



**Now, I want to ask whether the dispossession of the natives would go on in the West Bank, because as long as we understand this conflict in terms of settler colonialism, there is no other way for Israel, right?**

Yes, and I think it's very clear. I think Israel is being very clear that they're increasing settlement construction in East Jerusalem, they are increasing it in the West Bank. The levels of violence that we've seen in the West Bank are immense. In fact, they were immense even before October 7. This year, before October 7, was the deadliest year for Palestinians since the Second Intifada, specifically in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. So, we're talking about hundreds of people who have been killed, settler riots in Palestinian towns and villages, military actions in refugee camps. We've seen very, very high levels of violence that are all geared at dispossession.

And you're right. I think it's one of the strengths of the analysis of settler colonialism, which is to say, there's not some sort of national conflict. It's an ongoing process of colonization. And, by the way,

it's not only in the West Bank, it's also inside of Israel itself. There is a massive process that's been going on for the last decade, obviously, it's been going on since 1948, but in the last decade has again accelerated, and that is to displace Palestinians in the Naqab Desert in the south, also known as the Negev, where 70,000, Palestinians are being threatened with dispossession and displacement. There was a plan that was defeated by a social movement at the time, but which has not disappeared. And so there are big ongoing developments, or an ongoing push to achieve really what I think can be understood as the central strategic aim of the Israeli state towards the Palestinians: to concentrate as many Palestinians on as little land as possible – and that happens everywhere. You can see that happening everywhere, including inside of the green line.

**As my last question, I want to know that in your opinion, what hope is left for Palestinians at this stage?**

I think I very much share the analysis that the Palestinian Left had already developed in the 1950s

and 60s, which was to say that it's impossible to understand Palestine, outside of wider regional relations.

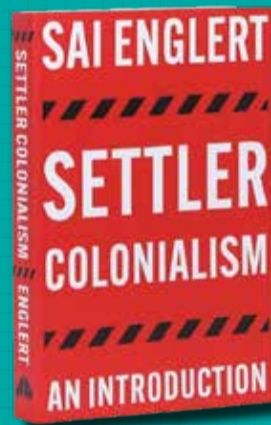
Similar to where we started our discussion today, which was that you can't understand Zionism and then the Israeli state without understanding wider relations of empire building and of imperialism, as Israel plays a particular role in imposing, defending, and reproducing Western power in the wider region. And so, that it's impossible to think about the Liberation of Palestine without thinking about a wider regional liberation.

The Palestinian leftist thinker, George Habash, used to say this famous sentence that the road to Jerusalem goes through the capitals of the Arab world. And, you know, without the fall of repressive regimes across the region, and somehow democratization of the region, I think it's impossible to think about the Liberation of Palestine.

Israel can function the way it does because the regional actors collaborate with it. The Palestinians are the majority of the population in Jordan, and they are an import-

Thousands of Pro-Palestinian protesters march in London against the war in Gaza on February 17, 2024.

● GUY BELL/REX



ant population in the south of Lebanon, as well as in the south of Syria. The fact that they are controlled by those regimes, that they are stopped from organizing for their return, plays a key role in stabilizing the region and stopping the Liberation of Palestine. But also I think there's a strategic question as well: halfway through the 20th century, the United States made a calculation that it was better for them to unite with Israel as a repressive force in the region than to unite with different sections of Arab nationalism. And that calculation obviously can be changed, in a region in which massive social movements, revolutionary movements – like we saw in 2011 – across the region were to take power, for example, and to genuinely start representing the will of their populations. I think you could see the United States and Europe being forced to rethink that strategic decision if they were to start losing control of the region in general. Would it still be worth it to continue supporting Israel in the blind and unconditional way that they do now? And so

in many ways, I think the Liberation of Palestine is intimately connected to the wider liberation of the region as a whole.

And Ghassan Kanafani, who was also a very famous Palestinian author and political thinker, used to talk about the enemy trinity, and he used to say there are three enemies: there are the local ruling classes, the local bourgeoisie, there are reactionary regimes in the region, and there is imperialism. And the Palestinians are facing all three of those at the same time, which is obviously bad news. But the good news is that they're not the only ones. I think the rest of the region is facing them as well. And so if we think about it, at a wider level, I think the situation is less hopeless than if we simply think about the Palestinians, isolated, facing both the Israeli state on the one hand, and its Western backers on the other.

Iran Daily does not recognize the statehood of Israel, and any part of the text that points to the contrary strictly reflects the opinion of the interviewee.



Israeli soldiers and tanks are seen inside the Jabalia refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip, on December 12, 2023.

● CHAIM GOLDBERG/FLASH90



The photo shows the ship 'Theodor Herzl,' carrying Jewish refugees, seized by the British Mandate authorities on its way to Palestine and escorted to the port of Haifa in April 1947. The banner reads, "The Germans have destroyed our families and homes — don't kill our hopes."

● X