



## The Evolution of Israel's Settler Colonialism

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### Abstract

*Settler Colonialism is the process in which foreign people migrate to a different geographical location and settles at that location. At the outlook this phenomenon may seem innocuous, but it has a much darker side as well. Unlike Colonialism where the motive of the colonial state is pure material i.e. the imperial state tries to exploit the resources of the colony as much as possible, the motive of the Settler Colonial states is rather insidious. In settler colonialism the settler colonies aim to eradicate the Culture, Values, Institutions, Mores etc. of the local inhabitants. In doing so the colonial power may also displace and dispossess the local population or simply annihilate them.*

### Introduction

The motives of the exercise of elimination of the native population are multifarious. First is that the native population could prefer not the assimilation or mixing of the races with another race. Most of the races where the settler's colonialism is witness have been isolated and self-sufficient in nature. Their exposure to the outside world is very limited in nature, therefore, when they are exposed to a foreign population, they are mostly abhorrent to the invading population. They also seek to secure their progeny pure by forbidding any inter-marriage with other populations. The settlers also have somewhat the same motives and aspirations, they also dissuade their race being mingled with the natives, but the reason for this behaviour is somewhat different. The settlers are generally of the opinion that the institutions, customs and values of the native population are crude and raw and they



are not workable in the contemporary era making them non-functional and rudimentary. (Wolfe, 2020)

Due to the above cited reasons, there exist a need for the settler population to annihilate the population of the native people. Annihilation doesn't only mean the eradication or homicide of the native population, while this is the case in most of the cases, but what it essentially means is that the institutions which define the sovereignty of the natives over the land are destroyed. Their governance structure on the land they used to live is destroyed. (Wolfe, 2020)

The governance structures are destroyed by many ways, which include, exiling the population from the area in question, de-possess them with the property they used to hold, assimilating them into their own governance structure or by the process of multi-culturalism. (Hixon, 2013)

When the population is exiled from a geographical area, the acceptance and assent of the people for that law disappears, furthermore, the experts of that law are also scarce. It is pertinent to be mentioned here that law is the consent of the people, when the people who have given consent for that particular law disappear, the law itself is made redundant, so the law and the governance structure standing on it wither away. (Hixon, 2013)

Second, when the people are de-possessed from their properties, their influence and their clout on the state machinery also somewhat weakens, in other words they have lesser say in the state affairs, therefore, the institutions that they champion also disappear. (Hixon, 2013)

Third, the colonial state exercise apparent benevolence, when it established multi-culturalism in the occupied state. But the voices, institution and the culture of the occupied state are given secondary paramountcy. They have an auxiliary role in the state craft and matters of utmost importance are not discussed with them. So, in short, a façade of inclusion is created to gather the legitimacy of the powers internationally. (Hixon, 2013)

Fourth point is that the settler colonialist emphasize is that the area in which the colonial power is exercising jurisdiction is empty and is not inhabited by the native residents. This they do in order to blindfold the international community about the nature of their conquest, which is often brutal in nature. So, the logic is that when there is no one in the land of the conquest there will not be any bloodshed in that area, so morality of any kind is not implemented in the area in question. (Hixon, 2013)

Fifth, the settling community only considers its interest only while disregarding the interest of the native community. This is essentially what is called a zero-sum game, which means that any gain by one community must result in the loss of other community. In this case the gain of the settler community should result in the loss of the inhabitants and the natives. So there is not provision for



the absolute gains, the gains are always relative in the sense that gain of one community is treated as the loss of the other one. (Hixon, 2013)

Sixth feature is the notion of Manifest Destiny. By this notion it means that it is the fate of the settler community to rule over that area where the natives claim their jurisdiction. Not only that, but they have the right to spread their values, norms and religion to the natives as well. The settlers basically consider the natives savages and barbaric and in order to civilise them, enforce their norms, values and religion forcefully, by hook or by crook. Initially the settlers try to acculture the native people and if that strategy fails, they will simply annihilate them, or displace them from the geographical location. So, they take it as a divine provident to spread their own civilization amongst the natives whom they consider as savages. (Hixon, 2013)

