, we completely agree on the “axis” and the “basis”, which would be the “destruction of the Zionist state” and you mark your disagreement on what should be built “after”: for us, it would be the “bourgeois” slogan of a Palestinian state, secular, democratic and non-racial. For you, however, the slogan you consider “transitional” and “classic Trotskyism” is Palestinian constituent assembly on the basis of the destruction of the Zionist state. We will see it is not so.

Who will destroy it?

In posing this first question, logically derived from our principled agreement, the profound differences of method begin, which are then reflected in the political line and slogans. If the decisive and fundamental purpose is the destruction of the Zionist state, it is a matter of establishing what are the objective forces currently engaged in this progressive, historical task, and what are the best slogans to support them and ensure they fulfil their role with the greatest enthusiasm and strength.

Perhaps the exploited and discriminated Sabras and Sephardim workers in Israel are doing it? Or is it Ashkenazi workers?

At this time, these forces are a stronghold of the Zionist state, not the vanguard of its destruction. The Ashkenazi labour aristocracy, through the Labour Party fully supports Zionism. The Sabras and Sephardim gave Begin his electoral constituency and they enthusiastically support his plans of colonisation of Arab lands.

This leaves at present the Arab and Muslim movement as the only social sector in a constant struggle against Israel, whose undisputed vanguard are the Palestinians driven from their homeland by the Zionists. For 34 years, since the racist state was built, the way to fight for its destruction has been to support the just war of the Palestinians and Muslims. We see no other way, for there is no other power in the objective reality that confronts Zionism arms in hand.

As Trotskyists, we must then try to find the appropriate slogans for this objective reality, this is, that help the Arab mobilisation and combat. That is our method, but not yours.

A slogan for accomplishing the task or for after completion?

When our methodological differences are embodied in various slogans, the new problem comes up of the function and the role they should play in the struggle. When and why should we use a slogan?

If we are guided by your slogan, Palestinian constituent assembly, it is raised for after the “base” task is accomplished. It is not to help better fulfil the task but to solve a later problem, in this case, what would arise after the destruction of the Zionist state.

This is the methodology that Trotsky defined as dissolving the concrete into the abstract and futurological. Indeed, you are dissolving the concrete, which is the Mohammedan and Palestinian fight to destroy the fascist, racist, and based on the Old Testament state, into a futurological abstraction, that, once the state is destroyed, you will call its current inhabitants, who are Zionists and have an absolute majority over the Palestinians, to a constituent assembly to discuss the reorganisation of the country, giving each of them a vote, like the Palestinians.

We, instead, believe the slogan should be at the service of the task, in this case, the destruction of the Israeli state. Not to give a response to the problem after this destruction but to implement it, to better mobilise the Palestinians. And let alone when the futurological abstraction is completely reactionary.

Your slogan does not help for the only current agents for the destruction of the Zionist state to have increasingly daring and courage but undermines that purpose. The Palestinian constituent assembly slogan, consciously or unconsciously, today serves Zionism, temporizes with it and it is the reason why only Lambert raises it but not all Trotskyism and less the revolutionary kind.

The trap of shameful support

One of the basic problems of the war which, under diverse forms, has been developing for 34 years is the dispute over who has the right to remain in Israel. That is, whether the Zionists are going to continue or not, whether the imperialist enclave supported on the Jews will stay or be destroyed. The Palestinians say and fight so the Zionists and occupiers who came to strengthen the enclave, go away.

If the enclave remains, that is, if Israel wins the war, it could take different forms. It could get to assimilate a collaborationist Palestinian minority and allow them some rights, even — why not? — electoral rights. But if the Palestinian war destroys Israel, it will mean the Zionists will leave Israel and, with them, those who give them their social and political base. This slogan, Zionists out of Israel!, is the decisive one, giving substance to our formulation of the destruction of the Zionist state. There is no other way to destroy the Zionist state than throwing out the Zionists. What kind of destroyers of the Zionist state are we if our main banner is to allow the Zionists to win or participate in an election for a constituent assembly, by which we commit to fighting with them and against the Palestinians because the latter does not consider the Zionists vote useful?

The Palestinian constituent assembly after the destruction of the Zionist state is precisely the shameful way of supporting the Zionists and of validating their presence, giving a “democratic” veneer to their fascist usurpation.

If you want to suggest this constituent assembly would be with non-Zionist Jewish settlers, we have implicitly answered before. These imaginary inhabitants do not exist. If the Jewish proletariat were to break with its Zionist apparatus (which is what we call for), we should study the best way to connect it with the Palestinian struggle. But this is music of the future.

In your letter there is a theoretical error that leads you towards the slogan of the constituent assembly, even though, as we have seen, it does not serve to mobilise Palestinians and it is pro-Zionist. You think it is “transitional” therefore superior to ours, which is bourgeois.

That is false. It is a strictly bourgeois slogan, as bourgeois as ours. Neither has a single class element. The constituent assembly is a bourgeois democratic claim, not based on class but on citizens. For each inhabitant, a vote. It is the epitome of bourgeois political rights.

Like any claim, regardless of its historical origin, it can play a traditional, progressive, regressive, and revolutionary role or counter-revolutionary one, depending on the context. For example, it is criminally counter-revolutionary in any colonial enclave, so imperialism tends to wield it to defend the enclave. We recognise no bourgeois democratic right of the people sent by the metropolis. When we occupy Guantánamo we will not call a constituent assembly with equal rights for Cubans and settlers from the base. Our slogan is, of course, Yankees out of Guantanamo, the same as we have in Israel.

In Israel today, the constituent assembly slogan is equally counter-revolutionary. We could only raise it ultra-propagandistically, and it would be useless, preceded by a lengthy explanation saying it will only take place if and when the Palestinians want it, when all Zionist, fascists, racists Jews who do not want to coexist with the Arabs have been thrown out of Israel.

If this is not properly clarified, or if it is dissolved in an abstract formula as the destruction of the Israeli state, without explaining that this destruction necessarily implies the removal of its current inhabitants, the slogan means accepting the fait accompli of the Jewish occupation of Israel and say that from now we will all be democratic, even the fascists.

Why did the leadership of PLO abandon it?

In contrast, the bourgeois and non-classist slogan of a Palestine secular, democratic, and non-racist, besides being the most progressive one raised by the Palestinian movement, can pave the way for the workers' revolution. In another situation, it could become counter-revolutionary, but today it plays a precise role equivalent to Yankees out of Guantanamo or Zionists out of Israel, which is what the "not racist" part of the formula actually means. And to us, this seems very good: that racist Jews be driven from Palestine. And tomorrow, also racist Arabs. But tomorrow, not today. Because today Arab racism against Israel is progressive: it destroys the Zionist state.

So good is the slogan that, as the leadership of PLO and the Arab movement become increasingly reactionary they drop it and, with it, the political line of destroying the state of Israel, to accept the establishment of a Palestinian state in some place of the Middle East.

We will be left alone raising the bourgeois democratic slogan most heartfelt and advanced of the Palestinian people. We are not taking a bourgeois or petty bourgeois "left-over". We emphasise the role of each slogan depends on the context in which it is wielded. In this regard, it is worth remembering the tactics Trotsky advised after Hitler took power. The "Old Man" advised considering the possibility of raising the convening of the Parliament that elected Hitler, with which it would have been possible to try to get the petty bourgeoisie to break with fascism and join the proletariat, via parliamentary legitimacy. Similarly, in Austria. As the working class there did not believe in workers' democracy or dictatorship of the proletariat, Trotsky advised the line to defend bourgeois democracy with class mobilisation methods.

Just like an ultra-reactionary parliament, bourgeois democracy or constituent assembly, under certain circumstances, may become progressive or transitional slogans. We believe that in the Middle East, the bourgeois slogan that fulfils this role is that of Palestine secular, democratic, and non-racist.

The slogan also serves, to the extent that it is abandoned by the leadership of PLO, to attack them like the boomerang and the same with all reformists who come to agree with imperialism, handing them the fight against the Zionist state. We appear as the only "consistent democrats" who are willing to use all means of struggle to destroy the State of Israel, imposing the great objective of the Arab masses.

What is PLO?

Our methodological and political differences are tied to those we also have regarding the overall characterization of the situation and the PLO itself. When you write “if a State of these characteristics arises (secular, democratic and non-racist), in the struggle against Zionism and imperialism, we would support it. But it is unclear why we claim it as our slogan”, you show you do not believe there is already a secular, democratic, and non-racist organisation at war with Israel and imperialism. However, its origin dates back to 1948 and it has consolidated since 1969 when PLO was founded.

For us, the key to the situation of the Middle East is the war, sometimes declared, sometimes not, but permanent of the Arab and specifically Palestinian movement against the State of Israel. This war has been expressed in various forms, globally or narrowly, with clashes between states, such as those staged by Egypt and other Arab nations, or with large and small guerrilla actions.

