

Why Zionism Is Racism

Zionism is a racist and irredeemable movement, like Bolshevism, Nazism, and Apartheid.

By Rabee' Sahyoun

Posted: 11 Rabi-u-Thani 1422, 3 July 2001

(Note: This article is a direct response, using the same format, on a line by line basis, to an editorial that appeared in the Montreal Gazette on April 26, 2001, written by Gil Troy, a Professor of History at McGill University.)

On this, the 53rd anniversary of the Nakbe' (the Catastrophe of the Palestinian people), it is all too tempting for friend and foe alike to define Israel, and zionism, solely by the Americans' proclamations of its enlightened democracy. To do so is to miss the normal atrocities that occur in Israel daily, the millions who are under curfew and blockade, starving and brutalized, in the Middle East's only colonized state. To do so is to feign the reality of zionism, a racist and irredeemable movement, that survived the twentieth centuries' other genocidal and seemingly passing revolutions such as Bolshevism, Nazism, and Apartheid.

The sad truth is that over a century after its founding, zionism seems to be grander and more honorable than its reality. Arabs have suffered from Zionism's belligerence and exclusivity, and many have blamed the United States, and the West, for this because of their unshakeable support of zionism. Israeli aggression over the past seven months has finally renewed international recognition that zionism is racism.

On this anniversary of the Nabke', it is now up to all Jews to follow in the footsteps of the brave few, and denounce the racist and separatist nature of zionism, while the world should encourage them to do so. The world should not allow the torchbearers of zionism to silence and quell the idealism of these few. No nationalism is pure, no movement is perfect, no state is ideal, but today, Zionism persists as a menace, a militaristic and dictatorial movement to me and to most Palestinians. A century ago, zionism extended Western colonialism to Palestine; today, as in the rest of the world, colonialism must be ideologically purged from Palestine.

I believe that zionism is racism, because 53 years after being exiled from their homeland, in defiance of the four Geneva Conventions, UN Resolutions 181, 194, 242, 338, and others, and other multilateral and international human rights conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the disinherited refugees of Palestine, continue to endure merciless punishment from the Zionist entity, most recently in the bulldozing of makeshift homes in the Khan Younis refugee camp in Gaza.

I believe that zionism is racism, because I am a Palestinian, and without recognizing the colonialist component in zionism, I cannot explain its racist character, a western movement uprooting the native peoples of Palestine, Muslim, Christian, Jew, Samaritan alike, a people bound to their land, through centuries of raising orange groves, and herding sheep, lending grace to the Hills of God, historically, religiously and culturally.

I believe that zionism is racism, because it fails to appreciate or acknowledge the Palestinians' ties to their homeland, their love for their historical capital, Jerusalem, and the 53-year plight they have endured as refugees worldwide, in Europe, in North America, in camps Dheishe, Shatila, Wehdaat and others, never giving up hope or struggle in yearning to return home.

I believe that zionism is racism, because it fails to admit the reality that the minority indigenous Jewish community in Palestine, that lived there for the last two thousand years, was an undistinguishable people from its Christian and Muslim Palestinian brethren, and that the leader of the Jewish community of the Jewish quarter of Old Jerusalem, Rabbi Lamram Blau, stood on the side of his Palestinian brothers and sisters being exiled in 1948.

I believe that zionism is racism because in modern times, the promise of liberal democracy and justice is a double-edged sword, preached by the Western powers, yet only paid lip-service to in the case of Israel, where Palestinian are continuously expelled, ethnically cleansed, and subjugated, and in the cases where they are assimilated, they are granted, limited, if any, civil rights.

I believe that zionism is racism, because in establishing the racially exclusive state of Israel, in 1948, and expelling the indigenous Palestinians from the land, the zionists severed a relationship that people had to the land for over 4,000 years, uninterrupted, since before Abraham.

I believe that zionism is racism, because in building Israel, the zionists were revising history, embracing the notion of racial superiority, an ideology that has empowered them to discriminate, with all of its associated social ills, injustices, and moral bankruptcy.

I believe that zionism is racism because it fails to distinguish between the nationalism of the American, based on multi-cultural harmony, and the racial exclusivity, separatism, ethnic cleansing, and brutality of zionism, that stands in clear violation of the most basic elements of international law and human rights practices, as most recently highlighted by reports issued by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

I believe that zionism is racism because in our world of post-modern identities, I know that we do not have to be "either-ors", we can be "ands and buts" – a zionist and a settler, an American citizen of Polish heritage but a soldier in the Israeli army.

I believe that zionism is racism because it self-propagates itself as a democratic movement. However, a democracy, cannot, by definition, only be representative of one community in a bi-national and tri-religious contiguous geographic area. A democracy cannot exist for one people and not for another. This as called Apartheid in South Africa, and is now called zionism in Palestine.

I believe that zionism is racism, because it espouses an independent and sovereign Jewish state, in a land where there is no Jewish majority. It espouses that such a sovereign state be at peace and harmony with its neighbors without allowing the Palestinian refugees dwelling within their borders, who were expelled from their homes in Palestine by zionist militias, as is clearly documented by numerous sources including the memoirs of David-Ben Gurion himself, to return to their homes, which is a basic human right guaranteed by Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I believe that zionism is racism because it is presented by its champions, from Gil Troy to Elie Wiesel, as a romantic movement, which allowed zionists to reclaim the desert and build a model nation-state. This is racism at its most acute, since there was no desert in Palestine, other than the Negev in the South. This is simply a myth that has been propagated by racists who have supported Israel for the last 53 years, and economic data on agricultural exports to Europe from Palestine dating to medieval times easily rejects and exposes this as a blasphemous claim.

Yes, it sounds far-fetched today. But as Vladamir Jabotinsky, father of revisionist zionism said in a racist boast in 1923, "There can be no discussion of a voluntary reconciliation between us and the Arabs... Any native people...view their country as their national home... They will not voluntarily allow, not only a new master, but even a new partner... Colonization can have only one goal. For the Palestinian Arabs this goal is inadmissible. This is in the nature of things. To change that nature is impossible... colonization can, therefore, continue and develop only under the protection of a force independent of the local population - an iron wall which the native population cannot break through. This is, in toto, our policy towards the Arabs. To formulate it any other way would only be hypocrisy."

And thus, Gil Troy and zionists abound are exposed as nothing more than unabashed racists.

[Mr. Rabee' Sahyoun is a economic development policy researcher, human rights activist, and columnist residing in Beirut, Lebanon. He is affiliated with the global grassroots Palestine Right To Return Coalition.]