All of these features were exercised by almost all of the settlers who invaded the territory of the native people and imposed their rule on the native people. (Hixon, 2013) The case in question is Israel's Settler Colonialism, we will in this paper see that how the above-mentioned procedures were exercised by the Zionism's propagators in order to achieve their aims in establishing the state of Israel. It will be apt to describe the evolution of this movement and simultaneously describe how the above-mentioned principles were applied by Zionist regime in order to further their aim of establishing the state of Israel. (Hixon, *Israel's Armor: The Israel Lobby and the First Generation of the Palestine Conflict*, 2019)

It is ironical to note that till the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the initial period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the predominant majority of the Jews were against the idea of a Jewish State, they were of the opinion that a separate Jewish State would compromise the liberty of Jews throughout Europe and the world. As Jews were well established particularly in Europe, it would have been absurd to leave their enterprises in Europe and to seek refuge in the area which was majorly a desert. (Hixon, *Israel's Armor: The Israel Lobby and the First Generation of the Palestine Conflict*, 2019)

The above-mentioned fact can be manifested by the observation that the renowned Foreign Secretary of United Kingdom Arthur Balfour, who proclaimed the Balfour declaration, which essentially was the intention of the establishment of the state of Israel in the land of Palestine, had earlier forbidden the immigration of Jews in the United Kingdom. Not only this, but having proclaimed the Balfour Declaration in 1917, the foreign secretary justified his act in the parliament by stating that it was an effective way to exile the Jews from Europe. (Hixon, *Israel's Armor: The Israel Lobby and the First Generation of the Palestine Conflict*, 2019)

The movement known as Zionism which strives for creating a Jewish state in the Middle East was founded by Theodore Herzl in 1897, he then went on to establish an organization known as Jewish Zionist Organisation, whose purpose was to establish the aforementioned state in the Middle East, and to be in particular in the area which was then known as Palestine. (BadEmPanada, 2023)



It will be apt to state here that the Jewish religion itself doesn't propagate the establishment of the state of a Jewish State, until the coming of the Messiah, and Theodore Herzl did not call himself as a Messiah. So, in a sense the absence of a Messiah, delegitimizes the creation of such a state as per the Jewish religion itself. (BadEmPanada, 2023)

So, in effect the earlier Zionists were less than 5 percent of the total population of Jews, with anti-Semitic statesmen of other states of Europe. Anti-Semitism was ripe in the states of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as the initial tolerance of the western nations to the Nazism. Theodore Herzl himself had propagated many a time that the major force in the creation of a Jewish state will be the Anti Semites, so it will not be wrong here to propagate here that they played a paramount role in the establishment of Israel, all because they wanted to get rid of Jews in the continent of Europe. (BadEmpanada, 2023)

Among the most famous Zionists of the earlier ages were people like Theodore Herzl. Herzl was an Austrian Journalist and a writer who was responsible for establishing a generation of proto-Zionists to the likes of Judah Bibas and Moses Hess etc. It is worth noting that Herzl's motives were purely geographical as he propounded for the mass conversion of Jews into Christianity, as propounded by his biographer Hoffenberg. This seeks to comment that Zionism was purely a secular movement initially. So, there were no fundamental religious principles behind this movement, unlike falsely attributed by both Semitics and anti-Semitics. (BadEmpanada, 2023)

The state of Israel had never had any intention for co-existence with their Arab neighbour, as the first Prime Minister of Israel David Ben-Gurion has been reported to say that the destiny of the Jews in Israel will never be established until the Israel had 100 percent of land, 100 percent of farms and 100 percent of ports. Therefore, from the very beginning the Zionists never had intention to co-exist with their Arab neighbours. (Ghoneim, 2021)