Of the various nations and nationalities in permanent war against Israel, there is one, that of the Palestinians, who when they organised PLO, formed this secular, democratic and non-racial organisation, the vanguard of the war against Zionism. Do we support it now or wait for them to win the war, occupy Israel, retrieve its territory and thus re-form as a State, for only then support it?

If we did that we would support it when the war has ended when our support would not mean anything and even when the slogan would lose its transitional character.

You characterize PLO as just another political party. For us, it represents the Palestinian nationality as a sui generis state organisation, secular, democratic, and non-racist, in war. It is almost a state: it is a united front covering the entire Palestinian movement in struggle to regain their homeland and return to being a state. In fact, it is a government: we claim for its recognition just as we did for the FSLN in Nicaragua. It is an organised nationality to which their land has been taken away: when it recovers it, it will be a nation again. It is a sui generis nation.

When you deny this role of PLO, considering it a mere faction of Palestinian politics, you give a “left” foundation to the characterization of imperialism. They also disown it as Palestinian national organisation, defining it as a terrorist organisation. Instead, they will negotiate with Palestinian characters that nobody knows and eventually the Palestinian mayors of Judea and Samaria because they collaborate with Israel.

Your refusal to acknowledge this sui generis character of a nation without territory means you endorse the Zionist and imperialist plunder of that country and accept they are right when they argue that, being expelled, the Palestinians were no longer an organised nationality.

Today, the organised Palestinian nationality has about five million people, divided into two sectors: those in refugee camps, led by PLO, which are the majority, and the layer of professional, technical and, generally, well-off middle class, which is the most advanced in the Arab world, and serves mainly in Persian Gulf countries. They have not lost their Palestinian nationality — they are politically active or contributors to PLO, which has offices and embassies in all Arab countries and many other nations.

PLO and its government

Your sectarian characterization of PLO, in which you confuse its progressive totality with the fact it has a treacherous, capitulatory, or conciliatory leadership, produces several consequences. First, regarding its historical war, you resemble the sectarians who did not want to support Argentina against Britain because Galtieri ruled it.

But neither are you capable of hitting their leadership for their actual capitulations that, in our view, are based on the abandonment of the slogan for a Palestine secular, democratic and non-racist.

Your criticism we are deluded because we call PLO to fight for socialism has the same root.

While this is not our fundamental slogan since, as we have said, it is the recovery of the land, to rebuild the nation, expelling the Zionists and ending up constituting a secular, democratic and non-racial Palestine, our call to PLO to struggle for socialism is based on considering it to be a sui generis nation. We say socialist PLO as we say socialist Chile. We do not ask their bourgeois or petty bourgeois leadership; just as in Chile we did not ask Pinochet. You forget to point out that carefully but systematically, as we do with every bourgeois government which directs a just war, we criticise the PLO leadership and we do not give them any political support.

The same confusion leads you to point out we do not agitate for the need to build Trotskyist parties in Palestine and the Middle East. Of course, we must build them now! But the first thing to build it is a concrete program. We raise this program: PLO's military victory supported in the mobilisation of the Arab masses against Zionism, to destroy their state and for the Palestinians to return, that is, the PLO. This is the fundamental point. Along with it, to make PLO break with the bourgeoisie, that is, a Palestinian State that breaks with the Arab bourgeoisies and practices class struggle. This is what we say systematically.

We can discuss which of the two poles of the program we should highlight, whether the break with the bourgeoisie or the destruction of the State of Israel. If we want to work on the Palestinian and Arab masses, we think the one we have been doing is paramount: the common front of struggle against the Zionists, within which we demand new leadership. With this orientation, we work and want to work in PLO. It seems the most appropriate, strictly speaking, the only one, to build, with its best fighters and its most exploited sectors, the revolutionary party.

Israel, a Nazi state

I want to touch in passing Israel. First to make a self-criticism: Israel is not a fascist state but, in the sense we define it, it is Nazi. Nazism provides methods of civil war, not only against the proletariat but also against races, especially the Jewish and Slavic races. It is one of the highest monstrosities of imperialism.

I do not want to devote myself to the historical problem, that Nazism potentially has shown all that is the future of humanity if capitalism triumphs. From the point of view of the monstrosity, the Nazi dynamics is brilliant because it is an attempt to transform the exploited in different species, in different races. The monstrosity of capitalism, in this sense, aimed perfectly well. In human monstrosity, there can be no more: the attempt to divide humanity into sectors that will end in different species, some working and others living at the expense of the other. To this end, there were the methods of civil war against races, not only against the working class [...]

We know perfectly well the working class of Israel, especially Ashkenazi (i.e., Jews of European origin), is not persecuted, we know they have Histadrut (Trade Union Confederation), they have everything. [...] What we denounce is that there is a systematic genocide of racial type. This is typical of Nazism more than of Fascism. So I criticise myself.

We did not appreciate the depth of this we have now learned. Also, one of the greatest Israeli jurists, member, if I remember correctly, of the Supreme Court, said that Israel was Nazi. We changed and said it was fascist, without grasping how deep it was. He understood better than we did, and he knew that even as a member of the Supreme Court he could afford the luxury to say that Israel was Nazi, he was free to speak. He was right; it was Nazi in this sense: the methods of civil war against a race. Where a race is persecuted with methods of civil war, there are Nazi methods, because they are methods of civil war.

Well, comrades, that is all.

Who oppresses, who is oppressed?

You draw a parallel between Nazism, Apartheid, and Zionism. Have you ever been accused of anti-Semitism because of it?

Yes, the Zionist left accuses me of anti-Semitism, especially as I argue the destruction of the Zionist state is necessary.

As a Marxist, I start from the premise the proletariat of a nation which exploits and oppresses another, as Israel does to Arabs and Palestinians, can't be liberated. The Jewish working class is heir to a glorious tradition of class struggle — the path of the Western proletariat, including the Argentinian, is strewn with a multitude of heroic Jewish fighters. But this proletariat can't continue to the end, or to grow green again and exceed its glorious tradition until they get on the side of the Palestinians and the Arabs, who are repressed, persecuted and enslaved by the State of Israel. Genocide is a constant of Zionism, from the early years until the recent invasion of Lebanon and slaughter in the camps of Sabra and Shatila.

Calling us anti-Semites is a trap for the unwary. It's like saying a German who wanted the defeat of Nazi Germany was anti-German, or someone who wants to sweep Boer republic off the map because it's anti-black is a racist because he's against the Boer farmers.

The question to be answered with regard to relations between peoples, races, nations and classes is very simple, I would say too simple — who oppresses, who is oppressed? For a revolutionary Marxist, the answer is as simple as the question: we're against the oppressors and for the oppressed. We defend to the bitter end the latter while pointing out, when needed, the mistakes of their leadership.

Arab terrorism is an aberrant tactic, totally wrong, and so we say. But we continue beside the Palestinians and Arabs, defending these fighters although they use aberrant and monstrous tactics that go against the interests of their people.

What is essential for us is that this terrorism is born out of desperation of the Palestinians youth living in conditions similar to those of the Nazi concentration camps. Look at the photos of the inhabitants of these camps — they have the skin attached to the bones. They show the same state as the survivors of the Buchenwald and Auschwitz camps when liberated at the end of the war. The culprit is the State of Israel, supported, unfortunately, by its people; just as the Nazi state, during its early years, had the support of most of the German people. It doesn't matter these camps are within or without the borders of Israel, its existence is because of the eviction of Palestinians from their homeland.

The similarity with the Boer State and Nazism is obvious. The Nazis not only persecuted the left but also used the most brutal methods of civil war against other races, mainly against Jews. We have always fought in the front row against all expressions of Nazism and will unconditionally defend the Jews.

When one belongs to an oppressing race or nation fighting against an oppressed nation or nationality, if one is a consistent revolutionary Marxist, one is for revolutionary defeatism. The

lesser evil is the defeat of one's own country or nationality. Lenin favoured the Russian defeat in the Russian–Japanese War and in the First World War, and so they called him a traitor, anti-Russian, racist, German agent. And our comrades fighting the Zionist Jews are called traitors, renegades, anti-Semitic, for opposing the oppression and genocide of the Arabs and the Palestinians by the State of Israel.

Racial oppression in Israel and South Africa is a modern expression of Nazi barbarism; it shows once again that where there's capitalism, Nazism is just around the corner if not stopped by the mass movement.

And even without going to the monstrous extremes of Nazism and its younger brothers, Zionism and apartheid, the economic development of capitalism itself leads to cases of North-Eastern Brazil and India — dwarfism, progressive and cumulative stultification.

Other works

What are Zionism and Israel?

By Mercedes Petit and Gabriel Zadunaisky. Fragment of an open letter from the leadership of [Argentinian] MAS to Partido Obrero (Workers Party) on 11 March 1984. The text places the characteristics of the “left wing” of Zionism and its slogan of “peace for land” arguing against the Partido Obrero pro-Zionist positions.

