


INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON APARTHEID AND DECOLONIZATION IN PALESTINE

SATURDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY 2023

**ONE BIRDCAGE WALK,
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LONDON SW1H 9JJ**

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“The tragedy of the people of Palestine is that their country was “given” by a foreign power to another people for the creation of a new state. The result was that many hundreds of thousands of innocent people were made permanently homeless. With every new conflict their numbers increased. How much longer is the world willing to endure this spectacle of wanton cruelty? It is abundantly clear that the refugees have every right to the homeland from which they were driven, and the denial of this right is at the heart of the continuing conflict. No people anywhere in the world would accept being expelled en masse from their country; how can anyone require the people of Palestine to accept a punishment which nobody else would tolerate? A permanent just settlement of the refugees in their homeland is an essential ingredient of any genuine settlement in the Middle East.”



Bertrand Russell

International Conference of
Parliamentarians in Cairo
February 1970

THE PROGRAMME

The Palestinian quest for freedom and independence is arguably the last of the great anti-colonial struggles. It is, in every respect, a response to Zionist settler colonialism, which was premised on the racist notion of the ‘white man’s burden’ to civilise the darker races.

After its establishment on 78 per cent of historic Palestine in 1948, Israel has worked assiduously to prevent the emergence of a Palestinian state in the remaining 22 per cent. Instead, it has deliberately created an apartheid reality in which two peoples occupy the same land but with one people, Israelis, totally dominating the other.

The Zionist settler enterprise was not as benign and altruistic as it feigned initially. It had no intention of leaving Palestine after its inhabitants were supposedly endowed with the virtues of western culture and civilisation. On the contrary, it sought to destroy and replace their national culture, political autonomy and national will. Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement confirmed this when he said, “If I wish to substitute a new building for an old one, I must demolish before I construct.”

What followed was a calculated attempt to erase Palestine from history and cartography. Israeli leaders replaced historical Palestinian Arab place names with that of Hebrew names. That objective was realised in 1948 when, in the words of Edward Said, Palestine was “rebuilt,” “reconstituted,” and “re-established” as the state of Israel. The resultant process of cultural genocide in Palestine was the natural outcome of the project to destroy and replace.

The process of decolonising Palestine has been protracted and multi-dimensional. From the late 19th century, Palestinians have been resisting and refusing to cooperate or engage with the nascent Jewish settler-colonies which were, even then, usurping their land.

This conference examines all aspects of the Palestinian reality under the three broad themes of apartheid, genocide and decolonisation. It seeks to initiate a dialogue that will foster greater international cooperation for the full attainment of Palestinian national rights.

Objectives

- To foster a better understanding of Zionist settler colonialism, its apartheid structures and genocidal consequences;
- To examine the legal and political dimensions of decolonisation in the Palestinian context;
- To explore the prospects for new and more effective international mechanisms to protect Palestinian rights.

OUTLINE AND THEMES

09:30 AM

Arrival / Registration

10:00 AM

Opening Address by Professor Joseph Massad

Joseph Massad is Professor of Modern Arab Politics and Intellectual History at Columbia University. He is the author of several books, dozens of scholarly articles, and hundreds of op-eds.



10:40 AM

Panel session one: : The Zionist enterprise: an outpost of European civilisation or colonialism?

Moderator: Selma Dabbagh
Panelists: Sara Hussein, Suja Sawafta



11:40 AM

Break

12:00 PM

Panel session two: Apartheid as a prelude to genocidal practices

Moderator: Dr Kholoud Al Ajarma
Panelists: Marc Owen Jones, Mouin Rabbani, Antony Lerman



01:30 PM

Lunch Break

02:15 PM

Keynote Address Professor Michael Lynk

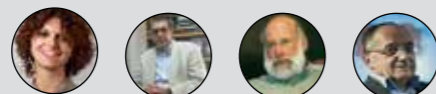
Seventh Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories.



03:00 PM

Panel session three: Resistance and liberation

Moderator: Catherine Charrett
Panelists: Jose Ramon Cabañas Rodriguez, Jeff Halper, Gilles Devers



4:30 PM

Closing Remarks

PANEL SESSION ONE | STARTS: 10.40 AM

The Zionist enterprise: an outpost of European civilisation or colonialism?

Selma Dabbagh

Panel Moderator

British-Palestinian writer; her novel, Out of It, which centered on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, was nominated for a Guardian Book of the Year award in 2011 and 2012.



Sara Hussein

- A colonial conquest driven by an ethnocentric and racially exclusive ideology

Director of the British Palestinian Committee. Sara has served as an advisor to the Secretary General of the PLO and the Palestinian Ambassador to Germany. (UK)



Suja Sawafta

- Palestinians' cultural "backwardness" was a justification for the ethnic cleansing of the population

Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies, Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Miami (USA)



SECOND SESSION | STARTS: 12.00 PM

Apartheid as a prelude to genocidal practices

Dr Kholoud Al Ajarma

Panel Moderator

Palestinian anthropologist and award-winning photographer and film maker. She is a lecturer at the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh.



Marc Owen Jones

- Social media challenges to the global discourse on Israeli apartheid

Associate Professor of Middle East Studies and Digital Humanities at Doha's Hamad Bin Khalifa University (Qatar)



Mouin Rabbani

- Pivotal instruments of Israeli apartheid: demographic engineering and fragmentation of the Palestinian people

Dutch-Palestinian Middle East analyst and former senior analyst for the International Crisis Group. (The Netherlands)



Antony Lerman

- Weaponising anti-Semitism to obstruct the global anti-apartheid movement

Senior Fellow Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue, Vienna (Austria)



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

STARTS: 02:15 PM

Professor Michael Lynk



Professor S. Michael Lynk (Canada), was appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 in 2016.

Prof. Lynk is Associate Professor of Law at Western University in London, Ontario, where he teaches labour law, constitutional law and human rights law. Before becoming an academic, he practiced labour law and refugee law for a decade in Ottawa and Toronto. As well, he worked for the United Nations on human rights and refugee issues in Jerusalem.

Professor Lynk received his B.A. (with honours) and his LL.B. from Dalhousie University, and completed his LL.M. at Queen's University in 2001.

THIRD SESSION | STARTS: 03.00 PM

Resistance and liberation

Catherine Charrett

Panel Moderator

Senior Lecturer in Global Politics at the University of Westminster. Before that Catherine taught International Relations at Queen Mary University of London.



Jose Ramon Cabañas Rodriguez

- On the legitimacy of peoples' struggle for self-determination and liberation from colonial and foreign domination

Director of the Research Centre for International Policy (CIPI), Havana (Cuba)



Jeff Halper

- Envisioning Palestine without Zionism

Director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions and a co-founder of The One Democratic State Campaign (Israel)



Gilles Devers

- Legal tools at the service of Palestinian resistance

French lawyer and academic. He has represented the Palestinian Authority before the International Court of Justice (France)



“The sustainability of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people has always been dependent on its ability to deliver justice to the Palestinians. I know first-hand that Israel has created an apartheid reality within its borders and through its occupation. The parallels to my own beloved South Africa are painfully stark indeed. Realistic Israeli leaders have acknowledged that Israel will either end its occupation through a one or two state solution, or live in an apartheid state in perpetuity. The latter option is unsustainable and an offense to justice. We learned in South Africa that the only way to end apartheid peacefully was to force the powerful to the table through economic pressure.”



Desmond Tutu

Late Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town
16 June 2014

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