The early Zionists were extremely racist as well as David Ben-Gurion is recorded to be following the extremely Xenophobic philosophy of Avidoh Ivrit, when he propagated that Jewish Labourer should earn more than Arab Muslim Labourer because the former are more intelligent and diligent. Avidoh Ivrit also propagated the racist philosophy that in the Jewish businesses only Jews should form the labourers. (Ghoneim, 2021)

The pioneer of settler colonialism in the Zionist framework was Vladimir Jabotinsky, who had given the concept of Iron Wall in the Zionism. Jabotinsky, was of the opinion that the state of Israel should be literally built behind the iron walls and should be expansionist in nature just like the Western Imperial States. He further elucidated that Jewish should not be restrained by peace treaties and truces and should expand until it occupies all of the promised land. (Ghoneim, 2021)

It may be aptly put here that Jabotinsky was extremely racist and propagated that the Arabs were five hundred years behind Jews culturally. He declared that colonialism is a brutal process and it would require coercion and the use of force, therefore, no matter how much one sugar coats the



aims of Israeli state, the Arab has full knowledge of the intentions of the Jewish State and that they should acquire it by the dint of force, if needed. (Ghoneim, 2021)

And it does not matter how ludicrous it may sound, but Israel did establish an iron wall in order to separate itself from the Palestinians. (Ghoneim, 2021) We have also seen a kind of dehumanisation in the Israel- Palestine conflict as well, this is necessary to carry out atrocities on the level as we have seen in the history of Israel- Palestine conflict. It has been on the record that the Israeli statesmen have a very negative perception of the Palestinian governing bodies, as can be embodied by the statement of Benjamin Netanyahu that it was Amir Al Hussaini, who was the leader of Palestinian National Movement who suggested to Hitler that the Jews maybe exterminated instead of being exiled. As for after the October 7<sup>th</sup> 2024 attack by Hamas the defence minister of Israel Yauv Gallant has said on National Television that Israel is fighting Human animals. Human Animals are the reference to the Palestinians who have been conveniently dehumanised by the Israelis now and again to legitimise their brutal attacks on an innocent population. (Shlaim, 2023)

It is undoubtedly the truth that dehumanisation can lead to Ethnic Cleansing first, and then to genocide. This idea was aptly put by Hans Cohn, in his famous book "Warrant for Genocide" that how dehumanisation of a race could lead up to genocide in the long run. It creates in a sense hatred for a particular race to such an extent that the perceived enemies in the end are considered not even humans, they are considered wild beasts, whose killing is justified in all the cases. This naturally leads to intentions of their extermination. And these intentions when translated into action, constitutes genocide. (Shlaim, 2023)

Another instrument that the Israel has conveniently used during this conflict is the blockade of the population of the Palestinian State. Everyday essential commodities such as food, water, chocolates, sodas etc. So, Israel has put the population of Palestine and especially the people of Gaza under the ruthless conditions of mal-nutrition. It is but a bitter truth that such essential items as infant milk formula etc do not reach the targeted population, due to which the infants and toddlers of Palestine often face permanent mal-nutrition, that affect their mental and physical growth. So, the youth and the children of Palestine are never able to self-actualize. (Shlaim, 2023)

This embargo of essential items constitutes crime as per international humanitarian law and if the aim is to eradicate the race, it also constitutes genocide and ethnic cleaning. As per the International Law, we can see that UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948, has laid out the definition of the genocide, in which the intent for the destruction of the particular group should be there, in the case of Israel we see a clear manifestation of this phenomenon, in it is defined as the intent to destroy a racial, national or a religious group collectively, and not individually. This intent is the most evident among the Israeli politicians, ministers and the Army Officers. The current defence minister of Israel has put it clearly that is Israelis fighting human animals, and have besieged Gaza completely. The Official spokesman of



the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) Danial Hegari has explicitly put out the statement that the aim of the Israeli Defence Force is to eradicate the Gaza Strip in its entirety. He is of the opinion that only solution to the Hamas insurgency is the total annihilation of the Gaza territory. (Segal, 2023)

The October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas on the state of Israel has exposed the fake narrative of Israel being an impenetrable state and its intelligence apparatus being flawless. This has further exerted pressure on the already unpopular government of Benjamin Netanyahu, to do something unorthodox in order to squeeze itself out of the current political crisis, and its manifestation are what we are seeing in Gaza, where the state of Israel in carrying out the campaign of ruthless bombardment towards innocent Palestinians. This has once again put the Palestinian Issue to the forefront among the world issues. (Ritter, 2023).