At the end of the last century, in response to pogroms against Jews that happened mainly in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Tsarist Russia (which were among other reasons a consequence of a policy of repression against workers and oppressed nationalities), a movement is formed driven directly by the imperialist bourgeoisie (with some prominent multimillionaire Jewish tycoons at the head, such as Rothschild), Zionism, which argued the solution was to form a “Jewish” state. This plan had the perfidious objective of separating the Jewish masses (mostly poor peasants, artisans, shopkeepers or workers) of the class struggle in their respective countries, of the struggle of all the exploited and oppressed to overthrow these totalitarian regimes, and of the global fight against the imperialist bourgeoisie system. It had the express purpose of separating them of the Marxist revolutionary parties, which the Zionists condemned as “subversive” parties.

This imperialist plan based on racism, that is, fascist, was opposed by Marxists from the very beginning. The Third International considered “the pretext of creating a Jewish state in Palestine, the country where Jews are a tiny minority”, as “deception organised by the imperialist powers with the complicity of the privileged classes of the oppressed countries” (Second Congress, 1920).

From the very onset of this sinister movement, for Marxism the following definition holds:

“Jewish state” = Zionism = Racism = Fascism

Israel, a Zionist, racist, fascist, invader “country”

The imperialist-Zionist-fascist counter-revolution succeeded in imposing the “Jewish state” in Palestine in 1948. The emergence of Israel in this land was the culmination of long years of struggle and anti-imperialist resistance of the Arab masses in the Middle East. Between the two world wars, there were many uprisings against British and French colonialists.

Palestine, which had been under British rule since the end of the First World War was the axis of these mobilisations, particularly between 1936 and 1939. To crush the Palestinian masses British imperialism had to appeal to half of the troops in its army, one of the most powerful in the world.

And it also enjoyed the efficient collaboration of the sinister Haganah, the “unofficial” army the Zionists had formed to repress the Palestinians during the British occupation. In this struggle, thousands of Palestinians were killed, arrested and condemned to the gallows or sentenced to very long prison sentences. In 1939, this bloodshed practically crushed the heroic Palestinian people. This facilitated the formation of the “Jewish State”, Israel, in 1948.

The military force of British troops and paramilitary Zionist gangs — leaving aside circumstantial friction occurred between Zionists and the British — with the support of French and American

imperialism and the approval of the sinister Soviet bureaucracy stripped the native Palestinian population of their land and their property, of their national and territorial democratic. Most of the inhabitants of Palestine were forced to emigrate, to wander as outcasts around other Arab states in the region, and those who remained within the borders of the new “country” suffer since then not only from tremendous overexploitation but also all the consequences of the fiercely racist legislation prevailing in Israel, only comparable to South African apartheid.

Israel is not just any country but an artificial monstrosity, product of imperialist-fascist counter-revolution, an invader, racist state, whose existence is based on the slaughter, genocide, dispossession, and eviction from their lands of the massive population of Palestine.

We Argentinians know very well a phenomenon similar to Israel: the Malvinas Islands. British troops invaded that part of the Argentine national territory 134 years ago, imposed by military force its domain and transformed them into a colonial enclave. The imperialists and the Zionists = racists = fascist Israelis did the same in the Palestinian territory since 1948. With a difference that enlarges the crime: while that part of the Argentine territory was uninhabited the lands on which the fascist state was imposed were inhabited by millions of peaceful peasants, overwhelmingly Palestinian, who were invaded, massacred, and evicted. Just as the Malvinas, after the defeat of the 1982 war, remain a British colonial enclave in the Argentine territory, Israel is a country enclave, which sits on the Zionist = racist = fascist persecution to the native population, the Palestinians whether inside or outside Israel.

Let us remember comrades: since 1948, for revolutionaries, the following definition applies:

“Jewish state” = existence of Israel = enclave = genocide

We shall return! — The battle cry of the Palestinians

Although the imperialist Zionist fascist invasion succeeded in 1948 in imposing the state of Israel, since then the war against began Israel of all the Arab masses and particularly the Palestinians to return to their land and regain their rights. The fact of having to continually confront the military aggression of the Zionists = fascist Israelis caused by the existence of Israel and for having lost their land, for having become a nation without territory, for not only having to suffer direct attacks of imperialism and Israelis but also sections of Arabs bourgeoisie and landowners, all of these led to their struggle developing almost exclusively in military form, with the Fedayeen, the famous fighters against the Israeli army, and all kinds of sabotage and attacks both against imperialism and against the Zionist invaders.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which became the nucleating organisation of all Palestinians dispossessed by imperialism and Israel, was formed in the 1960s. PLO heads since then the war of the Palestinians to return to their land. The Palestinian resistance was forged and PLO became bigger and stronger, to become globally recognised as the national representative of the Palestinian people because they raised the only democratic solution to the Palestinian “problem”: the destruction of the State of Israel, to allow the return to their land of the overwhelming majority of the population, the Palestinians. With this punished people, their right to national self-determination begins with recovering the land from which they were brutally evicted. If the democratic right of the Palestinians to return is achieved, this means the demise of the fascist = Zionist state because the Palestinians are the undisputed majority. The Palestinians may democratically establish a “secular, democratic, and non-racist state” (as the National Charter of the PLO states), which will be the only one that can bring peace to the region and allow Muslims, Jews, and Christians dwellers to enjoy equal rights.

The position of the revolutionaries is clear. Just as we fight Zionism for its racist-fascist character from its very inception, since 1948 we wholeheartedly support this war which means the democratic struggle of the Palestinian people, and later of PLO, to destroy Israel and return to their expropriated lands. Let us remember comrades:

Palestinian self-determination = destruction of Israel

The “democratic” wing of the fascists

Since its birth, Israel encouraged the development of a wing of Zionism that criticised the nastiest actions of the Israeli army, the most outrageous genocide, the most expansionist plans of the various governments, with the precise goal of seeking support among left-wing organisations and democratic opinion in different countries to recognise the “Jewish state”, fascist, racist, genocidal, which would give legitimacy to Israel’s existence.

This “democratic” wing of Zionism, also known as “leftist” or “socialist”, appeals to the following plot falsification: in the Middle East, there would be “two” peoples who have historically fought for national liberation, Palestinians and “Jews”. The latter would have achieved a huge step since there is Israel, their “State”, which would result from the “triumph of Zionism, the liberation movement of the Jewish people”. The difference between Palestinians and “Jews” would be the former have not yet reached their victory, they have no state, and the “Jews” do. The Palestinians have “also” the right to have their state and they must continue their struggle but they should not do it “against” Israel, but “by their side”. In both movements, there were “extremists”. On the one hand, “bad governments” of Israel, which have unfair expansionist ambitions. On the other, the PLO, which is not fighting for the self-determination of the Palestinians but is an organisation of “murderers”, “fanatic terrorists”, and “fascists” who militarily fight innocent people behind the “racist” goal of destroying Israel.

All this ominously false argumentation, powered directly by Israel, by their embassies in different countries, and by imperialism, has a clear goal: to disguise the tremendous injustice, the crime against democracy which means the existence of Israel, and to strike at the just struggle of the Palestinians, trying that they give up recovering what they are democratically entitled to, that they waive their right to return to their land and to accept as an irreversible fact the existence of the “country” of the invaders, Israel. Their policy is summarised in the formula of “mutual recognition”: that the Palestinians accept Israel’s right to exist as a nation, just give up the struggle for their destruction.

Ultimately, this encapsulates the essence of Zionism, which is synonymous with Israel’s existence. The “right” wing is content to ensure its existence with the millions of dollars that imperialism, particularly the US, inject every year to the Israeli economy to survive and with military strength of their army. The “democratic” wing intends to decorate this with the consensus of democratic and “leftist” sectors and with a “pro-Palestinian” varnish. This is, ultimately, the nuance of difference between the two wings of Zionist fascism.

Therefore, comrades, we revolutionaries repudiate the Zionist = fascist formula of “mutual recognition”.

“Mutual recognition” = existence of Israel = fascism.

Chronology

1897

First Congress of the Zionist Organisation in Basel (Switzerland). Herzl's negotiations before the various powers begin.

1905

First Russian revolution.

1914

Start of imperialist First World War of the Allies (Britain, France, Russia, Italy, etc.) against the Central Powers (Germany, Austria–Hungary, Turkey, etc.). In 1917 the United States join the allies.

1915

McMahon–Hussein Agreement whereby Britain undertakes to recognise the independence of Arabs if they revolt against the Turkish Empire that dominated them.

1916

Secret Sykes–Picot Agreement: ignoring the previous commitment, Britain signed a secret agreement with French imperialism to divide up the Middle East.

1917

February Revolution in Russia. The Tsar falls.

2 November: British imperialism issued the Balfour Declaration, in contradiction with previous agreements.

7 November: October Revolution in Russia. The Soviets in power.

1918

September: the Arabs take Damascus, defeating the Turkish Empire.

