

1962**Lam'i al-Muti'i, 'From Bandung to Casablanca'
(Excerpts)****Citation:**

"Lam'i al-Muti'i, 'From Bandung to Casablanca' (Excerpts)", 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Lam'i al-Muti'i, Min Bandung ilā Dār al-Baydhā' (From Bandung to Casablanca) (Cairo: Dār al-Qawmiyya, 1962 [?]), 27-34. Contributed, translated, and annotated by Cyrus Schayegh. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/291050>

Summary:

While in 1947 the Indian organizers of the First Asian Relations Conference invited a Yishuvi delegation, eight years later the Bandung Conference organizers did not invite Israel. At the same time, the second half of the 1950s signaled the start of Israel's long "African Decade," which would end only when many African states cut their diplomatic ties with the Jewish State after the 1973 October War. The first two countries to establish diplomatic ties with Israel were Ethiopia, in 1956, and Liberia, in 1957; in the 1960s, many others followed, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Thousands of Africans studied in Israel. Moreover, thousands of Israeli engineers, agronomists, architects, geologists and others who had participated in nation-state building in Israel worked often for years in development projects in Africa and also, though less so, in Asia and Latin America. And as Ronen Bergman's 2007 PhD thesis "Israel and Africa: Military and Intelligence Liaisons" shows, Israel exported weaponry and Israeli officers shared with the militaries of recently decolonized African countries their expertise in warfare and in controlling civilians. After all, Israel blitzed through the Egyptian Sinai in 1956, had won its first war back in 1948-1949, and from then until 1966 kept its own Palestinian citizens under military rule.

In fact, the Israeli Defense Forces and the foreign intelligence agency Mossad were central to Israel's involvement in Africa. The core reason for Israel's interest in Africa was political and strategic. Israel needed allies in the United Nations, where postcolonial Asian countries were turning against it. And it wished to minimize the dangers of postcolonial Arab-African alliances and to extend to parts of Africa its "periphery doctrine" of honing relations with Middle Eastern countries that neighbor Arab states, like Iran and Turkey. As it did so, Israel at times shared some contacts and information with the US government; becoming a US asset was a boon to the Israeli government, though it remained fiercely independent-minded.

Hence, we have the text reproduced here: translated English excerpts from a 1962

Arabic-language book that shows how Arab nationalists read Israel's Africa policy. Moreover, as works like Haim Yacobi's *Israel and Africa: A Genealogy of Moral Geography* (2016) and Ayala Levin's *Architecture and Development: Israeli Construction in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Settler Colonial Imagination, 1958-1973* (2022) show, the afore-noted political and strategic imperatives were steeped in well-rooted Zionist aspirations—aspirations that were colonial in type though not name—to be a Western developmentalist pioneer in the world. These aspirations pertained especially to Africa, which, literally bordering Israel, has helped shape Israelis' view of their place in the world. At the same time, however, Israelis explicitly framed this pioneering self-view within a view of Africans as people who, like the Jews, had recently escaped colonial conditions and reached independent statehood.

Original Language:

Arabic

Contents:

Translation - English

Africa v Israel

We would not be exaggerating when we'd say that the most important act of the Casablanca Conference is the resolution regarding Israel. This is for multiple reasons.

First: For the first time in the history of the African continent, the administrations of its independent states have met and joined ranks against Israel's expansionist policy and against its operating as an infiltrator working on the behest of the colonialist countries.

Second: The conference's resolution regarding Israel will stop Israel's infiltration attempts, i.e. stop Western capital from infiltrating Africa while hiding behind Israeli companies ..

Third: This resolution expresses the deep, conscious understanding of Israel's role as a supporting pillar of the colonialist countries and as a bridge head for colonialism within the [African] continent whose administrations have met [in Casablanca] and are putting an end to colonialist influence ..

Fourth: This resolution exemplifies the independent African states' belief in freedom everywhere, one and indivisible.

Fifth: This resolution expresses the extent of the pioneering role played by the United Arab Republic, embodied in the person of the President Abdel Nasser.

