



# ASIA MAIOR

Vol. XXXVI / 2025

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**Asia in 2025:  
Great power rivalry, contested politics,  
and global disorder**

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**viella**



CENTRO STUDI PER I POPOLI EXTRA-EUROPEI “CESARE BONACOSSA” - UNIVERSITÀ DI PAVIA

# ASIA MAIOR

The Journal of the Italian think tank on Asia founded by Giorgio Borsa in 1989

Vol. XXXVI / 2025

## Asia in 2025: Great power rivalry, contested polities, and global disorder

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## SPECIAL ARTICLE

### «COLONIALISM OF A DUAL NATURE»: FAYEZ A. SAYEGH, THE PALESTINE RESEARCH CENTER AND A PALESTINIAN GENEALOGY OF THE SETTLER COLONIAL PARADIGM

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*This article traces the intellectual genealogy of the analysis of Zionism as a form of settler colonialism, arguing that its core concepts were first systematically developed in the mid-1960s and early 1970s within Palestinian anti-colonial thought. Focusing on the contributions of the Palestine Research Center and, in particular, on the work of Fayez A. Sayegh, who first conceptualized Zionism as a «colonialism of a dual nature», it shows that ideas later central to settler colonial theory, such as the logic of elimination, the primacy of land over labour, the permanence of settler structures, and the racialization of sovereignty, were already clearly articulated within the Palestinian liberation movement. It further examines how this framework shaped Palestinian diplomatic efforts at the United Nations, including Resolution 3379 (1975), and underpinned the proposal for a single democratic state in historic Palestine. The article calls for a reassessment of settler colonial theory's genealogy, recognizing Palestinian thought as a foundational contribution to the field.*

**KEYWORDS** – Fayez A. Sayegh; Palestine; Zionism; settler colonialism; anti-colonial thought; PLO Research Center; Resolution 3379; decolonisation; racial ideology; Palestinian political thought.

#### 1. Introduction

In recent years, settler colonial studies have emerged as a distinct interdisciplinary field, marked by the proliferation of conferences, scholarly works, and a dedicated academic journal. Settler colonialism is understood as a specific colonial domination that operates not primarily through the extraction of Indigenous labour or resources, but through the elimination of Indigenous presence and its replacement with incoming settler populations who assert exclusive claims to land and sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> The settler colonial

1. See the foundational works of the field: Wolfe [1999]; Wolfe [2006]; Veracini [2010]; Veracini [2011].



«turn» has proven particularly influential in the study of Israel/Palestine, where Zionism has increasingly been understood as a form of settler colonialism characterized by land appropriation, the displacement and elimination of the Indigenous Palestinian population, and the establishment of a racially exclusive settler state [Busbridge 2018; Sa'di and Masalha 2013]. Such a reading helps account for both the foundations and recurrent patterns of Zionist violence, the structural asymmetry between settlers and natives, and the persistent failure of diplomatic agendas premised on parity or partition, which portray Israeli Jews and Palestinians as equivalent actors rather than as embedded in a hierarchical settler-colonial relationship [Salamanca et al. 2013].

However, this analytical framework did not originate within the contemporary academic field of settler colonial studies. From the early twentieth century through the post-1948 period, Arab and Palestinian intellectuals clearly identified the structural aspects of Zionist colonization of Palestine that contemporary scholarship now recognises as defining features of settler colonialism [Pappé 2015; Bhandar and Ziadah 2016; Sabbagh-Khoury 2021]. In the early twentieth century, as European powers partitioned Arab territories after World War I and Zionist settlement consolidated under the British Mandate, many Palestinian intellectuals increasingly characterized Zionism as a European-backed colonial project. Land transfers from absentee landlords, resulting in the displacement of Arab tenant farmers, the policy of «Hebrew labour» favouring Jewish workers over Arab labourers, and the establishment of autonomous Jewish institutions were all interpreted as mechanisms for creating a separate settler society, intentionally distinct from the indigenous Arab population. Although the formal terminology of settler colonialism had not yet developed, Palestinian writers at that time effectively described the particular form of colonialism they were witnessing, one characterized by foreign imperial backing, permanent settlement of Jewish settlers, exclusive land ownership, and economic and social separation, with the ultimate goal of altering the demographic balance of Mandatory Palestine.

While these early Palestinian reflections on Zionism remain significant, they largely focused on the immediate consequences of Jewish immigration. They did not yet conceptualize Zionism as a distinct form of settler colonialism. It was only with the emergence of an independent Palestinian national liberation movement in the mid-1960s that Zionism began to be systematically analyzed through a settler colonial lens. This was also part of a broader effort to develop a strategic discourse aimed at securing international solidarity by linking the Palestinian struggle to global anti-colonial movements, thereby transforming the Palestinian cause from a localized nationalist movement or a regional dispute over borders and refugees into part of a broader anti-imperialist framework. In this context, the Palestine Research Center, founded in Beirut in 1965 as the main research arm of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), played a major role in organizing and facilitating the intellectual effort to define Zionism as a form of

settler colonialism and provided Palestinian scholars with a platform to conduct a systematic examination of the various aspects of Zionism and Israeli society.<sup>2</sup> Early publications of the Research Center and the journal *Shu'ūn Filasṭīniyya* contributed to the development of the vocabulary used to describe the Palestinian anti-colonial struggle and the specific colonial enterprise it confronted. Their influence extended far beyond academic circles, influencing the intellectual and ideological underpinnings of the PLO's political discourse and international strategy during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

This article seeks to contribute to the reconstruction of an intellectual genealogy that has received limited scholarly attention so far. Within this genealogy, Fayeẓ A. Sayegh (1922-1980) stands out as one of the earliest and most rigorous theorists of Zionist settler colonialism. The article places Sayegh's work within the context of the Palestine Research Center, explores the affinities between his conceptualisation of Zionism and later settler-colonial theory, and assesses how this framework influenced legal and diplomatic efforts at the United Nations (UN). The article further examines how Palestinian resistance organizations framed Zionism as a form of settler colonialism and how this understanding informed a political vision of decolonization through the establishment of a single democratic state in all of historic Palestine. It argues that Palestinian anticolonial discourse not only prefigures key ideas later developed in settler colonial theory but also provides conceptual tools for understanding the enduring and structural dynamics that continue to sustain Zionist settler-colonial violence in Palestine. While much research on this topic remains to be done, this study suggests that many of the concepts and terminology later formalized within settler-colonial studies had already been articulated with remarkable clarity in mid-twentieth-century Palestinian anti-colonial thought.