October: British and French armies occupy the entire Middle East.

November: revolution in Germany and in Central Europe. The Kaiser falls and the First World War ends.

1920

Great Britain receives the “mandate” on Palestine from the League of Nations. The first Arab rebellion breaks out. Britain appoints the Zionist leader Sir Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner. Founding of the Haganah.

July: the Second Congress of the Third International said: “It is essential constantly to expose and to explain to the widest masses of the working people everywhere, and particularly in the backward countries, the deception practised by the imperialist Powers with the help of the privileged classes in the oppressed countries [...]. A glaring example of the deception practised on the working classes of an oppressed nation [...] is offered by the Zionists' Palestine venture and by Zionism as a whole, which, under the pretence of creating a Jewish State in Palestine, in fact, surrenders the Arab working people of Palestine, where the Jewish workers form only a small minority, to exploitation by England.” (Thesis on the National and Colonial Question).

1923

Arab rebellion.

1926

Arab rebellion.

1929

Arab rebellion.

1935

Start of the largest Arab insurrection that will culminate in 1936 and which runs until 1939 when it is definitively crushed. The general strike of six months, the longest in history takes place at the beginning of this uprising.

1937

Proposal of the Peel Commission on the partition of Palestine.

1939

The last Arab guerrillas are exterminated. White Paper: it begins the breakdown of Zionism with Britain. Start of imperialist Second World War. The Nazis massacred millions of Jews.

1947

29 November: the United Nations vote for the partition of Palestine. Large demonstrations and protest strikes by Palestinians. The terrorist campaign starts: massacres in the Haifa refinery, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Lydda, Safad, etc. The Palestinian exodus begins.

1948

The terror deepens, culminating on 9 April in the massacre of Deir Yassin. Palestinian resistance is crushed. The mass flight of Palestinians occurs.

May: the British mandate ends and the “State of Israel” is proclaimed. The intervention of the Arab armies of Transjordan (present Jordan), Egypt, Syria, etc. starts. Golda Meir–King Abdullah secret pact to divide up Palestine.

1949

Armistice with the Arab States. Israel denies the refugees their return. Expropriation of Palestinians property and lands.

1950

27 August: killing of Bedouins in the Negev.

1951

5 April: the Zionist air force bombed the village of Al-Hamma.

1952

11 January: massacre in the Arab village of Beit Jala (near Bethlehem).

1953

28–29 January: massacre in the villages of Falame and Rantis (Jordan) during an Israeli incursion.

11 August: attacks on the villages of Idna, Surif and Wadi Fukin (Jordan).

15 October: Israeli attack on the village of Qibya, Shuche and Budrus (Jordan); 75 men, women and children massacred. Qibya completely destroyed.

1954

28–29 March: Zionist attack and massacre in the village of Nabalim (Jordan).

July: The “Lavon Affair” is discovered. This Israeli Cabinet Minister had organised a band of thugs in Cairo to set fire to the British and American embassies and cause an intervention.

1–2 September: massacre in the villages of Beit Liqya, Tahta, Wadi al-Malagi (Jordan).

1955

8 February: Zionist attack on the Gaza Strip, with the death of 38 civilians.

31 August–1 September: massacre in the villages of Kan Younis and Bani Suheila (Gaza Strip).

2–3 November: attack at the Egyptian post of Sabha (Sinai), 50 dead Arabs.

11 December: killing of 50 Arabs in the attacks on the villages of al-Butheia and Koursi.

1956

4 April: Zionist forces invaded Deir al-Balah and Gaza market square, 56 Arabs dead and 103 wounded, mostly children and women who were shopping.

26 July: Nasser, President of Egypt, nationalises the Suez Canal.

28 August: attack on the village of Umm al-Rihan (Jordan):

11 September: Zionist attack on Rahwa (Jordan), 15 villagers killed.

13 September: attack on the school of Gharandai (Jordan), 11 dead.

25 September: Zionist attack to Husan and the school in the village of Wadi Fukin (Jordan), 39 dead and 11 wounded.

10 October: attacks and killings in the villages of Qalgilya, Azzun, Nabi, Ilyas Khan Sufin (Jordan), 48 Arabs dead and 23 wounded.

October: invasion of Egypt by Israel, France and Britain in “punishment” for the nationalisation of the Suez Canal. Thousands of Arabs are slaughtered in the bombing to Port Said, Suez, and Ismailia.

29 October: massacre in the village of Kfar Kassem. This Arab village was in Israeli territory. The authorities had arranged the curfew without notifying the Arab villagers. When they returned to their village after working in the field they were machine gunned; 49 dead.

3 and 12 November: during the Israeli occupation of Gaza, after the October war, Israeli troops open fire on two manifestations of Palestinians in Rafah and Khan Yunis refugee camps, killing 111 and 275 Arab civilians respectively.

1962

14 February: attack and destruction of the village of al-Tawafiq.

1964

13 November: attacks on the Syrian villages of Abbasieh and Tell al-Aziziyat.

The Arab States created the Organisation for the Liberation of Palestine (OLP). The following year the movement Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat carries out its first attack on Israel.

1965

27 May: attacks on Jordanian villages of Kalqilya and Manshiyat.

28 October: attacks and killings in the villages Huola, and Resi al-Jabal (Lebanon).

1966

During this year and until the 1967 war, Israel carries out permanent air strikes on Syria.

13 November: massacre in the Jordanian village of Sammu.

1967

Continuing attacks on Syria, in preparation for the June war.

June: The Six Day War. Israel invades Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. They snatch from Egypt the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, from Syria the Golan Heights, and from Jordan the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Second Palestinian

exodus, 400,000 Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank and 100,000 from Quneitra are expelled from their homes.

November: the UN Security Council approves Resolution 242, calling for the Israeli withdrawal, fair recognition of all States of the region and a fair solution to the problem of refugees.

1968

December 28: Zionist attack on Beirut airport.

1969

On 14 January Fatah, turned into the principal current of PLO for leading guerrillas against Israel, unveiled a seven point paper calling to fight for the destruction of the State of Israel and the conquest of “a Palestinian, secular, democratic and non-racist State”. Shortly after Yasser Arafat was elected President. The Palestinian National Charter adopted by PLO proclaimed the struggle for “the establishment of a free democratic society in Palestine, open to all Palestinians –Muslims, Christians, and Jews”.

1970

1 January: attack to Irbid (Jordan).

28 January: bombing to a neighbourhood in Cairo.

12 February: bombing a factory in el-Khanka (Egypt); 68 dead and 28 wounded.

30 March: bombing of Mansoura (Egypt).

8 April: the Zionist air force sheds napalm on the primary school of Bahr al-Bahr (Egypt); 46 children die burned and 40 others suffered serious injuries.

28 September: the President of Egypt, Nasser dies. He is succeeded by Anwar el-Sadat, who keeps the country away from Soviet influence and begins to place it at the service of the plans of US imperialism in the area.

September: the struggle between Palestinian revolutionaries, who have grown in strength and popularity, and King Hussein of Jordan breaks out. Israel intervenes in favour of Hussein, bombing the Palestinian camps. The US fleet moves to intervene. 20,000 Palestinians are massacred. It is a major defeat for the Palestinian masses and guerrilla groups, who are forced to take refuge in Lebanon. It is known as Black September.

1972

Attack on the Israeli delegation at the Munich Olympics. Eight athletes die. It is a totally wrong action from a desperate Group (Black September) that plays into Zionism hands. Israel in retaliation bombed Lebanon, including Beirut airport, and razed dozens of Arab villages.

1973

6 October: Yom Kippur War. Egypt, in agreement with Syria, launches a military attack against the troops of Israel settled in the Sinai and the Golan Heights. The PLO called for a general strike affecting a large part of the Israeli economy. After a first surprise, Israeli troops supported by a gigantic operation of supply provided by the US made the Arab troops move back. Anyway, the crisis in Israel advances. From then on, Sadat advances in the total surrender to imperialism and the Zionists.

22 October: the UN Security Council approves Resolution 338, which calls for the cease-fire, the compliance to Resolution 242 of 1967, and immediate negotiations for a “just peace”.

December: negotiations between Egypt and Israel open, sponsored by the United States and the USSR. They were preceded by a tour of Kissinger. The PLO does not participate.

1974

June: the PLO meets in Cairo and adopted a document where it started to abandon the struggle for the destruction of the State of Israel.

December: the bombings to the Arab villages and the refugee camps in Lebanon were becoming permanent.

1975

May: start of street fights in Beirut.

August: another Kissinger tour.

September: new agreement Egypt–Israel on the Sinai. Egypt recovers some kilometres of land and some oil wells and undertakes not to participate in any armed action against Israel. Palestinian students take the Egyptian Embassy in Madrid in repudiation of the agreement. PLO does not support them.