Taking a closer look at the conference's resolution, it says:

Israel is an instrument of neo-colonialism (*al-isti'mār al-jadid*) in all of Africa just as it manages colonialism in the Middle East .. The conference calls upon all African and Asian states to stand against this Israeli policy, and it discerns the necessity for the creation of a just solution to the Palestinian issue that matches the UN resolutions and the Bandung resolutions, supporting the Arab Palestinians' return to their country .. And the conference disapproves the Israel-French secret understanding in carrying out atomic tests.

I say that if we pour over this resolution, we have no choice but to return to Nasser's speech at the United Nations .. that speech that the President Gamal Abdel Nasser held at the fifteenth General Assembly on September 27, 1960 .. and in which he explained how the Israeli-English-French Suez War against Egypt constitutes the end of unveiled colonialism (*al-isti'mār al-safir*), and the start of a new form of colonialism that shows clearly in Africa .. On this issue, the president said in his speech:

Four years ago, the African continent witnessed the end of one form of colonialism .. and today, the African continent is witnessing a new form of this colonialism.

Suez was the end of armed unveiled colonialism and what it perpetrated, and today, we find that Congo is the start of veiled colonialism (*al-isti'mār al-muqanna'*). The latter does not even refrain from exploiting the United Nations itself as a veil to hide its greedy ambitions, maneuvering behind its back to carry out its objectives. As far as Asia and Africa's liberation movements are concerned, then, the real meaning of Suez is that the era passed when the colonialist powers were able to amass the armies; [now], they are turning to myths to hit the liberation movements.

The Suez War determined that freedom has its weapons and friends everywhere .. You were here, in this very place and hall .. freedom's weapon and friend .. Due to you and your efforts, reflecting the apex of the world's belief in freedom, our people were able to hold out against the aggression. It did not take long for colonialism to recede from our coasts and to be defeated, and this withdrawal and defeat constituted the end of the era of armed ambitions. Thereafter, colonialism sought protection and searched for another instrument for its ambitions. And after Suez, we witnessed what we might call the period of colonialist irresolution.

Perhaps, the above paragraphs from the President's speech at the United Nations explain the new form that colonialism assumed after the Suez War—the form that shows best in the African continent, where Israel functions as the agent of neo-colonialism. The Casablanca conference clearly pointed out this issue.

The Casablanca conference also pointed to the return of the Arab Palestinians to their country, adhering to the UN resolutions and the Bandung resolutions .. The President Abdel Nasser explained this issue at the United Nations, saying that

In our region of the world, in the Middle East, the United Nations have forgotten their

charter, and it has forgotten its responsibility regarding the rights of the Palestinian people.

The defeat inflicted on the Zionist circles by Nasser's General Assembly speech, which confronted the United Nations with its responsibility *vis-à-vis* the resolutions trampled on by Israel's actions—this defeat was without any doubt in preparation for the defeat that Israel will suffer regarding the Casablanca conference resolutions ..

And in this regard, the President said at the United Nations:

“Silencing an error will bring about a chain of errors .. Even if the roots of the problems appear small or are left buried in the ground now, they will not be forgotten with the passing of time. Rather, these roots grow bigger by the day, and time makes them only more complex and dangerous.

A *fait accompli* is being used as a pretext for a great sin committed in violation of the [UN] principles. If we accepted this argumentation, then repulsing the thief [Israel] and demanding back from him what he has stolen [Palestine] would not be justified, and his theft would become a *fait accompli*. [But] a *fait accompli* that is not built on justice and on the rule of law is a distortion that [international] society ought to reform and correct.

There is no doubt that these pronouncements of the president expressed the United Nations' position towards Israel's persistent breaking of its resolution under the pretext of *fait accompli* .. The Casablanca conference asserted the United Nations' role in the necessary application of its resolutions regarding the Palestinian people.

But if the United Nations forgot its charter and its responsibility towards the Palestinian people .. the Palestinian people has not forgotten its homeland and its land .. and the independent people of Africa assert the Palestinian people's right to their homeland and their land.