## 2. «Colonialism of a dual nature»

Fayeẓ A. Sayegh, founder and first director of the Palestine Research Center, was the key figure in this intellectual development.<sup>4</sup> Through his combined

2. For a bibliographic list of the publications of the Palestine Research Center see Husary [2018]. Among the most recent studies of the Palestine Research Center's intellectual legacy and publications, especially regarding Zionism, see Gribetz [2024]. For historical background, see: Sleiman [2016] and Jiryis and Qallab [1985].

3. Across their large body of publications, they also helped develop and circulate the analogy between Israel and other apartheid regimes like South Africa and Rhodesia, which later would shape much of the scholarship and international legal debates on the subjects of racism and colonialism. For instance, in 1969, the Palestine Research Center published Richard Stevens' essay on Zionism in South Africa [1969].

4. Born in Kharaba, Syria, in 1922 to a Christian family and raised in Palestine, Fayeẓ Abdallah Sayegh left for the United States in 1947, earning a PhD in philosophy from Georgetown University. He later held academic appointments at Yale,

work as a scholar, educator and diplomat, he exercised significant intellectual influence in shaping the PLO's political discourse and diplomatic strategy during the late 1960s and 1970s, a formative period for Palestinian national institutions. Acting as a diplomatic advocate of the Palestinian cause in international forums, he also left an enduring mark on how it was perceived worldwide. Sayegh was one of the earliest scholars who offered a comprehensive interpretation of Zionism as a form of settler colonialism rooted in racial exclusivism. Undoubtedly, his understanding of Zionism was influenced by the global wave of decolonization struggles that defined the 1950s and 1960s and by the anti-colonial theory emerging from international forums such as the Non-Aligned Movement. Writing during the height of Asian and African liberation movements, he placed Zionism within the same analytical categories used to critique other European settler projects, such as Algeria under French settler rule, and South Africa and Rhodesia under white minority domination. In particular, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa allowed for drawing parallels between racial separation policies there and Israeli practices toward Palestinians.<sup>5</sup>

Stanford, Oxford, Macalester College, and the American University of Beirut. While in Lebanon, he was active in the Syrian Social Nationalist Party for a few years until he was expelled after disputes with his founder. In the PLO's institutions, he served as a member of the Executive Committee from 1964-66, during which he was also Director General of the Palestine Research Center and as a member of the Palestine National Council (PNC) from 1964-80. A prolific scholar, Sayegh authored numerous monographs on Palestine, Zionism, Arab nationalism, and the United Nations. He also served with the Lebanese, Yemeni, and Kuwaiti delegations to the UN, eventually becoming chief of the Arab States delegation. From 1968 until his death in 1980, he was the Rapporteur of the Special Committee established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

5. In this regard, it is worth noting that in its 1962 program, the South African Communist Party coined the concept of «colonialism of a special type» to analyse the settler-colonial nature of apartheid South Africa. The term, which later exerted considerable influence on the strategy of the African National Congress, was developed to describe the specific form of colonialism where both the colonizer and the colonized lived in the same country, with South Africa's white minority functioning as an internal colonizing force, economically and politically dominating the black majority. In comparative terms, it is interesting to note how the concept of «colonialism of a special type» and Sayegh's formulation of Zionism as «colonialism of a dual nature», though emerging in different political contexts, were both products of the 1960s anti-colonial theory and share notable similarities, especially in the way both systems institutionalized racial hierarchy through law and territorial segregation. However, whereas the concept of «colonialism of a special type» identified racial capitalism and the exploitation of Black labour as the structural foundation of settler domination, Sayegh's formulation of «colonialism of a dual nature» identified the driving logic of Zionism not in labour extraction but in demographic replacement, resulting in far graver consequences for the Indigenous population. While the first concept describes a system of internal colonial *exploitation*, Sayegh describes a form of settler colonial *elimination*.

In his seminal work, *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* [Sayegh 1965], he formulated what can now be recognized as an ante litteram definition of settler colonialism.<sup>6</sup> Long before the consolidation of contemporary settler colonial theory, Sayegh recognized its fundamental logic: the inherent drive to eliminate the Indigenous presence and replace it with a settler polity claiming exclusive sovereignty on the land.<sup>7</sup> According to Sayegh, Zionism represents a specific form of colonialism characterized by a «dual nature»: on the one hand, it entails the expulsion and eradication of the Indigenous population; on the other hand, it involves the establishment and solidification of a racially exclusive settler polity. The colonization of Palestine, he argues:

Took the combined form of forcible dispossession of the indigenous population, their expulsion from their own country, the implantation of an alien sovereignty on their soil, and the speedy importation of hordes of aliens to occupy the land thus emptied of its rightful inhabitants. The people of Palestine have lost not only *political control* over its country, but *physical occupation* of its country as well: it has been deprived not only of its inalienable right to *self-determination*, but also of its elemental right to *exist* on its own land. [Sayegh 1965, p. v]

Sayegh identified three core features of Zionist settler colonialism. The first one is its racist character. In his view, racism lies at the heart of Zionist colonialism, serving as both its ideological justification and the driving force behind the displacement of the Indigenous population. The Zionist racist character gives rise to three interrelated principles that form the core of its ideology: «racial self-segregation, racial exclusiveness, and racial supremacy» [*Ibid.*, p. 22]. The Zionist project of building a society grounded on the principle of Jewish racial supremacy could only be realized under conditions of Jewish self-segregation and exclusive possession of the land. The expulsion of non-Jews (that is, of Palestinians) thus emerges as a fundamental premise of Zionist racial supremacy: «If *racial discrimination* against the ‘inferior natives’ was the motto of race-supremacist European settler-regimes in Asia and Africa, the motto of the race-supremacist Zionist settler-regime in Palestine was *racial elimination*» [*Ibid.*, p. 27]. Through his reading of Zionism as a form of European race supremacy, Sayegh was able to draw comparative parallels with other racially exclusive regimes, anticipating what would later emerge as «the apartheid analogy» [Fischer

6. *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* was published in its ‘Palestine Monographs’ series in English, French, and Arabic in September 1965.

