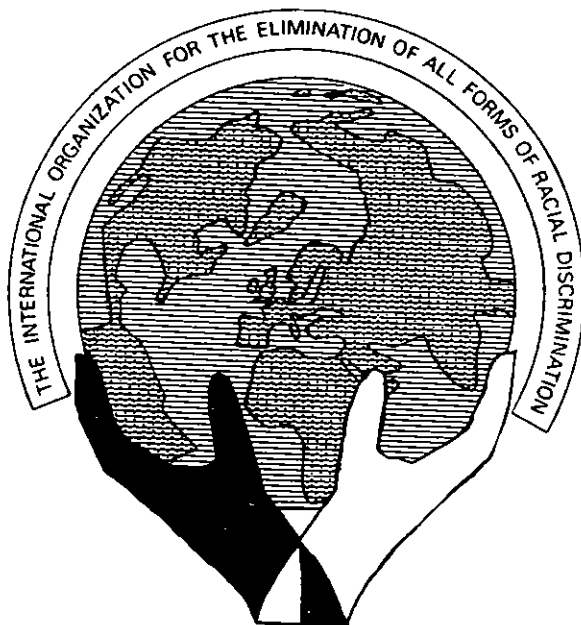


**THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION
FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
(EAFORD)**



RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
by
DR FAYEZ SAYEGH

It is about six years since our deeply lamented colleague, the late Dr Fayez Sayegh, spoke the words reproduced in this paper. Fayez participated in the International Forum on Zionism and Racism in July 1976 and delivered a detailed analysis of racism, racial discrimination and Zionist ideology. As usual, Fayez spoke without the assistance of a written text, except the quotations. It was his practice, however, to tape his interventions. This time, unfortunately, the tape failed to record the entire statement, and that was discovered only after his death. The part reproduced here verbatim forms one of the most lucid and authoritative analysis of racism and racial discrimination by a person who, until his death, was the Rapporteur of the Special Committee established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

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RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION DEFINED

by
DR FAYEZ SAYEGH

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, my modest contribution to our discussions of zionism and racism in this Seminar shall be an attempt to find the genetic nature of racism in general. What is it, what are the premises on which this phenomenon is based, what are the theoretical implications of racism as a doctrine and what are the practical policy consequences that flow from these theoretical implications. And then, having done this about racism in a general way, I shall attempt to place zionism on the general map of racism and identify the manner in which it relates to the other principal varieties of racism that mankind has known, at least in this country.

In my judgement, the most abstract definition of racism is that any concept, any attitude to life which is predicated on the assumption that one's racial belonging is the most crucial fact, the most decisive fact about his relations with other men and about the relations of his group with other groups. Racial identity and partaking of that racial identity by individuals is the most decisive fact about inter-personal relations and about inter-group relations in the framework of racism.

Now saying this, implies two things. It implies first that mankind is essentially divided into racial groups, the difference between which is unbridgable or, according to orthodox racism, must not be bridged. And also secondly, the implication that, these differentiated racial groups of which mankind is composed have inherently different characteristics, different traits, different attitudes and different destinies. So these are then the two essential inescapable implications of any racism whatever its kind.

The belief-systems on which racism is based may again be divided into two principal principles. First, there can be no racism unless there is a belief that some races are superior and therefore some other races are inferior. Racial superiority is an inescapable aspect of racism. It is an inescapable theoretical base on which racism is based; and when we say racial superiority, we do not just mean a slogan, we mean that some races or one race, have superior status, they have superior qualities, they have superior capabilities and they are entitled to privileges to which other racial groups are not entitled. All these are corollaries of the doctrine of racial superiority; and, obversely, since there can be no superiority without there being inferiority, then it means some other races or all other races have an inferior status, inferior qualities, inferior capabilities. In other words, the qualities are not accidental: they are inherent, and the capabilities are equally so, and therefore they do not have the privileges to which only the superior races are

entitled. That is one of the basic principles of racism. And the second basic principle of racism, in my opinion, is, and without which there can be no racism, that races are incapable of co-existence, they are incapable of smoothly living together. They are not meant to mingle, they are meant to be apart.

Now from these two theoretical principles of the doctrine of racism, there follow two or three policy questions – policy consequences. The first policy consequence, again without which there can be no racism, is that races must be segregated, in as much as some are superior and some are inferior but all are different. And they cannot mingle freely and happily, they must be segregated, and racial segregation becomes an inescapable component of racism. Secondly, racial discrimination: that which follows also essentially from the premises which I have been listing. Since people are different by virtue of their ethnic and racial origin, they should be treated differently, they cannot be treated equally when they are not equal to begin with. This is a fundamental principle of racism. In fact, it is the most noticeable aspect of racism, and in the world campaign against racism, it is that which draws the greatest amount of attention: the combatting of racial discrimination, so much so, that the whole concept of racism has been reduced in the mind of many people to the concept of racial discrimination, although, I hope, I have shown that the concept of racism is far wider and more generic, and racial discrimination is only one manifestation and one policy consequence of racism.