The President Abdel Nasser stated in his General Assembly speech:

“In the Arab East .. the United Nations has forgotten its charter .. and its responsibilities regarding the rights of the Palestinian people .. But did the Palestinian people forget its homeland and land and abode, did the Arab people forget the catastrophe that has befallen one of its people against which colonialism conspired, which, commissioned by the League of Nations, erected a Mandate against it? This colonialism promised to others [Jews] of a homeland that belonged to people other than them [Palestinians]. Since when are people's homelands the property of a colonizer who with one word snatches it away from its owners to give it to somebody else according to his will? And did the people of Palestine accept their loss? Did the Arab people accept this loss?

I do not want here to make you shed tears for the situation of the Palestinian refugees, but rather want for the Palestinian people their full rights .. not tears.

The United Nations absolutely has to assume its responsibilities towards Palestine and its Arab people .. these simple rights of this brave people, which faced in the twentieth century, in the most oppressive periods of history, an unheard-of trial .. This is the only right[ful solution] for the refugees of this people. The United Nations here knows enough about their dreadful situation to draw a saddening picture of the oppression of a million human beings who were evicted from their homes and deprived of all their belongings .. if not their entire lives.”

Hence, it would not be strange if the Zionist circles would rise again to attack the United Arab Republic and the President Gamal Abdel Nasser, for they see that Abdel Nasser is wrecking the Israeli Zionist actions in Africa.

The news agencies said that President Nasser was able to expose the Israeli infiltration in the African states, and that he was able to explain the role that Israel plays for the interest of other states .. and that he succeeded in having the conference adopt a resolution against the Israeli-French secret understanding regarding atomic tests.

Regarding the atomic tests, and the talk about Israel's move to obtain nuclear bombs, the Zionist circles will not forget that President Abdel Nasser was the first to expose this issue with determination and to oppose it with force in his [Suez War] victory day speech in Port Said on December 23, 1960. In this speech, President Abdel Nasser explained for the first time the outlines of his position *vis-à-vis* Israel's nuclear

program. .. President Abdel Nasser's talk about the necessity to attack and sweep away the basis of aggression [Israel] should it be confirmed that it possesses the atomic bomb struck fear in the Zionist circles .. And he exposed the role of America and of the colonialist countries that stand behind Israel, supporting her and financing her purchase of nuclear plants .. and preparing her armament with nuclear weapons.

[...]

And so, colonialism wished for Israel to be a pillar of support for it in the Arab East .. the Arab people will destroy this pillar .. And at the Casablanca conference, not only did the Arab people reassert its united stance in the battle against the pillar of colonialist support—Israel—but also, all people of the independent countries of Africa came to join them.

We can think of the period between September 27, 1960, and the Casablanca conference on January 10, 1961, as the period in which Israel's intention were publicly exposed .. the period of practical resolutions against it. And President Gamal [Abdel Nasser's] speech at the General Assembly put Israel in the defendant's box, for she tramples the UN resolutions regarding the Palestinian people. In his speech in Port Said on December 23 [1960] he revealed the role that America, NATO, and Western colonialism play in arming Israel with atomic weapons. And in his speech at Casablanca he was able to expose Israel in Africa and to get the independent African countries to form a bloc against colonialist actions, deeming them a threat not only to the Arab East but also to all of Africa, and deeming [Israel] a colluder, with France, in its atomic tests that expose the peoples of the continent to nuclear danger.

Hence, it is not strange that the responsible functionaries in the Israeli Foreign Ministry declare their dismay and their disappointment of their hopes regarding the results of the Casablanca conference. The news agencies reported that President Gamal Abdel Nasser has been able to convince the African leaders that Israel is an instrument in the hands of colonialism .. which is what the conference's resolutions stated.

A spokesman for the Israeli government said: Ben Gurion's government has sent to the African states protests against the conference's anti-Israeli resolutions that, Israeli circles see, were adopted based on President Gamal Abdel Nasser's recommendations.