7. Patrick Wolfe’s formulations that settler colonialism is «a structure and not an event» and that it operates through a «logic of elimination» resonate with Sayegh’s «dual logic of dispossession and replacement». In this sense, his analysis of Zionism also anticipates later theoretical distinction between settler colonialism and other extractive or exploitative forms of colonialism, further theorized by Veracini.

2020]. In his perspective, the dominance of a logic of racial elimination over a logic of racial discrimination renders the Zionist project distinct from, and in several respects more brutal than, the apartheid regimes of South Africa or Rhodesia.

The second defining feature of Zionism is its «dependence on violence» against the Arab population, who become targets simply by virtue of their continued presence on the land. Violence here is not incidental but constitutive, a systematic tool for clearing land and displacing populations, aimed at securing and perpetuating settler rule: «The perennial aim of Zionism was and still is statehood in all of Palestine (called by Zionists “Eretz Israel”, or the Land of Israel), completely emptied of its Arabs» [Sayegh 1965, p. 33].<sup>8</sup> The third feature of Zionism is considered to be its «expansionist orientation», consistent with the historical Zionist objective of establishing a Jewish state in Eretz Israel, that is, across the entirety of the biblical «Land of Israel», encompassing the territory of Mandate Palestine, the Kingdom of Jordan, southern Lebanon, and the southern and south-eastern regions of Syria [*Ibid.*, pp. 21-35].<sup>9</sup> This understanding of sustained, structural violence is now echoed in the concept of al-Nakba al-Mustamirra (the ongoing catastrophe), central to Palestinian contemporary political discourse, which interprets the 1948 Nakba not as a historical event confined to the past but as a continuing process of dispossession and displacement.

Unlike colonial systems based on economic or resource extraction, which may allow for the coexistence of colonizer and colonized, Sayegh clearly understood that settler colonialism is intrinsically eliminationist. Zionism poses an existential threat to the Palestinian people. Since Indigenous claims to land and sovereignty contradict the settler narrative of exclusive entitlement, Zionist colonialism is «essentially incompatible with the continued existence of the ‘native population’» [p. 5]. Coexistence, therefore, is structurally impossible: «by its very nature, racial self-segregation precludes integration or assimilation» [*Ibid.*, p. 22].

In sum, Sayegh argued that Zionist settler colonialism, characterized by racial supremacy, systemic violence, and expansionism, renders the erasure of the Palestinian presence an inherent feature of its project. The «dual nature» of Zionism that Sayegh identified served as the basis for a collective intellectual effort within the Palestine Research Center, where Palestinian scholars looked at Zionism through a racial and settler-colonial lens and integrated those analyses into a larger comparative framework. The following section considers two of the main contributions of the Palestine Research Center on this topic.

8. The Palestine Research Center further explored this topic in Bishuti [1969].

9. On this topic, see The Palestine Research Center’s two publications: Razzouk [1970] and Kishtainy [1970].

### 3. «How to get the land and get rid of the natives»

Building on Fayez A. Sayegh's examination of the structural aspects of Zionist colonialism, Hasan Saab extended the analysis to its ideological and racial dimensions. In *Zionism and Racism*, written in 1968 under the auspices of the Research Center, Saab looks at how Zionist thinkers, influenced by European racial doctrines, developed the concept of a coherent, exclusivist Jewish «race». Saab argues that Zionist ideology conflates nationalism with a racialized perspective, in which Jews are not merely a religious or cultural group, but a distinct, biologically defined race with a unique destiny tied to the land of Palestine. This ethno-national understanding of Jewish identity supports Zionism's claims about land and people, making the building of a Jewish state inherently linked to the racial exclusion of Palestinians and other non-Jewish groups. Israel is often seen as a safe haven for Jews from antisemitism; nevertheless, the country actually enforces differences between Jews and Arabs, Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews, and even between Western and Eastern Israeli Jews, revealing its structural and ideological commitment to a racial hierarchy.

Zionism should therefore be regarded as part of the broader history of modern racial ideologies, rather than as an exception to European racism; it is, in fact, one of its historical expressions. Saab drew explicit comparisons between Zionism and antisemitism, emphasizing how Zionist racial doctrines mirrored Nazi Aryanist principles through analogous racialized notions of collective identity:

The concept of a «chosen race», in Zionism, differs from the concept of a «chosen race» in Nazism, only in the identity of the race – the Zionists speaking of a «Jewish race», and the Nazis of an «Aryan race». Racial consciousness led the two ideologies to the belief in a super-race or super-nation, which is endowed with a special historic destiny and called upon to fulfill a unique cultural mission. [Saab 1968, p. 9]

Saab's *Zionism and Racism* laid the basis for successive Palestinian critiques that depicted Zionism as a form of racism, drawing parallels with other systems of racial exclusion and discrimination. His portrayal of Zionism through a racial perspective also contributed to the PLO's international advocacy by aligning the Palestinian cause within the same analytical framework used to critique apartheid and colonial racism. This framing would prove particularly relevant in UN debates during the 1970s.

Another substantial contribution from the PLO Research Center was George Jabbour's *Settler Colonialism in Southern Africa and the Middle East* [Jabbour 1970], one of the first scholarly works to explicitly use the term «settler colonialism» and apply it within a comparative analytical framework. It argues that Zionism is part of the same family as the white-su-

premacist settler states in Southern Africa. In the introduction of his essay, Jabbour states:

There is a pattern of behavior which is identical in its general lines exhibited by those European settlers who have formed political entities in non-European lands; that this pattern of behavior is quite recognisable in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Israel; and that it is therefore warranted to study those experiments within the framework of this behavior. [*Ibid.*, p. 7]

With striking analytical clarity, Jabbour advanced ideas that would later become key pillars of settler-colonial theory, namely the distinction between «traditional» and settler colonialism, and the argument that, in settler-colonial contexts, the primary objective is the control of land rather than the exploitation of labour. Settlers are «land-hungry people» [*Ibid.*, p. 38], claims Jabbour; they are «permanently there» and «invariably pre-occupied with the question of acquiring land» [*Ibid.*, p. 7]. While many traditional colonial systems were primarily focused on the extraction of labour (the exploitation of Indigenous or imported populations for economic purposes), settler colonialism is motivated by the need to secure land, reshape it, and establish a permanent and exclusive colonial order:

The settlers' systematic acquisition of land enabled them to secure the material (geographic) basis of their states. As to the natives, they were either pushed away to parts of their original lands «reserved» for them (South Africa and Southern Rhodesia) or else driven out of their lands rather completely (Israel). [*Ibid.*, p. 39]