1976

Syria invades Lebanon, giving support to the Phalange militia and the Christian right, who are on the verge of being defeated by the Lebanese opposition and Palestinian fighters. Ten years of civil war will open.

27 June: a terrorist commando, which was never identified, kidnapped in flight an Air France plane that was making the trip Athens–Paris with almost 300 people on board. They demanded that Israel release a hundred imprisoned Palestinian militants. While the plane was at the airport in Entebbe (Uganda), the Israeli Government launched a rescue operation. Israeli aircraft led a commando group which in 52 minutes took an action in which killed all kidnappers and three hostages and rescued all the rest. Details of the operation were never released.

1977

An explosives-laden refrigerator exploded in the centre of Jerusalem. Twenty People die and there are a hundred wounded.

Egyptian President Sadat travelled to Jerusalem in a mission of “peace”. Other Arab Governments define him as a traitor.

1978

Israel invades southern Lebanon.

September: Egypt, Israel, and the US sign the Camp David agreements, offering the Palestinians restricted autonomy in the occupied territories. Israel continues refusing to negotiate with PLO and the latter rejected the autonomy proposal. Egypt is the first Arab country that officially recognises Israel and makes a “peace” agreement separately. The US gives Israel \$ 2.3 billion annual aid. Israel returned to Egypt the Sinai and its rich oil wells. The Arab League rejected the agreement and Egypt is isolated from Islamic countries.

1979

January: revolution in Iran. The Shah flees. Khomeini returns from exile. On 10 February the masses rise, attack the barracks and chase the agents of the secret police (Savak). For almost two years workers’ strikes take place and develop the *shoras* (workers’ councils) and the coordinating committees.

November: the US Embassy in Tehran is occupied with civilian and marines hostages.

27 December: to curb the rising power by the Iranian revolution, the Soviet Union invades Afghanistan.

1980

September: Iraq’s attack against Iran starts.

1981

January: the occupation of the US Embassy in Tehran ends.

October 6: Sadat, President of Egypt, is killed by Islamic fundamentalists amid a military parade. Hosni Mubarak assumes.

1982

April: Iranian troops drive Iraqi invaders out of Kurdistan. The President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, is forced to open peace negotiations.

29 June: Iraq announces its total withdrawal from Iranian territory.

June–July: Iran’s offensive against Iraq starts.

6 June: Israel invades Lebanon. Armed by the US, the Israeli army massacred thousands and thousands of Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians, and razed Beirut. The operation is called "Peace for Galilee". Begin and Sharon promised it would last "twelve hours" and would bring "40 years of peace". Three years later they folded back defeated.

August: PLO fighters are almost decimated. They are forced to leave Beirut and disperse defeated in the Arab countries. Arafat took refuge in Tunisia. He begins his statements on the abandonment of the armed struggle against Israel, the transit to diplomatic channels to achieve a Palestinian "State" coexisting with Israel, and the acceptance of the Resolutions 242 and 338 of the United Nations that legitimise the Zionist State.

September: fascist Lebanese militiamen and Israeli soldiers invaded the civilian refugee camps in Sabra and Shatila, on the outskirts of Beirut. They killed over 1,000 people, mostly elderly, women and children. Ariel Sharon is responsible. Within Israel, a wave of repudiation rises. More than half a million people mobilised by the "Peace Now" movement demand the fall of the Government and to restrict the Zionist expansion.

September: an Israeli–Lebanese–American agreement is signed. Reagan and Mitterrand announce the dispatch of a multinational "peace" force. There will be 5,000 elite soldiers, Americans, French, British, and Italians. Three hundred US advisers prepare the new Government army.

1983

Bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut; 63 dead and hundreds of wounded.

1984

February: popular insurrection in Beirut. The US suffers a major defeat, as they are forced to remove all the Marines with the Sixth Fleet.

1985

February: defeated, Israel withdraws from Lebanon, except in the border area where it promotes the formation of the mercenary South Lebanon Army and Israeli troops remain in the so-called "security Strip".

April: a restaurant in the centre of Madrid is bombed; 18 People die and 82 wounded, 15 are American soldiers.

1986

January: Reagan promotes an economic boycott against Libya, accusing Gaddafi of encouraging terrorist attacks against Israel. The US Sixth Fleet usurps territorial waters of Libya to settle in the Gulf of Sidra.

April: the US bombs Libya. All Arab governments and Iran condemned the attack.

May: Iraq bombs tankers in the Gulf to force the US and Saudi Arabia to enter the war against Iran.

June: the crisis of PLO erupts, with violent clashes. The capitulations of Arafat to Egypt and Israel will strengthen internal opposition and pro-Syrian sectors, there is bloodshed. Arafat and fighters from Fatah are expelled from Tripoli (Libya).

2 October Israel attacks PLO headquarters in Tunisia; 60 Palestinians and 20 Tunisians die.

8 October: Four Palestinians hijack the ship "Achille Lauro". An American tourist is killed.

23 October: suicidal commandos of the Islamic Jihad made an attack against the barracks of American and French troops in Beirut. Over 200 marines and over 50 French soldiers die.

October: there is a general strike of two hours by Israeli workers. They claim against the fall in living standards, linked with the disastrous invasion to Lebanon. Previously there were strikes of the State unions, postal workers, doctors, teachers, port workers, and miners.

October: a Likud–Labour coalition Government is formed in Israel to try to alleviate the strong crisis caused because they are being defeated in Lebanon.

December: there is an explosion on a bus in Jerusalem. It kills four people and there are over 40 wounded.

December: Jihad makes attacks on the Israeli airline El Al, in the airports of Madrid and Rome. 19 passengers are dead and 110 wounded.

December: a scandal bursts in the US when it becomes known that it sold arms to Iran.

1987

9 December: the Intifada begins. In Gaza (which is part of the territories invaded in the 1967 war) in repudiation to the death of four Palestinian workers whose pickup truck was hit by an Israeli army truck, thousands of people take to the streets to shout against the occupiers and to confront the Zionist troops with stones. For months daily demonstrations will continue, which extended to all of Palestine.

December 21: the first mass general strike of the Israeli Arabs in 40 years of Israel existence. The slogan is “for a Palestinian State”.

1988

23 January: thousands of demonstrators from the Peace Now movement go through Tel Aviv demanding a peaceful solution and negotiation with PLO for the two “States” to coexist.

13 February: new demonstration of Peace Now led by members of the Knesset and military heads of the Zionist “left”.

February: US Secretary of State George Schultz begins a tour of the Middle East to try to impose a “peace” plan in exchange for the surrender of a part of the occupied territory.

August: By mutual agreement, military hostilities between Iraq and Iran cease.

November: the Palestinian National Council proclaimed the creation of a “Palestinian State” and implicitly recognises Israel by supporting Resolution 242.

1989

February: the USSR, defeated, withdraws from Afghanistan.

May: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir presented a four-point plan which includes elections in the occupied territories. He ruled out contact with PLO and the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

October: US Secretary of State James Baker proposed a five-point plan which Shamir rejected after forming a right-wing coalition in June 1990.

November: fall of the Berlin Wall.

1990

August: Iraq’s army occupies Kuwait. US imperialism promotes an economic blockade and gigantic war preparations begin. Arafat supports Saddam Hussein. The latter offers territorial concessions to Iran, to win their support. On 16 August 1990, he officially ends the war against Iran.

1991

17 January: start of the Gulf war.

February: Iraq bombs Israel.

End of February: the military coalition of the UN driven by the US defeats Iraq.

March: US President George Bush argues the victory over Iraq opens an opportunity to resolve the Arab–Israeli conflict. Baker travels to the Middle East, in the first of eight peacekeeping missions.

August: Baker proposes the preparation of a Conference on the Middle East in mid-October. Shamir agrees to attend, provided the subject of Palestinian representation is agreed beforehand.

20 October: the Israeli Cabinet accepts the realisation of a peace conference, sponsored by the US and the USSR after Syria, Jordan and Lebanon had agreed to participate.

30 October: at the request of Israel, the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid talks is formed with residents of the occupied territories; hence PLO is formally excluded, even though its officials instruct the delegation.

December: Gorbachev falls and the Soviet Union dissolves.

1992

March: a bomb attack destroyed the Israel Embassy building in Buenos Aires.

23 June: Yitzhak Rabin (of the Labour Party) defeats Shamir (of the Likud Party) in national elections.

27 November: general strike in the occupied territories. There are daily clashes and demonstrations. Thousands of Palestinian prisoners go on hunger strike in 15 Israeli jails.

Israel deported 415 activists of the Palestinian resistance to the ongoing negotiations to a “no man’s land” on the Lebanese border.

1993

19 January: the Israeli Parliament suspends the criminalisation of contact with the PLO, which had been imposed in 1986. Rabin still refuses to negotiate with the organisation directly.

February: attack on the Twin Towers in New York; 5 dead and over 1,000 wounded.