In general, and finally one last policy consequence of racism is that racist regimes have a paradoxical relationship with one another. Racist systems have a paradoxical relationship with one another; when they are within the same orbit they are in clashing relationship; they are in conflict. Nazism versus Zionism – the war to the death between the two. But when they are apart, and not stepping on one another's toes, then there is sympathy between them. There is a natural alliance between them, especially as they confront the rising tide of anti-racism throughout the world. Hence the special relationship of friendship and sympathy that we notice between the Zionist regime in Palestine and the apartheid regime in Southern Africa.

This then is the general idea of racism that I submit to you, ladies and gentlemen, as a working definition on the basis of which, we can examine the peculiarities of any racial system and see where it belongs within the general framework; where it fits on the map of racism in general. Where does Zionism fit within this map? How does its concept of racial superiority differ from the Nazi concept of racial superiority? How does its concept of racial hostility differ from those of the others? How does its concept of segregation differ from the others? It is only when we see the map of the whole, that we can identify the exact location of each species within the genus in general.

Zionism begins with the belief that judaism is not only, and it is not essentially, and it is not principally a religious faith, and the fellowship among people who call themselves jews is not the fellowship produced by a common faith. Rather, judaism is a nationhood or, the favourite word of zionism, a peoplehood. The bond between jews is not God, to whom our relations, each in his own individual way, identify our respective faiths. The relationship among jews [according to zionism] is the ethnic community to which jews belong which identifies them and without which they are out of context. Hertzl himself said "Judaism to me is not a faith, jews are a race". Again and again he said "we are a people, one people" and he himself was not a practising jew.

But it's not only an 80 year old doctrine that I am talking about. Up until today in the concrete embodiment of zionism, in the State of Israel, descent from a jewish mother is the main criterion that identifies a jew and distinguishes between a jew and a non-jew, and that is a biological fact, an ethnic fact, a racial fact, not a religious or a spiritual fact. Just the other day the Minister of Religion in the State of Israel, who also happens to be the Chairman of the National Religious Party, on April of this year [1976] he was asked in writing the following question "many Israelis claim that they are not religious and believing jews but they are jews in the historical and national sense of the word. Do you, Mr Minister of Religion, accept this definition of a jew?" and his answer is this and I quote "I accept this definition. Every jew who has sinned, nonetheless remains a jew. In accordance with our religious law, with the Halakha, whoever was born a jew never ceases to be one, he can be the adherent to some other faith, but even then, even if he has converted to another religion, he remains a jew. He might not observe the precepts of judaism. He might be a complete atheist, a complete non-believer, but the moment he was born of a jewish mother, even if his father was a gentile, he remains a jew." Judaism is a matter of biology and not a spiritual matter of faith. It is a question of descent. It is a racial factor.

Now does zionism believe in racial superiority? And what kind of racial superiority does it believe in? What produces the superiority of the jewish people according to zionism, over other peoples? To the nazis, the question was easy. It is genetic factors, a gene of the Arians made them superior to the non-Arians. To the proponents of apartheid, it is also simple – colour determines the superiority of some over others. What determines superiority of the jewish people over others according to zionism? It is something more fundamental than genes, more profound than colour: it is God himself who determines the racial superiority of the jewish people. The concept of a chosen people originating in the Bible in a spiritual context, with spiritual implications, has been pulled out of context by zionism, politicized and given racist connotations. Jewish people is a chosen people.

I have before me here a statement signed by a group of zionist rabbis on 4

June of this year [1976], which opens with the following words “the jewish people is a chosen people, chosen at Mount Sinai by the Lord. It is a chosen and holy people whose religion and nationalism are identical and indivisible.” I have before me a statement by a zionist rabbi published in January this year [1976] – forgive me if I read at some length from it because some people are under the impression that the concept of a chosen people is a part of a mythology that has been discarded and is not relevant to our discussion of zionism today. This is January of this year [1976] and it reads as follows: “The jewish God of history called the world into being; He called the world into being for one reason only – for the sake of the Torah of Israel and the jewish people. All that occurs, all the eruptions of wars and catastrophes, the rise and fall of empires, have no meaning, except that they affect the fortunes and misfortunes of the jewish people. The jewish nation is indeed the heart of the world and there is no reason for the existence of empires, of kings, of rulers, of masses or of systems except for their influence on the jewish people and their fate”. The statement continues: “The jewish God of creation, created the world for the sake of the Torah in order that the principles and truths of the Torah be translated into practice and into life and the jewish people was chosen by God as the vehicle for living and teaching his Torah, that and that alone, is the jewish *raison d’être*”. The statement goes on to say: “not another Sweden, and not another Britain, not another pale replica of East or West, not one more part of the socialist or capitalist camps, not one more but the only one, the only one chosen by God – the God of history as his own, as his unique people.” Do you think that this is an exceptional erratic rabid rabbi who happens to be called, Meir Kahane who has been writing this?