The emphasis on the permanence of settlement anticipates the later understanding of settler colonialism as a distinct, self-perpetuating system of domination that continues to shape Indigenous-settler relations (including land ownership, access to resources, and political representation) long after the initial acts of colonial conquest. This perspective aligns Israel with the white supremacist settler states of Southern Africa:

Declared espousal of discrimination, on the basis of race, colour or creed, without the need to feel apologetic about it, is the distinguishing feature of settler colonialism. Because the settlers are well-entrenched in the lands they acquire, settler colonialism is not as easy to dismantle as traditional colonialism. The colonialists here were not overseas agents who came to the colonies on duty; they were permanently stationed in the colony, permanently in control of the natives and permanently fortifying their positions of strength. [*Ibid.*, p. 8]

Settler colonialism is inherently violent, argues Jabbour, with indigenous populations subjected to systematic and inhumane treatment that surpasses what is typically observed under classical colonial regimes: «when

the settlers were confronted with the natives, they treated them almost as a subhuman species» [*Ibid.*, p. 57]. Settlers consistently assert a position of superiority (racial, cultural, or religious) reinforced through conquest and domination. While similar attitudes toward the native population can be observed in South Africa and Rhodesia, the Palestinian situation was considerably harsher. In this case, «the «ordinary» European superiority toward the natives is reinforced by the Zionist ideology and the whole religious-historical concept of the Jews being a chosen people» [*Ibid.*, p. 59].

As Jabbour points out, violence and terror are structural features because «the Zionists want the lands empty» [*Ibid.*, p. 54]. Unlike in Southern Africa, where indigenous populations were exploited as a labour force, in Palestine the settlers sought removal rather than exploitation: «they did not want them as cheap labor but as evacuees» [*Ibid.*, p. 62]. Zionist settlers were mainly concerned with maintaining their own purity and showed little interest in engaging with the Indigenous population: «For them the question was essentially how to get the land and get rid of the natives of the land» [*Ibid.*, p. 201]. It is clear that this is not only a matter of taking control of the land, but of transforming its very nature.

In retrospect, the work of these authors laid much of the conceptual groundwork that would later be formalized within contemporary settler-colonial studies. Developing their analyses from the specific context of Palestinian dispossession and exile, they outlined the fundamental characteristics that continue to define the academic field: the structural nature of colonization, the logic of eradication underpinning settler expansion, the racialization of sovereignty, and the intrinsic impossibility of coexistence under settler dominance. Subsequent scholarship drew directly on these seminal contributions.<sup>10</sup>

The intellectual efforts of the Palestine Research Center soon acquired political relevance as the analytical framework developed by these authors, most notably Sayegh himself, was translated into legal and diplomatic arguments at the UN, particularly in the debates that culminated in Resolution 3379. We now turn to the making and meaning of this Resolution.

#### 4. *«A form of racism and racial discrimination»*

The comparison between Zionism and other settler and racist regimes extended beyond analytical inquiry; it also carried strategic weight, anchoring the Palestinian question within the anti-colonial and anti-racist discourse

10. Later works would consolidate the analysis of Zionism and Israel through the lens of settler colonialism. Some of these include: Trabulsi [1969]; Rodinson [1973]; Abu Lughod and Baha Abu Laban [1973]; Hilal [1976]; and Zureik [1979].



that dominated international legal debates in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>11</sup> In this context, Fayez A. Sayegh's interventions in the UN constitute one of his most enduring legacies. His analysis of Zionism, combined with his diplomatic engagement, shaped the discourse that led to UN General Assembly Resolution (UNGA) 3379, of which he was one of the main architects, stating that «Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination» [UNGA 1975]. While his role as Rapporteur of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) provided a formal platform to frame Israel's policies toward Palestinians in terms of racial discrimination, his position as representative of the Kuwaiti mission at the UN enabled him to work closely with other Arab states' delegations in drafting, presenting and advocating for UNGA 3379 before the General Assembly plenary [Erakat 2025].

Between 1973 and 1975, Sayegh delivered four statements on Zionism before the UN's Third Committee and the Special Political Committee [Sayegh 1976]. In these speeches, he linked Zionism to the basic ideas of settler colonialism and racial domination. He argued that Zionism was not simply a nationalist movement but an exclusionary, racist ideology that institutionalized Jewish superiority. By defining Jewish identity in ethnic-national rather than religious terms, Zionism sought to establish an exclusivist state (a Jewish state, or *Judenstaat*) based on the displacement and exclusion of the indigenous Palestinian population.

The Zionist program aimed to accomplish its goals through two interconnected processes. First, it sought to gather Jews from around the globe into a designated territory. Second, it aimed to remove as many non-Jews as possible from that same territory to accommodate the incoming Jewish populations. Sayegh used a powerful metaphor to make this point, comparing the Zionists' logic of replacement to the heart's rhythm of coordinated inflow and outflow. Just as the heart functions through the simultaneous actions of pumping blood in and pumping it out, this interpretation suggests that Zionism relies on both the influx of Jews and the outflow of non-Jews to establish a Jewish state:

As in the beating of the heart two rhythmic operations – a pumping-in and a pumping-out operation – are indispensable for the heartbeat, so in the heartbeat of Zionism the pumping-in of Jews and the pumping-out of non-Jews are indispensable for the fulfillment of the goal of Zionism: the establishment of the *Judenstaat*. [*Ibid.*, p. 8]

Moreover, under racially discriminatory policies, Palestinians who were expelled are not permitted to return, while those who were not «pumped out» suffer unequal treatment due to non-Jewish identity. Sayegh contends that Zionism instituted a system of «distinctions, exclusions, re-

11. On the relevance of international law to the Palestinian question, see Yahia [1970] also published by the Palestine Research Center.

strictions, and preferences» [*Ibid.*, p. 11] grounded on descent and ethnic origin, as defined by the UN, thereby aligning it with apartheid and white settler regimes in Southern Africa.