27 April: negotiations, which had been suspended by Israeli repression, restart. There are 396 Palestinians still deported.

August 12: Israel does not object the unprecedented decision to appoint seven members of the PLO to the Palestinian Peace delegation. Days later resignations take place and there is a crisis in the leadership of PLO. There are rumours about secret meetings reaching a tentative agreement on the autonomy of the occupied territories.

31 August: the Israeli cabinet approved a draft agreement with PLO regarding Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho. PLO states the clause of its National Charter that denies the existence of Israel has no effect or value.

23 September: in Oslo (Norway) the historic agreement between PLO and Israel is signed: mutual recognition; Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho for five years; elections in nine months for an Autonomy Council; removal of the Zionist army and creation of a Palestinian police force. Signed by Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Prime Minister, Yasser Arafat, PLO, and US President Bill Clinton. Major Palestinian groups — Hamas, Hezbollah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and others— reject the agreement, and the Governments of Libya, Sudan, Iran and Iraq as well.

1994

February: Israeli attacks Hezbollah bases in southern Lebanon.

In Hebron, a Jewish physician kills over 50 Palestinians who were praying inside a mosque. In the subsequent unrest, Israeli soldiers kill dozens more and there were hundreds of wounded. At the funeral, the soldiers killed three other Palestinians and left 50 injured.

4 May: in Cairo, Rabin and Arafat sign the agreement for autonomy in Gaza and Jericho.

21 May: an Israeli commando, in a blitz operation, kidnapped a leader of Hezbollah while he slept in his home in a small town in the north of Lebanon.

2 June: Israel’s bombing of a training camp of Hezbollah in the Bekaa Valley (Lebanon). It was the bloodiest in seven years, with 45 dead and over 70 wounded. Lebanon requests an urgent meeting of the Security Council. The Arab League condemned the attack.

9 June: as per the Arafat–Rabin agreements, Israel begins the release of Palestinian prisoners.

15 June: for the first time, Israel and the Vatican establish diplomatic relations.

1 July: after 27 years of exile, Arafat returns for the first time in a public and official way to Palestine, visiting the Gaza Strip.

5 July: the “Palestinian Autonomous Government” settles in Jericho.

15 July: Bill Clinton announces that on 25 July Rabin and King Hussein of Jordan will meet in Washington. Both countries are technically at war since 1948.

17 July: Israeli repression on Palestinian workers in the main border post between Gaza and Israel, the Erez Crossing. There are two dead and 92 wounded. Thousands of Palestinians face repression.

18 July: a bomb attack destroyed the six floors of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) building in Buenos Aires and several neighbouring buildings. There are dozens of dead and missing and over 100 wounded. Soon after, in Panama, an aircraft explodes in flight carrying Jewish businessmen and, in London, a car-bomb exploded by the Embassy of Israel.

25 July: Rabin and King Hussein are presented before the US Congress and they announce the start of peace negotiations. Syria, with the support of Lebanon, says separate agreements with Israel weaken the Arabs. PLO rejects the Israeli–Jordanian agreement.

27 July: Rabin makes a new proposal to Syrian President Hafez Assad on the Golan Heights.

Israeli bombing in the south of Lebanon. There are eight (nearly all women and children) dead and 30 wounded.

26 October: Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel. Bill Clinton attends the ceremony.

1995

9 April: two Palestinian suicide terrorists kill seven Israelis soldiers and a student in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Authority detains 170 Islamic fundamentalist activists.

28 September: agreement in Washington between Israel and Palestinians of autonomy to Palestinian territories.

4 November: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by a student of an ultra-Orthodox Jewish group.

1996

20 January: Arafat is elected Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, with 88 per cent of the votes.

21 May: elections in Israel give a win by a narrow margin to the candidate of the right, Benjamin Netanyahu.

April: Israel bombs civilian targets in the south of Lebanon.

September: the opening of a tunnel threatens the foundations of the mosque of Al Aqsa in Jerusalem, one of the most important. The fact is regarded as a provocation by the Palestinians. There is a popular rebellion and confrontation with the army of Israel that costs 70 dead and hundreds of wounded.

1998

23 October: at Wye Plantation (United States), Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister, and Arafat agree to the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank and the release of Palestinian detainees. Two months later Israel froze the agreement.

1999

4 September: Barak signs with Arafat, in Egypt, a modified version of the Wye Plantation Accords; a part of Palestinian prisoners is released and the Israel army withdraws from Palestinian administration areas.

2000

24 May: the Israeli Army abruptly abandons Lebanon. Israel suffers a hard military defeat. What they planned as a gradual and ordered withdrawal becomes a rout, leaving to their fate the mercenary Christian fascists of the South Lebanon Army, armed by Israel. Hezbollah fighters occupy the whole south of Lebanon, take over tanks and artillery left behind by the Israeli army in their flight and free hundreds of resistant Lebanese prisoners.

July: Arafat, Barak, and Clinton meet at Camp David, the summer residence of US Presidents, for several days with the declared purpose of signing a peace agreement. But the Summit ends in failure.

10 September: the Palestinian Central Council adjourned to 15 November the proclamation of a Palestinian independent State in West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This proclamation was scheduled for 13 September when interim agreements with Israel expire.

October: the Intifada extends to all the occupied territories and also to the inside of the Israeli State. Across the Arab world grows an unstoppable wave of solidarity. In Yemen 500,000 demonstrators take to the streets shouting “death to the United States, death to Israel!” Iraq announces a million volunteers had enrolled to fight Israel. Hundreds of thousands also mobilise in Morocco.

12 October: the destroyer USS Cole, one of the most modern of the US fleet, “encountered” an explosive boat on the shores of Yemen, causing a gaping hole and the death of 17 marines and dozens of wounded. The response of the United States is surprisingly cautious. Closes 37 embassies in Africa and Asia to prevent new attacks and announces “they will investigate” the attack on the destroyer.

17 October: Summit at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, between Arafat and Barak, hosted by the United States. It is agreed to “stop the violence”. But the agreement has no effect. The Intifada continues with force. Marwan Barghouti, chief

of the Tanzim, the Palestinian militia of Fatah, said that the Intifada “cannot be stopped with an order... It is the masses on the streets”.

2001

February: Ariel Sharon, leader of the right-wing Likud party, the mass-murderer of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon, wins the election to Prime Minister in Israel

April–May: climb in violence. For the first time since 1967, Israel used F-16 aircraft to bomb densely populated areas causing 12 dead, 120 injured, and destruction of several buildings. The pretext is a Palestinian suicide bombing at an Israeli shopping centre. The Israeli bombardment is repudiated internationally. Even the Bush administration hypocritically condemns the attack, saying “they should stop it”.

11 September: attack and destruction of the Twin Towers in New York.

7 October: the United States start the invasion of Afghanistan, under the pretext they will capture Bin Laden, the supposed mastermind of the attack on the Twin Towers. Although, despite sophisticated military machinery and spy satellites, they do not find him.

17 October: a Palestinian command, claimed by the Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine, kills in a Jerusalem hotel the ultra-right Tourism Minister Rejabam Zeevi.

December: confinement of Arafat in the Mukataaa, headquarters or administrative centre in Ramallah, West Bank. After a wave of suicidal Palestinian attacks, Israel accused the Palestinian President of not acting to stop them and the Israeli Army established a military siege to Arafat offices.

2002

10 March: thirty shells fired in a little less than 40 minutes destroyed the residence of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Gaza early in the morning. Previously the international airport in Rafah, Ramallah’s Radio and TV and the Orient House in Jerusalem had been bombed and destroyed.

29 March: after a day of violent military assault with tanks and artillery to the offices of Yasser Arafat in Ramallah, in what little remained afoot of the Mukataaa, the Israeli forces say they control almost the entire complex.

In the midst of the Israeli offensive on Ramallah, another suicide bombing in Jerusalem left a toll of three dead and over 20 wounded. The attack was carried out by a young Palestinian woman of 16 years that exploded in a supermarket in the Kiryat Yovel area.

In a message aired at the end of the emergency meeting of the Israeli Cabinet, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced the offensive saying: “We are facing a coalition of terror and Arafat is an enemy to isolate.” Arafat replied on the Arab television network Al-Jazeera, pointing out that the Palestinians would never surrender in their “struggle for an independent State” and accused Israel of not wanting “peace”.

Meanwhile, in the rest of the Palestinian territories there were violent protests against the Israeli offensive and also the attacks continued. Additionally, in Jerusalem, police collided with Palestinian demonstrators protesting near the Al-Aqsa Mosque, where the second Intifada began. There were also protests in the camps of Palestinian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.

3 April: Jenin massacre. The Israeli army invaded the Palestinian towns of Jenin and Salfit. At the same time, they continue operations in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Tulkarm, and Qalqilya. In Jenin, the Israeli army bombs, invades, and destroys this Palestinian camp of 15,000 inhabitants. Palestinians resist heroically house to house against Israeli bulldozers and tanks. There are 500 dead and thousands injured, including elderly and children among the Palestinians. United Nations envoy, Terje Roed-Larsen, was able to enter the settlement after the Israeli withdrawal, and spoke of “an appalling, unacceptable and irresponsible situation”. The European Union says “we must investigate”.

