**Violence against civilians**

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For many decades Israeli politicians have been working toward the goal of establishing what they call ‘Eretz Israel’ or ‘The Greater Land of Israel’ – a greater Israel composed of all of the Palestine mandate “from the Sea to the River Jordan” (their words). After the partition of Palestine under UN auspices in 1948, Israel has expanded its territory, by military and non-military means, and now comprises 78 per cent of what was once Palestine, plus Syria’s Golan Heights.

There is a clear historical record of deliberate displacement documented by many scholars, including the book, “Plowshares into Swords: From Zionism to Israel,” (Verso, 2008) by Princeton Professor Arno Mayer. Coming off the horrors of Russian pogroms and Nazi genocide, the early Founders of the Israeli state were in no mood to respect the rights of the indigenous Palestinians.

It took an American-born Prime Minister of Israel, Golda Meir (1969-1974), to speak the ultimate antisemitism against the Arabs of Palestine, declaring “There is no such thing as a Palestinian people… It is not as if we came and threw them out and took their country. They didn’t exist.”

Other Israeli leaders before and after Golda Meir were brutally frank about what they were making happen on the ground. Israel’s lead Founder, David Ben-Gurion, in 1937 wrote in a letter to his son, “We must expel the Arabs and take their places…” A year later he said in a speech, “Let us not ignore the truth among ourselves… The country is theirs, because they inhabit it, whereas we want to come here and settle down, and in their view we want to take away from them their country. …” Many years later, in the 1980s, Ben-Gurion renewed his candor: “There has been Anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They see but one thing: we have come and we have stolen their country. Why would they accept that?”

In 1979, Israeli war hero, top general Moshe Dayan, recognized that “Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages.” After naming a number of them, he added “There is not a single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.” Speaking to Jewish settlers, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in 1988 warned resistors, meaning Palestinians would be crushed “like grasshoppers” and their “head smashed against the boulders and walls.”

Other Israeli Prime Ministers – Menachem Begin (1977-1983), Ariel Sharon (2001-2006) and the incumbent Benjamin Netanyahu have expressed similar assertions of the need to expel the Palestinians, as they have repressed and impoverished them in the Occupied Territories. Now, Netanyahu wants to push Palestinians out of Gaza entirely, if he can, into Egypt and Jordan.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak (1999-2001), responding to a columnist asking what he would have done if he had been born a Palestinian, frankly replied “I would have joined a terrorist organization.”

When it comes to “terrorism,” – defined as violence against civilians for political purposes – Palestinians have lost over 400 times more innocent lives than have innocent Israelis over the decades. Israeli state terror against Gaza’s (starving, sick and dying) civilians, mostly children and women, is manifesting itself daily with vast supplies of American weaponry and diplomatic cover.

To Israeli hardliners, countered by numerous courageous Israeli human rights organizations, Palestinian lives are valued beneath “cockroaches” and “snakes,” antisemitic rants against Arabs flow through the Israeli media. One Rabbi who eulogized American-born Baruch Goldstein’s 1994 massacre of 29 Palestinians killed and 150 others injured who were praying in Hebron’s al-Ibrahimi Mosque, declared “One million Arabs are not worth a Jewish fingernail.”

Israeli politicians have an encompassing reason why they believe they can get away with all kinds of violations of international law in their oppression of Palestinians and, in recent years, routine bombings and incursions into neighboring countries too weak to respond. That reason is the U.S. government. The U.S. is a lawless Empire bombing and invading where it wants, without Congressional declarations of war and in violation of federal and international laws.

In 2001, the BBC reported that Israel’s Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, said, that “Israel may have the right to put others on trial, but certainly no one has the right to put the Jewish people and the State of Israel on trial.”

That same year, P.M. Sharon declared what Israel’s prime ministers, before and since, have striven for regarding Congress and the White House when he told former P.M. Shimon Peres (1984-1986), as reported on Kol Yisrael radio: “Every time we do something you tell me Americans will do this and will do that. I want to tell you something very clear, don’t worry about American pressure on Israel. We, the Jewish people control America, and the Americans know it.”

Such imperiousness and violent racist remarks against Palestinians are reflected in Israeli leaders and opinion-shapers who call Palestinians “beasts,” “animals,” “subhuman,” “crocodiles,” “vermin,” and worse. With such vile pejoratives, it was easy for Eli Yishai, Israeli Interior Minister to say in 2012: “The goal of the operation [Operation Pillar of Defense] is to send Gaza back to the Middle Ages…”

Actually, the Palestinians have one of the highest literacy rates – 97 percent – in the world. Under dire conditions, they have accomplished farmers, physicians, scientists, engineers, poets, musicians, novelists, artists, and a deep entrepreneurial tradition carried on by the Palestinian diaspora around the world.

It is no accident that Israeli bombers directly target Palestinian cultural and educational institutions in their recurrent assaults on Gaza.

Israeli militarists have to degrade all Palestinians (3.2 million in the West Bank and 2.3 million in the Gaza Strip) to expel them from their ancestral lands and in so doing violently reveal the “other antisemitism” that most of the media has ignored.

Excerpted: ‘Israel’s Right-Wing Wants All the Palestinian Land – and This Explains Its State Terrorism’.

Courtesy: Commondreams.org