As this article suggests, the arguments presented here emerge from a decade-long effort by Palestinian scholars at the Palestine Research Center to develop a coherent body of ideas on the nature of the Zionist colonization of Palestine. In his earlier writings, Sayegh depicted Zionism as a racial and settler-colonial regime that combines the demographic goals of settler colonialism with the ideas of racial superiority. In diplomatic international forums, and particularly at the UN, he translated these arguments into the language of international law, describing Zionism as a form of racism deserving the same moral and legal condemnation reserved for the crime of apartheid. It is no coincidence that UNGA 3379 was passed at a crucial moment in history, when many newly independent states from Africa, Asia, and the Arab world were redefining the moral and legal language of international politics. Indeed, it was part of a global campaign to define racial discrimination and apartheid as violations of international law and threats to international peace and security, particularly through the adoption of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973), and that culminated with the UN's Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1973-1983). The Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of African Unity, and the Soviet bloc united to launch this international campaign aiming to oppose South Africa's apartheid system. Building on this global anti-racist and anti-colonial momentum, UNGA 3379 linked the Palestinian struggle to the broader fight against institutionalized racism and colonial domination, proving both moral legitimacy and a legal foundation for Palestinian claims. In fact, it begins by citing Resolution 3151, passed on 14 December 1973, which condemned the «unholy alliance between South African racism and Zionism» [UNGA 1973]. Later, other UN documents that condemned both apartheid and Zionism used the same language.

Nevertheless, compared with earlier UN resolutions condemning South Africa's apartheid regime, which were lengthy, detailed, and called for concrete measures such as sanctions or arms embargoes, Resolution 3379 was remarkably brief and purely declaratory. It labelled Zionism as a form of racism but recommended no specific actions or enforcement mechanisms. This reflected political necessity: a short, symbolic formulation made it easier to maintain a broad coalition within the General Assembly, avoiding divisive debates over sanctions or implementation that might have eroded support, especially in the Non-Aligned Movement and among African countries, some of which were cautious about escalating tensions with Western powers and Israel. Its significance, therefore, lay less in practical enforcement and more in symbolic and ideological impact: it sought

to place Zionism within the UN's growing body of resolutions addressing racism, apartheid, and colonialism, making a moral and political determination rather than initiating a program of action.

Sayegh's involvement with the UN marked the concrete realisation of his earlier theoretical work. He succeeded in translating his theoretical framework into the legal language of international law, thereby giving his argument both intellectual coherence and diplomatic leverage. *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* and *Four Speeches* provided much of the conceptual basis that informed Resolution 3379. His framing of Zionism through the lens of settler colonialism and racism made Palestinian dispossession legible within the UN's anti-racism conventions and its broader legal architecture opposing colonialism, allowing the Palestinian cause to be connected to the growing tide of global decolonization movements and anti-apartheid struggles. For the PLO, this was a strategic chance to not only question the ideological legitimacy of Israel but also to set the stage for its diplomatic isolation. Even though the Resolution was repealed in 1991, the idea of Zionism as a racial and settler-colonial project continues to influence both academic research and decolonial practices today.<sup>12</sup>

##### 5. «*The worst type of occupation*»

The Palestine Research Center maintained a close and continuous relationship with the resistance movement, serving as an ideological bridge between scholarly production and the ideological and strategic development of the Palestinian liberation movement. Palestinian resistance groups drew on the settler-colonial framework developed by the Palestine Research Center's intellectuals to conceptualize Zionism as a form of settler colonialism. One of the first articulations of this framework appears in Fatah's *Studies and Revolutionary Experiences* pamphlet «The Liberation of Occupied Countries and the Method of Struggle Against Direct Colonialism» [Fatah 1967], part of a series aimed to educate cadres and sympathizers on the anti-colonial nature of the Palestinian struggle. While in this study, as well as in other early documents, Fatah does not explicitly employ the exact term «settler colonialism», its analysis of Zionism clearly reflects an understanding consistent with the core ideas of settler colonial theory. For Fatah, Zionism was not merely a form of «direct colonialism» (*al-isti 'mār al-mubāshir*), which typically

12. It is therefore not surprising that, with the shift in the global geopolitical landscape, UNGA 3379 was ultimately revoked in 1991. The revocation of Resolution 3379 by UNGA Resolution 46/86 was adopted in the post-Cold War context, under U.S. and Israeli pressure, and was agreed to by the PLO as a condition for joining the so-called «Oslo peace process». Subsequent U.S.-led talks reframed the Palestinian question from a national liberation struggle as a conflict resolution issue, sidelining its racial and colonial dimensions.

entails temporary military occupation by a foreign power, but rather a more comprehensive and enduring system based on the permanent implantation of settlers, the displacement of the indigenous population, and the reorganization of land and social structures to serve settler interests:

The worst type of occupation (*ih̥tilāl*) is that which takes the form of settler colonialism (*al-istiṭān*), when the invading countries attempt to bring groups of their own populations to replace the indigenous people of the land, carrying out an aggressive role of dispersing, exploiting, or exterminating them. The French settlement in Algeria was a vivid example of this, and an even worse example is the Zionist occupation of part of Palestine, the usurpation of that territory, and the displacement of its people. This colonial plague has spread to many parts of the world, such as Rhodesia and South Africa. [*Ibid.*, p.4]

The Arabic term *al-istiṭān* literally denotes the act of settling or the permanent colonization of land. Within modern Palestinian and Arab anti-colonial discourse, however, it carries a more specific meaning: it refers to a form of colonialism based on displacing the indigenous population from the land and establishing permanent settler sovereignty, rather than simply exploiting resources. In this sense, *al-istiṭān* corresponds to what is now termed in contemporary scholarship as «settler colonialism», and its use marks an early recognition of this distinct colonial form based on dispossession and replacement, one that fundamentally differs from other types of foreign domination, such as direct military occupation or indirect colonial control.<sup>13</sup>

Fatah viewed Zionism as a form of settler colonialism that went beyond the narrower bounds of traditional colonial rule, resulting in structural, demographic, and territorial transformations that permanently altered Palestinian society and its relationship to the land. The problem is not just occupation, but a colonial structure aimed at replacement:

History has witnessed a new and particularly brutal form of colonisation, whose depth and violence were manifested in the expulsion of an entire people from their homeland, the occupation of their land, the fragmentation of their social structures, and the imposition of extermination (*ibādah*) upon them. [...]. The Zionist invasion, in reality, represents an occupation in the harshest form, for our people have been replaced by a group of alien elements who came from various human societies. The Zionist movement gathered them together, and their invasion represents a colonialist movement (*ḥarakat isti'māriyya*) with a racist character [*Ibid.*, p. 17].