16 June: the construction of the wall begins, including the confiscation of land and the destruction of thousands of olive trees near the village of Salem, in the north of Israel, and to the west of the West Bank town of Jenin, after the Council of Ministers of Israel approve raising the halfway point of a “security fence”, from an initial length of approximately 350 km, designed to prevent the infiltration of “Palestinian terrorists”.

Late July: the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Salah Shehade is killed with a one-ton missile. The missile killed another 15 Palestinians and wounded another hundred.

September 11: the Israeli Government decides that the tomb of the biblical matriarch, Rachel, in the West Bank's Bethlehem district is under its sovereignty which is the annexation of 25 per cent of the territory of the city.

September 22: Israel again bombed Arafat's offices in Ramallah. Thousands of Palestinians defy curfew to surround the Mukataa and defend their leader.

2003

January: in the framework of the III Social Forum of Porto Alegre there is a rally of 20,000 people in solidarity with Palestine and calling for penalties on Israel.

15 March: huge demonstrations against the imminent war and invasion of Iraq. In Europe, there are over one million protesters in Great Britain and Spain.

20 March: US troops begin the invasion of Iraq.

17 May: Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon and his Palestinian colleague, Mahmoud Abbas, meet to discuss a new peace plan called the Road Map sponsored by the quartet comprising the United States, the European Union, the Russian Federation, and the United Nations. "Phase I" is to "combat terrorism". Abbas agrees on behalf of the PNA to suppress "terrorist acts" against Israel. Israel promises not to demolish Palestinian homes or infrastructure or attacking civilians. "Phase II", when the "first" is reached, is to create a Palestinian State without defining its possible borders.

July: the Minister of Defence announces the culmination of the first phase of the wall, a total of 180 kilometres while adding US\$171 million for its construction.

29 September: Israel includes the Jewish settlement of Ariel on the Israeli side of the separation wall it builds in the West Bank, amputating another sector of the West Bank, despite the President of the United States, George W. Bush, saying he opposes it. Subsequently, the wall includes several settlements more, up to 20 kilometres within the West Bank.

9 November: the Palestinian population protest on the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, against the "separation barrier" in a series of mass demonstrations, while in 22 other countries there are demonstrations in solidarity.

8 December: the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution which calls on the International Court of Justice in The Hague to rule on the legality of the construction of a wall.

2004

12 February: the Government of Israel decides not to appear before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, whose deliberations on the separation wall begin on the 23rd.

26 February: the Palestinians Zakaria Mahmoud 'Eid Salem, age 28, and Muhammad Fadel Hashem Rian, age 25, die by gunfire from Israeli soldiers, making them the first Palestinians who lose their lives in a protest against the wall.

29 February: the Israeli Supreme Court judges ordered to halt the construction of a section of the "security wall" that Israel is building amid growing protests in Palestinian lands of the West Bank.

22 March: in Rafah, Israeli helicopters armed with missiles killed the head of Hamas, Ahmed Yassin, along with other seven Palestinians. The founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, age 67, was in his wheelchair at the exit of the mosque in the neighbourhood of Sabra where he had gone to pray when he was the target of an Israeli helicopter which fired three rockets in his direction, killing two others and injuring 13, including two sons of Yassin. His funeral became the largest mobilisation against the Zionist occupation in recent years. More than 200,000 Palestinians paraded crying vengeance. The mobilisations of repudiation and indignation against the United States, Israel, and Arab Governments, spread to important countries in the region such as Egypt and Jordan.

15 April: the UN Human Rights Commission adopted a resolution by 27 votes in favour, 24 abstentions, and 2 against — United States and the Republic Democratic of the Congo — which calls upon Israel to destroy the wall of separation from the occupied territories and put an end to its policy of settlements in these areas.

July: armed rebellion in Gaza against Palestinian authorities of the PNA. Militiamen occupy Parliament, the police chief is kidnapped and forced to resign. He was accused of corruption.

July: 171 Palestinian organisations and trade unions make an international call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions to Israel

2 July: in the United States, 500,000 demonstrators in New York mobilised against the war in Iraq and against Bush. The largest demonstration since the Vietnam era.

26 September: a high official of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) died in Damascus when a bomb exploded under his vehicle; days later the Government of Israel accused Syria of providing refuge to “Palestinian terrorists”. The attack occurred in the Palestinian refugee camp of Al Zahra, where the victim, Izz Eldine Subhi Sheik Khalil, lived for three years after having been deported by the Israeli authorities following the first Intifada (1987-1993).

October: attacks with handicraft Qassam rockets from the Gaza Strip. Israel invades Gaza with armoured vehicles and air support. Many houses are destroyed and in two weeks adding over one hundred victims among civilians and militiamen. The Zionists used Palestinians as human shields to advance in more conflicting areas.

2 November: in the United States, George W. Bush is re-elected.

8 November: US attack in Iraq to the city of Fallujah, with bombings, a massive invasion, the killing of civilians, and the destruction of a big portion of the houses and public buildings. Heroic popular resistance which also causes heavy casualties to US troops.

11 November: Yasser Arafat dies in a clinic in Paris; his remains are buried in Ramallah. The precise reasons for his death never became known. Palestinian sources suspect he was poisoned by Zionist agents. On 12 November, the burial of Arafat in Ramallah, in the destroyed Mukataa, was an impressive mass rally. “As soon as they see the Egyptian helicopters appearing in the skies of Ramallah from Cairo, the crowd broke out in tears and cheered its President. ‘Abu Ammar, Abu Ammar!’”, they cried, in memory of the Arafat’s nom de guerre.” The mob broke all the protocols and took the coffin in their arms. “We don’t need bureaucrats, Abu Ammar was buried by the people”, said a teenage hoarse from yelling.

2005

9 January: Abbas, candidate of Fatah, wins with 65 per cent of the vote the elections to replace Arafat as President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The independent left opposition candidate is Mustafa Barghouti, who took 23 per cent. Hamas boycotted the election.

8 February: the President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Mahmoud Abbas, and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared a cease-fire in Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt) bilaterally.

21 March: Israel handed over control of the city of Tulkarm in the West Bank to the Palestinian National Authority.

18 May: Israel launched the biggest offensive in the Gaza Strip, in Rafah. The stated goal of the operation was to find and destroy underground tunnels through which Palestinian militants have access to weaponry coming in smuggled from Egypt.

June: in the vicinity of Jenin, Israeli troops kill Maruh Kamil, a local leader of Islamic Jihad, in what is denounced by the Palestinians as the restart of practices of selective murders answered with more attacks on Israeli settlements.

August: the Israeli withdrawal from 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip and four others to the north of the West Bank starts. With this, they say, a 38-year occupation comes to an end to. The reality is it was very costly for Israel to defend the small Gaza Strip settlements, besieged by the Palestinian revolt. Following the withdrawal of the Israelis from the Gaza Strip, Israel issued an order to seize West Bank land and raise a security barrier surrounding the Jewish settlement of Ma’ale Adumim. The withdrawal triggered a political crisis in Israel. A strong movement against Sharon’s “disengagement plan” starts and even clashes with soldiers who evicted the Zionist settlers.

September: Israel declared its boundary with the Gaza Strip as an international border, formally marking a division.

November: the political crisis in Israel, caused by the Gaza withdrawal, is expressed in the split of Likud. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert, and other main leaders of Likud founded a new party called Kadima, which supports Sharon’s plan against the wing of Likud who opposed the Gaza withdrawal.

15 December: Hamas achieves victory in the municipal elections in the West Bank and Gaza, defeating the Fatah movement.

December: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, 77, suffers a stroke that leaves him in a coma. Ehud Olmert assumed functions as acting Prime Minister.

2006

25 January: Political earthquake in Palestine. Hamas won the legislative elections with the program of non-recognition of Israel. It is the first time in history that Fatah loses an election. Hamas achieved 39 per cent of the vote and 76 members (out of 132). Fatah 35 per cent and 43 members. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) 5 per cent and 3 members. The movement of Mustafa Barghouti received 3 per cent and 2 members.

Ismail Haniyeh is the new Prime Minister. Hamas proposed to share the Government with Fatah in a national unity Government. Israel, the United States, and the European Union enacted the total economic blockade against the new Government.

10 April: Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declares he will complete the withdrawal of the majority of the Jewish settlers on the West Bank, will strengthen the presence in other strategic areas and define the borders of their country before 2008.

10 June: while children and adults enjoyed the sea beach of Beit Lahia, north of Gaza, they are attacked with bombs and missiles from Israel ships. Fifteen civilians killed and there are dozens of wounded, among them children.

