



Land at the Heart of Palestinian Liberation

Why tree planting has become so important in Palestinian resistance



Over the last 22 years, a collective of activists founded the **Million Tree Campaign (MTC)** to reclaim Palestinian sovereignty over lands and food systems.

To understand why tree planting has become a powerful act of resistance, we have to trace how the settler-colonial state came to be.



After the Belfour Declaration... the British set the stage for **Israeli settler colonialism**

For centuries, under Ottoman rule, Palestinians practised a type of collective land tenure called *musha'*, which promoted sustainable farming, and equitable distribution of resources. **When Britain took control of Palestine in 1917, they eliminated *musha'*, privatising Palestinian lands, and facilitating the Zionist purchase of landholdings from the newly formed land market.**

Until the late 1940s, the Zionists consolidated around 7 percent of Palestinian lands, expelling nearly all indigenous farmer tenants and workers.



“To eliminate the indigenous, settler-colonialism required breaking-down of native title into alienable individual freeholds” – Wolfe 2006



*** The Belfour declaration was issued by the British government in 1917 announcing its support to establish a “national home for Jewish people” in Palestine.**

The settler state is built on the genocide and dispossession of the Palestinian people

The colonisation of Palestine continued with the departure of the British in 1948.

During the 'Nakba',
Zionists

Expelled

900,000

Palestinians

Killed

Thousands

of Palestinians

Destroyed

531

Villages

Laws, including the Absentee Property Law (1950) formalised the seizure of land belonging to those who were expelled or killed. Other lands were expropriated by the Land Acquisition Law (1953) for “security” or “development” purposes, and many without legal pretext.

In 1967, the remainder of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank were seized and placed under military occupation. Around 400,000 Palestinians were displaced, half of them for the second time.



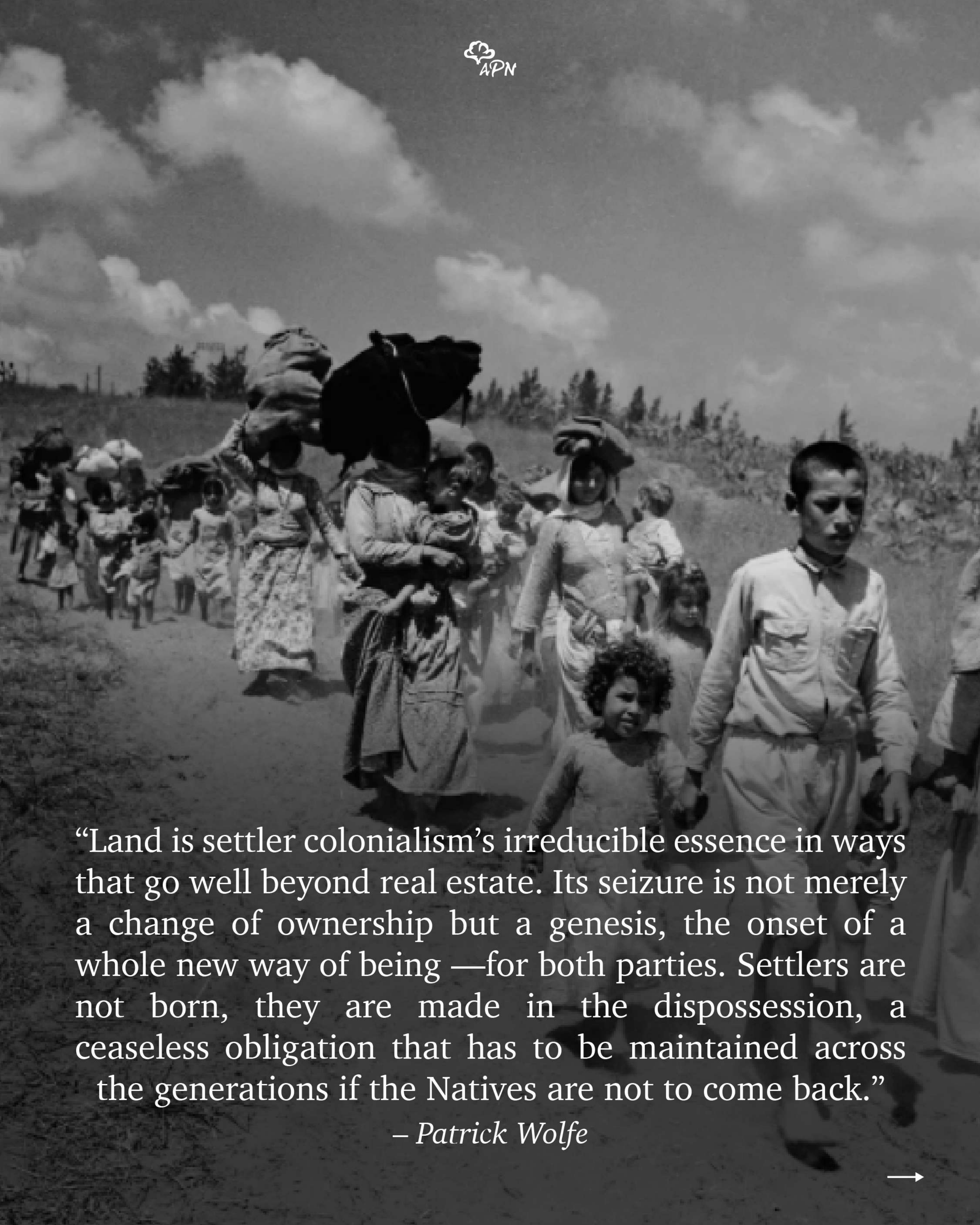
1948

1967

Today

■ Palestinian land

■ Zionist settlements



“Land is settler colonialism’s irreducible essence in ways that go well beyond real estate. Its seizure is not merely a change of ownership but a genesis, the onset of a whole new way of being —for both parties. Settlers are not born, they are made in the dispossession, a ceaseless obligation that has to be maintained across the generations if the Natives are not to come back.”

– *Patrick Wolfe*

Israel corrupts old laws to steal fallow lands

After the Nakba, Israel distorted an old piece of legislation, named the Ottoman Land Code of 1858, to justify mass land grabbing in Palestine. The Code had originally encouraged agricultural production by reallocating agricultural land to new farmers who would cultivate it, if it had remained fallow for 3 consecutive years.

Now, Israel seizes fallow lands to establish settlements and other colonial infrastructure.



This strategy alone has led to the expropriation of approximately 40% of the West Bank.

A systematic campaign to restrict cultivation, through violence and destruction

Trees have become primary targets for their role in preserving Palestinian lands and livelihoods.

Israel uprooted, burned and bombed more than 3 million trees since 2000

They uproot trees to uproot people.

Many Palestinian farmers do not have the means to replant their lands - making them vulnerable to displacement.





They uproot one, we plant ten.

In 2001, the Million Tree Campaign (MTC) was launched to respond to the systemic attack on land and farmers in Palestine. The campaign planted over **2.6 million fruit trees** supporting **30,000 farmers**, among numerous projects bolstering food systems.

Go to www.apnature.org/en/mtc to plant trees in Palestine.

1 Tree = 7 USD

Join the movement and spread the word.

**Let us together plant trees, dignity,
and freedom.**



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