13. This is why, in this context, «settler colonialism» is the most accurate translation of *al-istiṭān*.

In this formulation, Zionist colonialism is described as a project that builds a new society on the ruins of the indigenous one, «removing the social imprints of the oppressed population and severing it from its natural environment». Thus, the liberation struggle is conceived not only as the overthrow of an imperial presence but also as the dismantling of the entire settler-colonial structure, including its military, political, and economic institutions, to prevent their re-emergence. The goal, then, goes beyond military defeat. It includes the «comprehensive de-Zionisation of the territory».

Whether Marxist or nationalist, Arab and Palestinian thinkers depict the Zionist project primarily through their lived experience of exile and dispossession: Israel is frequently described as an externally imposed colonial project, a settler base directly tied to Western imperialism, aiming at the usurpation of land and the eradication of the Palestinian presence. While at this stage the exact terms «settler colonialism» or «*al-isti'mār al-istīṭānī*» were not always employed, their analysis clearly reflected the notion that Israel constituted a settler-colonial project operating according to the logic of demographic replacement. For example, already in the Palestinian National Charter (1964; revised 1968) Zionism is explicitly defined as «a movement organically linked with international imperialism, racist and fanatical in nature, aggressive, expansionist, colonialist in its aims (*'udwāniyya, tawassu'iyya, istīṭāniyya*), and fascist in its methods» [PLONC 1968, Art. 22]. Here, the settler-colonial framing is carried by the expression *istīṭāniyya*. In Fatah's publications of that time, Israel is often described as a «settler-state» [Fatah 1970, 2 April, p. 12]. In the analysis of the Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Israel is defined primarily according to the role it plays within the global imperialist system: it is a colonial outpost implanted on Arab land, organically linked to the global Zionist movement, and used by U.S. imperialism to counter progressive Arab movements, thereby ensuring the exploitation of the human and material resources of the Arab world. In its 1969 programmatic manifesto, *A Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine* [PFLP 1970], Israel is referred to as a «colonialist expansionist presence (*wujūdān tawassu'iyyan istī'māriyyan*)» and as «an imperialist and colonialist base (*qā'idatan imbiriyāliyya wa-istī'māriyya*)» and Zionism as «an aggressive racial movement (*ka-ḥaraka 'unṣuriyya 'udwāniyya*) connected with imperialism».<sup>14</sup>

A critical engagement with Palestinian anticolonial literature reveals that the concept of settler colonialism was clearly present, both semantically and conceptually, even before the terminology of the settler-colonial theory became standardized in later scholarship. By the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, both the English «settler colonialism» and the Ara-

14. The document's Arabic text can be accessed through the official PFLP website archives.

bic «*al-isti'mār al-istiṭānī*» began to appear more frequently in analytical and political writings, including publications of the Palestine Research Center and other resistance organizations, gradually replacing earlier expressions such as «direct colonialism», «colonialism of a dual nature», and «settler-state». A notable example is the Political Statement issued during the Fifth Session of the Palestine National Council [PNC 1969], held in Cairo on 4 February 1969, at a time when the guerrilla organizations were consolidating their control over the PLO and electing Yasir Arafat as Chairman of the Executive Committee. The statement clearly describes Zionism as a settler-colonial project:

We have been forced to follow that road [of resistance and liberation] thanks to the Zionist movement which is a form of settling colonialism (*al-ḥaraka al-ṣahyūniyya al-isti'māriyya al-istiṭāniyya*) and which is in collusion with the imperialist nations, particularly the United States, for there is no other way to repel the Zionist-imperialist invasion of the Arab homeland, which has established a bridgehead in Palestine.<sup>15</sup>

Starting in the early 1970s, these terms began to appear more frequently in the literature of the Palestinian resistance movement. For instance, the PFLP used this (or very similar) expression in the Political Report of its Third National Congress, held in March 1972, both in the original Arabic document and in its official English translation: «Firstly, ours is a difficult, complex and ruthless struggle. In addition to those general aspects of liberation struggle [...], there is the specificity of our own struggle, where Zionist settler-imperialism (*al-isti'mār al-istiṭānī*, in the Arabic text) defends its existence in a life or death battle» [PFLP 1972, p. 84], and later in the same document, commenting on the Israeli policies of expansionism in the territories conquered in 1967, it reiterates that «Israel has gone a long way towards achieving this transfer from settler-colonialism to imperialist expansionism (*min al-isti'mār al-istiṭānī ilā al-tawassu' al-imperiyālī*)» [*Ibid.*, p. 61].<sup>16</sup>

Other examples of its use by resistance groups can be found in the early political documents of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DPFLP, later DFLP), such as the 1970 essay *Towards a Democratic Solution to the Palestinian Question*, which states that «the Israeli society was built up through a colonial settlement operation in the shadow of Zionist reactionary chauvinistic ideology» [DPFLP 1970, p. 11]. In the 1971 document *Proposals to the 9th Palestinian National Congress* [DPFLP 1971], Is-

15. «Settling colonialism» is the expression used in the original English translation. For the original Arabic text, see: Nasrallah [1971] Both transcripts can be accessed online through *The Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question*, an online platform conceived by the Institute for Palestine Studies.

16. For the Arabic text, I referred to the official document [PFLP 1972]. The English version [PFLP 1973] is available on the PFLP official website.

rael is described as «the Zionist colonial-settler state», a term that would be used more frequently in the Political Program of 1975 [DFLP 1975]:

Zionism is a reactionary racist movement (*ḥarakah 'unṣuriyyah raja 'i-yyah*) which is firmly tied to world imperialism and which constitutes a negation of the national existence of the Palestinian people [...]. The Zionist project grew and developed under the aegis of British colonialism, and it now maintains its racist and settler-colonial institutions (*fī ṭār shūfīnī wa-isti 'mār-istiṭānī*) thanks to the wide-ranging support of American imperialism. [*Ibid.*, pp. 23-24]

Elsewhere in the text, Israel is framed as a «racist and settler-colonial project (*al-mashrū 'al-isti 'mār al-istiṭānī al-'unṣurī*)» [*Ibid.*, p. 30].<sup>17</sup>

This clearly indicates that Arab and Palestinian intellectuals, as well as the PLO and the main resistance organizations, had already expressed the concept of «settler colonialism» via the Arabic phrase «*al-isti 'mār al-istiṭānī*», which explicitly conveys the notion of a distinct type of colonialism driven by a logic of population replacement. By the mid-1990s, as settler colonialism was developing into a distinct academic field with its specific analytical vocabulary, the Arabic term «*al-isti 'mār al-istiṭānī*» started to gain wider circulation among Arab and Palestinian scholars. This clearly reflected the growing influence of global settler-colonial theory and the scholars' intention to employ this terminology to align the Palestinian case with indigenous struggles worldwide.