27 June: Hamas and the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, came to an agreement on a document that implicitly would recognise the right of Israel to exist. However, the document is ambiguous enough to give rise to different interpretations. Hamas denies it recognises Israel.

Mid-June: Israeli unmanned aircraft during several days make successive attacks with missiles to Palestinian militiamen and possible points of Qassam rocket release on Sderot and other Israeli border towns. Missiles cause the death of several civilians, including children.

28 June: a joint command of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other two Palestinian militia forces attacked by surprise the Israeli base of Telem, near the border crossing of Kerem Shalom through an underground tunnel causing three casualties and capturing Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

29 June: under the pretext of releasing corporal Shalit, Israel begins the invasion and bombing of Gaza, killing hundreds, destroying houses, roads, and its main power plant. The Palestinians demand the release of children and women, among the 9,000 Palestinian prisoners with Israel, as a condition for the release of the corporal. In subsequent weeks, Israel also invades West Bank and kidnaps a large part of the legitimate Government of Palestine, headed by Hamas. In addition, it produces a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza destroying the power station, workshops and houses. The Israeli army detained 10 Ministers and 20 members of the Legislative Council. The Israeli Minister of Internal Security, Roni Baron, considered them suspects of "having participated in terrorist activities against Israel". Among the personalities arrested figure the Labour Minister, Mohammad Barghouti, the most popular leader of Fatah. Besides Barghouti, the other Ministers were Khaled Abu Arafam, Nayef Rajoub, Samir Abu Eishah, Issa Al-Jabari, Omar Abdel Razek, Wasfi Kabha, and Fakhri Al-Turkmani.

12 July–15 August: Lebanon War; two Israeli soldiers captured by the Lebanese resistance of Hezbollah in a border battle, on land that Israel occupies. Israel, under this pretext, sparks a 34-day war against Lebanon. It discharges thousands of bombs on the small country. It bombs Beirut, the capital, and other cities. The south is razed. One million Lebanese must leave their homes. Tens of thousands of homes are destroyed. Around 2000 Lebanese die and there are thousands of wounded. Israel invades to destroy Hezbollah. But they fail. The Hezbollah militia heroically resists the Israeli ground onslaught. Israel lost hundreds of its soldiers and over 150 tanks. The Israeli genocidal army must withdraw humiliated. It is the most serious defeat of Israel in its history.

4 August: Iraq; one million demonstrators organised by the Iraqi Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr shouted in the streets of Baghdad "death to the United States, death to Israel! Allah, give victory to Nasrallah", directly defying the US occupants.

7 November: a catastrophic electoral defeat of George W. Bush in the United States. The Democrats win the majority in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The almost exclusive subject of the election was the war. All analysts agree it was a referendum against the war. The Democrats propose only "change of course" (without saying which course) but enough to get them voted against Bush.

November: Israel bombs Gaza, killing 81 people in just one week.

1 December: in Lebanon, a million protesters, led by Hezbollah, demand on the streets the resignation of Maronite Christian Prime Minister Fuad Siniora, accused of being pro-US and of having boycotted the national defence against Israel. The slogan of Hezbollah is “for a Government of national unity”.

15 December: Hamas and Fatah followers face each other with gunfire in Ramallah and Gaza. The clashes arise when the retinue of Haniyeh is headed to the Gaza Strip with money collected from Arab countries to break the Israeli blockade. The Hamas militia took by storm the Israeli post of Rafah to break the blockade. Finally, Haniyeh crossed the border without the money and then his entourage is attacked with gunfire by Palestinian policemen. Hamas accused the police chief of Abbas of trying to assassinate Prime Minister Haniyeh. One of Haniyeh’s bodyguards died and his eldest son was wounded.

In protest against these events, there was a demonstration the next day in the Gaza Strip, involving at least 100,000 supporters of Hamas. The police of Fatah have repressed the demonstration with gunfire. In the clashes, there were at least 13 people injured, mostly militants of Hamas. There have also been protests in Ramallah where at least 32 people were injured by firearms. A prominent Hamas leader has accused President Abbas of starting a war by ordering his security forces to fire on the demonstration. The attacks to members of Hamas multiplied. In Gaza, also, a judge is killed by masked men. Hamas accused Fatah.

2007

8 February: Hamas and Fatah reached agreement in the Saudi city of Mecca on a unity Government, after a bloody power struggle.

9 April: Iraq, one million Shiite protesters demand US withdrawal of Iraq in a new anniversary of the entry of the invaders in Baghdad.

1 May: a crisis in Israel. A report from the armed forces starkly revealed the military setback suffered in Lebanon. 200,000 demonstrators demand Olmert get out.

May: new bombings to Gaza destroy power plants. The argument, this time, are the rockets that Palestinians shoot on the Israeli town of Sderot.

June: coup d’état of the Government of Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah against Hamas. In the Gaza Strip Mohammed Dahlan, leader of a sector of Fatah, the former head of the Preventive Security Force, tries to liquidate Hamas with weapons supplied by Israel, after months of attacks and murders. The coup fails. After five days of clashes, Hamas takes Gaza defeating Dahlan. In retaliation, Abbas dismisses Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, of the majority party Hamas, and appointed by decree a Prime Minister linked to Fatah. Two antagonistic governments of the ANP are formed. In the West Bank Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah, dominates and Hamas rules Gaza.

September: Israel declared the Gaza Strip as an “enemy entity”, deepening the blockade.

27 November: Annapolis Conference. While Israel still continues blocking Gaza, in Annapolis, Egypt, a “peace” Conference is held. The leaders of Israel, Ehud Olmert, and of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, under the umbrella of the United States, declare they restarted negotiations that would lead to a final peace agreement before the end of 2008 and whose focal point will be the creation of an independent Palestinian State. President George W. Bush reported the Declaration agreed in Annapolis is the beginning of finding the peace that both want and that it is the right time to avoid terrorists continuing their attacks in the region. Meanwhile, the blockade to Gaza continues. Tens of thousands of demonstrators take to the streets in Ramallah (West Bank) and Gaza to repudiate the Conference as a new deception and a new betrayal of Abbas.

2008

January: Gaza is subjected to a blockade by land, air, and sea. Israel has cut fuel and electricity supplies leaving all the Gaza Strip and its 1.5 million inhabitants in the dark and without any kind of energy. The blockade does not allow the move of the population and the exit or entry of goods, in addition to prohibiting the entry of UN humanitarian aid. Palestinians desperate reaction expressed by the launch of craft rockets is used by Israel to justify the blockade and bombing with a rain of deadly missiles of advanced technology which in only three weeks resulted in 75 dead and hundreds of injured, most civilians and, among them, children.

23 January: Palestinians in Gaza demolished the wall that separated them from Egypt, thus breaking the Israeli blockade. Hundreds of thousands enter Egypt to get resupplied. In Egypt demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinians multiply.

13 February: Imad Fayez Mughniyeh, a high command of the armed Hezbollah operations is killed in a bombing in the Syrian capital, Damascus. Hezbollah accuses Israel.

10 April: Israeli offensive by land and air in the Gaza Strip. At least eight Palestinian dead and 25 others injured, three of them children in a critical condition.

16 April: the death in combat of three Israeli soldiers unleashes a new massive attack. At least 18 Palestinians were killed, including several children and other unarmed civilians, and over 30 were wounded in the Gaza Strip in attacks by Israeli aircraft and ground forces using tanks. Among the dead is the cameraman working for the news agency Reuters, Fadel Shana'a, who was hit by gunfire from an Israeli tank while filming. He had travelled there in a car which clearly indicated that it was a vehicle of television and the press. They killed him at the start of filming the tank.

17 April: former US President Jimmy Carter met the political leader of Hamas, Khaled Mashal. Carter says it will negotiate as an intermediary for the Minister of Industry of Israel, Eli Yishai, on the case of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, held by Palestinian militias since June 2006. The interview between Carter and Mashal was held at Hamas headquarters in Damascus and it was also attended by several leaders of the Palestinian group based in the Syrian capital. The meeting was held despite the criticisms in recent days from the United States and Israel, who do not see with good eyes that Carter will meet with Hamas representatives.

24 April: demonstrations of tens of thousands of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip went to the Erez Crossing with Israel, in the north, and the Rafah border crossing with Egypt in the south, to protest against the 10-month Israeli siege that has stifled the economy of Gaza.

28 April: an incursion by the Israeli army in Gaza resulted in the death of four young children and their mother, who were in their home when they received the impact of a shell fired from a tank. This was a few days after Hamas, ruling in Gaza, proposed a truce to Israel.

11 and 14 May: Israel makes a lacklustre celebration of its anniversary with Bush as star guest on Sunday 11. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert faces trial for corruption that could cost him the post. The Palestinians made massive demonstrations of repudiation on 14 May. In Ramallah, demonstrators released 22 thousand black balloons, one for each day since the Nakba, the catastrophe, of 60 years earlier.