The dream of a peaceful Middle East, where Arab States are allied to the state of Israel has turned out to be a pipe dream only. When Saudi Arabia was about to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, Hamas with the help of the state of Iran sabotaged the very plan. It is to be noted that had Saudi Arabia went ahead with the plan, it would have opened ways for a civil nuclear deal with Saudi Arabia and Iran would have been isolated in the Middle East. Thus, the Pariah state status of Iran would have been reinforced. (Cronin, 2024)

The internal sources of IDF have identified that the Force has a long history of committing war crimes in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, there have been instances when the force's soldiers were ordered to intrude the homes of people in the West Bank and particularly in the Jenin area just to show their presence in the area. They are repeatedly commanded to take no risk and to shoot indiscriminately while operating in the Gaza Strip as they are told that the people they are fighting are less than humans, the soldiers are even ordered to take captives young children, in order to send a message to the opponents that they will just disregard the International Humanitarian Laws when it comes to defending their so-called territory. (Bernstein, 2023)

The Israeli state's defense against any state or non-state actors depends upon four cardinal principles as postulated by David Ben-Gurion, the ex- Prime Minister of Israel. Those principles are: Deterrence, Intelligence, Defensive capability and a decisive victory against its foes. On the 7<sup>th</sup> October, all the above stated principles failed and thus we saw a brutal attack of Hamas in the state of Israel. (Cronin, 2024)

The attacks on the civilians of Israel by the Hamas, were although horrific but there is a need to identify the root causes of such a retaliation. Palestinians essentially live in an open-air prison as suggested by the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron, the unemployment rate amongst the youth is as much as 60% while their living standard is abysmal. The literate youth has no avenue to expend their energies, on top of that Israel time and again conducts air raids and military operations in Gaza, in what the Israel label as "Mowing the lawn". Some of the examples of the above



stated phenomenon include Operations conducted by IDF in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2020, 2021, 2022, and now in 2023 some of the well-known operations are Operation Cast Lead, Operation Protective Edge and Operation Pillar of the Fence etc.. Essentially the Palestinian youth doesn't have a past, they don't have a present and neither do they have a future. Therefore, the despair and the lack of hope amongst the Palestinian compels them to retaliate in whatever limited manner they can. (Finkelstein, Piers Morgan vs Norman Finkelstein On Israel and Palestine | The Full Interview, 2023).