The analysis of Zionism as a settler-colonialism also has a normative dimension: Palestinian thinkers and resistance groups agreed that liberation required dismantling settler structures *before* building an egalitarian political order. The next section examines how this settler-colonial framing underpinned the proposals for a unitary, democratic state across historic Palestine.

## 6. «*A New Palestine*»

This analysis of Zionism reveals the impossibility of coexistence in a settler-dominated framework. This point was further elaborated in Jabbour's *Settler Colonialism in Palestine*. Zionist settler colonialism, Jabbour argues, was based on the notion that the land should be uninhabited, or made so through displacement. Such commitment to racial purity left little willingness to accommodate the indigenous population, even as cheap labourers. Therefore, settlers' «peace» is based on military dominance, not indigenous consent. The push for exclusivity, Jabbour maintains, is based on both racist ideas and strategic concerns. The challenges facing South Africa's apartheid

17. For the Arabic text, I referred to the original document [DFLP 1975a].

were evident when Israel was founded; this is why the Zionist leaders in Palestine believed that the large-scale removal of the native population was the only way to create an «internally secure» state, a process that was largely carried out in 1948 [Jabbour 1970, pp. 201-208].

Faced with the dilemma of remaining committed to annexing the occupied territories while avoiding integration with the native population, Zionist settlers have adopted a strategy similar to that of South African settlers: dominance *without* coexistence. Since mid-1967, this thinking has included proposals for a limited, internally autonomous Palestinian entity within Israel in parts of the occupied territories:

The idea of a small native «Bantustan» entity in Israel, in a greater Israel, is thus a corner-stone in the settlers' visions of the future. Admittedly it will take a long time for the settlers to formally espouse such a solution, and longer to put it into effect. But again this course of events is inevitable since the settlers are determined to expand, and at the same time guard their racial and cultural exclusiveness. [Jabbour 1970, p. 207]

Viewed today, these words appear to foreshadow the underlying dynamics that would lead in the following decades to the signing of the Oslo Accords and the launch of the so-called «peace process», resulting in the further fragmentation of Palestinian territory and the consolidation of an apartheid system akin to or, in many respects, worse than that of South Africa. Yet no native movements call for the mass expulsion or destruction of settlers, concludes Jabbour. Their future vision is based on equal rights for all, regardless of race or nationality, and removal of discriminatory settler institutions: «Establishing a state on the basis of equality to all means simply that all present state structures based on discrimination have to be supplanted» [Jabbour 1970, p. 212]. To many settlers, this demand feels like a threat to their very existence, having long assumed their dominance is natural.

If coexistence under settler-colonial structures proves impossible, then the necessity of a political framework founded on equality and decolonial justice follows. For Sayegh, a just and lasting peace could only be achieved through a principled solution addressing the root causes of the conflict (namely, the dispossession of Palestinians and the exclusivist character of Zionism) within a unitary, democratic political framework in which all inhabitants would enjoy equal rights and common citizenship. As he puts it, not a «solution somewhere *between*», but a «solution *above* them both» [Sayegh 1970, p. 35]. In *Palestine, Israel and Peace*, an essay published by the Palestine Research Center in February 1970, Sayegh presents its vision for a single democratic state in Palestine as an alternative to both Zionist and Arab exclusivist national projects. Insofar as the rights of the Palestinian people and the claims of Israel are «mutually exclusive», leaving no room



for genuine compromise, efforts to reconcile the two through negotiation or procedural formulas are ultimately illusory and risk imposing surrender on one side. As a result, continued confrontation is inevitable, with stakes as high as national survival and the potential for catastrophic outcomes.

Central to Sayegh's argument is the rejection of any political arrangement based on ethnic or religious supremacy. He dismisses both the expulsion of Jews and the permanent exclusion of Palestinian refugees as morally indefensible and politically unworkable: «Neither an *exclusionist "Jewish State"*, existing in all or part of Palestine at the expense of deprived Palestinians, nor a *restored Arab Palestine*, in which the non-indigenous Jewish immigrants cannot aspire to have a place» [*Ibid.*, p. 39], can meet the ethical and political requirements for a just peace. Anticipating the themes that would later shape contemporary debates regarding a one-state or binational solution, Sayegh critiques the idea of a binational state, arguing that it institutionalises and therefore also perpetuates communal divisions instead of overcoming them. The alternative is what he calls a «new Palestine», that is to say «a *pluralistic, humanistic, secular and democratic state*» [*Ibid.*, p. 37] in which indigenous Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim, as well as non-indigenous Jews, can coexist and would freely intermingle to form an authentic human community, with all individuals as equal citizens and committed builders of a shared political future.

From the late 1960s onward, the Palestinian resistance movement began to discuss a proposal to establish a unitary, democratic, and non-sectarian state in Palestine. This solution was intended to secure Palestinian self-determination by ensuring the refugees' right of return and ending the occupation of Arab lands, while also allowing Jewish settlers to remain as equal citizens alongside the indigenous Palestinians, provided they renounce Zionism. The aforementioned 1969 Fifth Session of the Palestinian National Council formally adopted this proposal, which eventually became the official policy of the PLO. It resolved to «reject all liquidatory resolutions and projects, including the Security Council Resolution [242] of 22 November 1967» and called for «establishing an independent democratic society in Palestine for all Palestinians, Moslems, Christians and Jews» [PNC 1969].

Within the Resistance movement, this idea was framed by the two main ideological currents: Palestinian nationalism and Arab nationalism [Abdul-Majid 1979]. The first, represented by al-Fatah, viewed the creation of an independent Palestinian state as a first step toward a federated Arab entity. The «democratic, progressive, and non-sectarian Palestine» would grant Israeli Jews full citizenship, equal access to resources, and the right to freely express their religious and cultural beliefs. The idea of a democratic, non-sectarian state is not equivalent to «surrender to Israel, negotiations with its racist government, or a proposed agent state for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip». Instead, it can only emerge «out of liberation and as a con-

sequence of liberation: hence, it is not a substitute for liberation» [Rasheed 1970, p. 8]. Supporters of the second perspective, including pan-Arabist organizations like the Arab Liberation Front and al-Saiqa, as well as Marxist groups such as the PFLP and the DFLP, believed that a democratic Palestinian state could only emerge after the success of the Arab revolution, the dismantling of artificial states created by colonial powers, and the elimination of the Zionist presence in the region. The Palestinian anti-colonial struggle was thus connected to the broader struggle for Arab liberation and social change, as the Popular Fronts saw it. In their vision, a liberated Palestine would be an essential part of a unified Arab state that would remove the basis for economic exploitation and national, ethnic, and religious oppression [PFLP 1970].