I have another statement 20 years old from a moderate responsible English jew by the name of Norman Bentwich who was a prominent official of the British mandatory system in Palestine during the British mandate, and he says, this moderate, rational man “If Judaism has stood for anything in political thought, it was for the principle that God was the King, that the jews were a holy people, and that the jewish nation was not like the other nations, but devoted to the Law of God.” And so it follows, ladies and gentlemen, that if God has chosen the jewish people and set them apart, then a zionist could write in May of this year [1976] “The State of Israel is the power of God, manifesting his intended purpose”. Another zionist could write in April of this year [1976] during the resistance in the occupied territories “It was not the State of Israel alone that was attacked and humiliated last week, the stones and the curses and the rebellion were not aimed only at the jewish state. It was God that was attacked, it was the Lord, the God of the jews was humiliated, and it was against Him the rebellion took place. What occurred in the Galilee, what occurred in the little triangle, was the desecration of the name of the Lord and until that is

understood, we will understand nothing and continue to react in absurd and sterile and futile ways.” I could go on quoting at length, but it’s all to the same effect – if the jews are the chosen people of God then everything that affects them must be judged by a different standard, what affects others must be seen as something affecting God himself, aimed at God himself, because he has chosen the jewish people and set it apart. Even the army of Israel, thought a zionist in September of 1956, is different to all other armies in the world. To belong to such an army is a sacred privilege, a mitzra, a religious deed in the deepest spiritual sense. A commandment of God which was put down for all eternity in the Torah with the words “thy God goes with thy camp to save thee and to give thine enemy to thee, let thy camp be holy”. Ladies and Gentlemen if that is the case, then it follows that there is a special link between Israel and eternity.

I have with me a speech that Abba Eban the representative of Israel then, made 24 years ago in honour of President Truman. What man, what representative of any country in the world would say this? He said “The people of Israel wish to confer upon President Truman the only honour which is their gift. We do not have Orders or Decorations, our material strength is small and greatly strained, we have no tradition or formality or chivalry. One thing however is within the power of the people of Israel to confer – one thing is within their power to confer – it is the gift of immortality. Those whose names are bound up with Israel’s history, never become forgotten. The annals of this people have a way of entering the records of unlimited time”. When last heard of 21 years later, Mr Eban was still distributing promisory notes on the Divine Treasury to people who had done some service to Israel, because on the death of President Johnson, he, then as Foreign Minister of Israel, no longer as just an ambassador, he wrote to the American government in a formal memorandum from one government to another saying: “We hope in this grievous personal and national loss, you may find comfort in the knowledge that Lyndon Johnson has earned immortality in the annals of Israel”. Still the same language as he used about Truman. Why, Weitzman had preceded him 60 years earlier by saying the same thing to Balfour. You would expect Weitzman, the recipient of Balfour’s benevolence, to come and say ‘thank you’ but Weitzman went to Balfour and said no, you thank me. He said in his memoirs “I do not know what a wonderful great man you are, that it was granted to you to give us this present, and to associate such a pre-eminent work with your life. What did you do that was so noble to make you deserve to have been the giver of such a good gift to us?” Ben Gurion went even a step further. He said “They call us a chosen people. God did not choose us, we chose Him.” And it follows, ladies and gentlemen, that this concept of chosenness, this concept of superiority, must reflect itself in superior traits. And so zionist literature abounds, I do not need to go into reading many of

these quotations, I would take the time of the entire seminar to read them all showing this sense of superiority by the Zionists. But here is one statement "We can never match the Arabs in oil, or the Soviets in weapons, but we are unbeatable in terms of brain power, we are a veritable superpower in creativity and innovation and we should act like it". There is another statement - "Jews throughout the history of mankind have found more cures against disease than any other ethnic or religious group in the world". And on and on these statements go. So much so that very recently when President Assad in June went to France, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency had their report to make: it said "Syrian President Assad attended a special ballet performance Thursday night in his honour at the Elysee Palace. If he knew what he and his group saw it must have been a strange experience. The show was the ballet Giselle. It was based on a ballet by a German Jew, Hynek Hyanek, with music by a French Jew, Adolf Adams, the choreography by Zinelli, an Italian Jew and danced in the main by Paris opera-star dancer Kalfouni, an Algerian born Jew." Now what does this mean? An Algerian Jew, a Russian Jew, an Italian Jew. Is his contribution a Jewish contribution or is his contribution an Algerian or Italian or French or Russian?

The views expressed in this Bulletin are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of EAFORD.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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