The history of the conflict is rather more gruesome, it will be essential here to start tracing this conflict from 1917, when the area in question was under the British Mandate. At that moment the British published what was known as the 'Balfour Declaration', according to which the colonial state pledged to carve out a state in the area which was at that moment Palestine for Jews, it is to be noted here that the Arab Muslim population in the area constituted 98%, while the Jews constituted 2% of the total population. Soon the migration of Jews in the region started and then in 1947 the United Nations again through a resolution stated its goal for establishing a Jewish state, when the population of Jews in the region was 25% and that of Arabs were 75%, and soon more than 700,000 Palestinians were displaced in what was to be known as "Nakba". The UN proposed that 55% of the state should be given to the Jews and while 45% to the Arab Muslims, naturally this was unacceptable to the Muslims. Soon after two wars were fought in the name of this cause by the Arab Muslims against the state of Israel, first in 1967, which was known as the 6 days war and then in 1972 which was called the Yom Kippur war. After the 1972 war, the state of Israel not only captured the whole of Palestine but also the Golan Heights of Syria and Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. In 1982, Israeli expansionist state had another war, this time with Lebanon, on the pretext that there were massive intrusions of Palestinian refugees back to Israel. The Israeli forces in this operation not only flattened the city of Beirut, but also managed to kill more than 20,000 innocent civilians of Lebanon. When the Palestinian came to see that their armed struggle was not availing any dividend, they initiated a peaceful struggle which was known as 'First Intifada' in 1987-88, this exerted the pressure on the international community to resolve this issue, and thus Oslo accords were culminated, where the two sides decided to resolve the issue in 5 years. Then in 2000 and 2001, under the good office of United States and by the mediation of Bill Clinton, another round of peace talks was started, but these were soon shot down by the intransigence of Israelis who insisted on not abandoning the practice of illegal settlement in the West Bank. In 2006, elections were held simultaneously in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In the West Bank, Fatah was able to win the elections while in the Gaza Strip to the utter astonishment of everyone Hamas won the elections. Israelis didn't like the idea of Hamas ruling Gaza, so a severe blockade of the territory was ordered, and this initiated the exploitation of the Palestinian masses. (Finkelstein, What Events Lead to the Current Situation in Israel and Palestine?, 2023)

Palestinian Liberation Organization initially was reluctant for the two-states solution, but the then President of United States Jimmy Carter persuaded Yasir Arafat for a two-states solution. Carter was of the opinion that for a lasting peace in the Middle East, it was instrumental that there exist



two states in the region. Now, the onus is on the United States to convince Hamas that they should seek a two states solution, instead of focusing on a larger Palestinian State, which will compromise the security of both Israel and the Palestinian state, and to make the Israeli state realize the benefits of a two states solution when it comes to the security of Israel. (Mearshimer, 2023)

The one state solution for Israel is detrimental for its cause, as that would mean that there would be a slight Arab Muslim majority in the state 'Greater Israel'. This is the reason that Israel is seemed to be waging a war of genocide against Palestinians both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel at the moment is trying either to exterminate the Palestinians or force them out of Gaza through the RAFA 'a crossing into Egypt, in order to lessen their numeric population in the region. (Mearsheimer, 2023)

There is a great deal of pressure from the international community to unanimously label Hamas as a terrorist organization, but in essence Hamas is only retaliating the Israel Defense Force's attacks. The IDF has essentially disregarded the International Humanitarian Law, particularly that of Proportionality, during its ongoing war against Hamas. As per the figures released by IDF itself, it has 1:100 kill ratio when it comes exterminating Hamas fighters, which essentially means that it has killed 99 innocent Palestinians in order to kill one Hamas fighter. This in sense constitutes ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population. (Hijab, 2023)

Although, all the states have the right to defend themselves under the Article 51 of United Nation's Charter, but it doesn't apply on Israel, as it is the occupying state, and the Palestinians being the occupied population has the right to throw away the supremacy of Israel as per their will. The Palestinians have been historically declined basic human rights as enshrined in the multiple Geneva and the Hague Conventions, the rights that are to be protected by the occupying state with regards to the occupied territory. (Khan, 2023)

## **Conclusion**

There are two possibilities of this conflict getting more convoluted, first is that the massacre that is waged by the Israeli forces may instigate a feeling of hatred amongst the future generations of Palestine, so that vigilantism will not only emerge from this war but will be further exacerbated. Moreover, the conflagration of Israel Defense Forces with Hezbollah in the north of Israel can involve Iran in this region which will initiate a chain reaction and more powers will also come into the fray. So, this conflict can escalate at an enormous pace. Israel has failed to achieve any strategic victory in this conflict with the Hamas, it essentially had three objectives, first to defeat Hamas, second to bring back the hostages and third to destroy the war infrastructure of Hamas and other Jihadi groups in the region. As far as outcomes are concerned, Hamas is still operational in the region and the hostages haven't been returned to Israel (Faraj, 2023). So, the IDF can take a step out of desperation that will be detrimental for the world not only for the region.



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