However, from the mid-1970s onward, a series of regional changes gradually shifted the focus of the PLO's political agenda from anti-colonial liberation to state-building *without* liberation.<sup>18</sup> The PLO leadership moved toward the idea of establishing a Palestinian state in the territories occupied in 1967, as a step toward liberating all of historic Palestine [Gresh 1988]. The PLO's 1974 «phased program» officially accepted this change. Over the following decades, the PLO worked toward this goal through negotiations that led to the 1993 Oslo Accords. This changed the structure and nature of the organization: what had been an anticolonial liberation movement in exile transformed into a self-governing body operating within the Israeli colonial structure [Yazid Sayigh 1997]. In other words, the solution of a single democratic state framed in anticolonial terms was gradually replaced by the «two-state, two-peoples» formula, which focused on state-building, territorial compromise, and (U.S.-sponsored) bilateral negotiations. It is precisely the kind of scenario Fayez A. Sayegh predicted would have failed.

Reflecting changes on the ground, the settler-colonial analysis has gradually declined in Palestinian political discourse since the mid-1970s, giving way to an interpretation of the conflict as one between two national movements [Pappé 2013; Hilal 2015]. However, after the failures of the Oslo period and the entrenchment of Israeli settler-colonial policies, many Palestinian, Arab, and international scholars returned to the settler-colonial paradigm as the most effective framework for explaining the persistence of colonial structures and for reconsidering Palestinian strategies for liberation. The rise of a new generation of critical scholars progressively transformed the discourse, and the settler-colonial framework has taken centre stage in academic and intellectual discussions of Palestine [Rouhana and Hawari 2023]. In a similar vein, renewed interest in the debate over a one-

18. Some of these changes significantly shifted the balance of power after the October War: the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel represented a significant blow to the PLO, since Egypt had been one of the most important Arab states involved in the conflict, while the PLO's expulsion from Lebanon in 1982 resulted in both military weakening and increased political isolation.

state solution has marked a decisive shift in discourse from partition, negotiations and statehood to decolonization, equal rights and justice.<sup>19</sup>

As these analyses suggest, the failure of Oslo and other negotiated solutions is not an accident of history. Rather, it reflects the impossibility of reconciling agendas based on «territorial compromise» or «coexistence» with a settler-colonial regime committed to exclusive, permanent control over the land and to the removal, if not the physical elimination, of the native population. The notion of a unitary democratic Palestine was not an abstract or utopian aspiration, but a conceptual framework grounded in anticolonial theory and developed as a response to the settler-colonial character of Israel. As discussed in the concluding section, this invites a more comprehensive reconsideration of the origins of settler-colonial analysis.

### 7. *Reassessing the genealogy of the field*

This article has suggested that the intellectual work of Faye A. Sayegh and the Palestine Research Center offered an important, though often overlooked, early formulation of a settler-colonial analysis of Zionism. Sayegh's writings represent one of the first systematic attempts to theorise Zionism as a form of settler colonialism, making him a central figure in Palestinian anti-colonial thought and a pioneer in settler-colonial theory. Moreover, his perspective provides powerful insight into Zionism as a system of racialized, settler-colonial domination, placing his analysis at the intersection of racial and settler-colonial theories [Erakat 2025].

However, Sayegh's contributions did not emerge in isolation; rather, they formed part of the Palestine Research Center's intellectual efforts to develop a systematic study of Zionism, in which Palestine was framed as a paradigmatic case of settler colonialism. These analyses influenced legal arguments in UN forums, where issues of racial discrimination and colonial domination were increasingly debated, and were adopted by Palestinian resistance organizations from the late 1960s through the 1970s. It was against the backdrop of exile, dispossession, and resistance that the concept of settler colonialism first assumed a coherent analytical significance, long before its revival in the late-1990s Anglophone academia.

As discussed above, the first Arab and Palestinian formulations of settler-colonial analysis arose from within the liberation movement itself. They were used as *political tools* by intellectuals facing dispossession and actively participating in the national struggle. For Sayegh, as for many other intellectuals, scholarship was inseparable from politics. In this sense, their

19. The literature on this topic is now extensive; here it is sufficient to refer to one of the most recent contributions, Loewenstein and Moor [2024]. There are also numerous initiatives and campaigns supporting the one-state solution; for example, see The One Democratic State Campaign website.

approach anticipates current discussions in settler-colonial studies that call for integrating theoretical analysis with decolonial ethics and for realigning our understanding of settler colonialism within an indigenous framework [Barakat 2018]. Decolonisation, for these authors, could not occur while settler-colonial structures remained in place; rather, it required the establishment of a new egalitarian order within a single democratic polity, achievable only *after* the dismantling of the Zionist state.

In conclusion, a re-examination of Palestinian anticolonial literature sheds new light on the genealogy of settler colonial theory. By the latter half of the 1960s, Arab and Palestinian intellectuals had clearly recognized the defining features of Zionist settler colonialism. Key concepts later systematized in academic scholarship, including the logic of elimination, the centrality of land over labour, the permanence of settler structures, the racialization of sovereignty, and the global interconnections of settler-colonial regimes, had already been formulated and widely debated within the Palestinian liberation movement. Reengaging with this literature provides contemporary scholars with analytical tools to better understand the persistence and resurgence of settler-colonial violence in Palestine, which today manifests in recurring ethnic cleansing campaigns in the West Bank and culminates in the ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip. The «dual nature» of Zionism, as defined by Sayegh, reveals that the core of the Palestinian issue lies in the fundamental contradiction between the Palestinian presence on the land and the Zionist imperative to replace it with a new colonial order based on Jewish exclusivism. Striking evidence, to use Sayigh's metaphor, that the Zionist «heart» continues its movement of «pumping in» and «pumping out», adapting its forms over time yet maintaining the same fundamental goal: the emptying of Palestine of its Indigenous inhabitants.

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