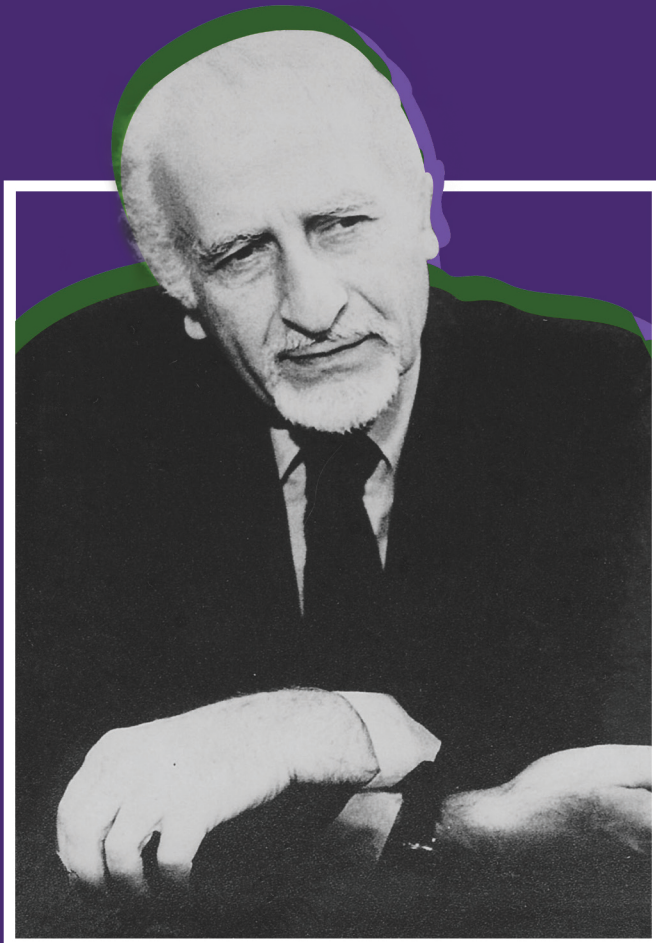




**MAS**

**PALESTINE ECONOMIC POLICY  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MAS)**



**Yusif Sayigh Development Lecture**

**2025**

# **The Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture**

## **The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)**

is dedicated to producing high-quality economic research and analysis on Palestinian development policy issues. MAS research aims to contribute to both enhanced economic policymaking as well as greater public awareness of the multifaceted nature of the Palestinian “development problématique”. Professor Sayigh was a member of the first Board of Trustees of MAS.

In the tradition of our institution and in tribute to the intellectual and national contribution of Professor Sayigh, in 2009 MAS launched the “Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture”, intended as an annual public address delivered in Palestine by eminent scholars, policy-makers and development practitioners from around the world and the region.

## **Yusif A. Sayigh (1916-2004)**

was the foremost Palestinian development economist of his generation, a scholar and patriot whose critical mind was devoted to the cause of his people. Professor Yusif Sayigh pioneered research on Arab economic integration and on prospects for sustained Palestinian development that paved the way for these issues to become disciplines in themselves. In his role as member of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Executive Committee and in establishing its strategic and economic planning capacities, he was noted for his intellectual independence and principled positions. Professor Sayigh’s tireless work in leading the preparation of the PLO’s Palestinian Development Program (PDP), published in 1993, crowned his professional career and national role.

## **The Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture**

is envisaged as an institutionalized educational and advocacy exercise to commemorate the contribution of Professor Yusif Sayigh to Palestinian development studies.



**The 2025 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

will be delivered by Adam Tooze, Professor of History at Columbia University, where he directs the European Institute and chairs the Committee for Global Thought. He received his Ph.D. in Economic History from the London School of Economics (LSE).

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**The 2022 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

was delivered by Prof. Fadle M. Naqib, Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of Waterloo in Canada, titled “A Reading of Present and Future Economic Development in Arab Mashreq”.

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**The 2021 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

was delivered by Dr. Joseph E. Stiglitz, Professor of Economics at the University of Columbia in New York; and Nobel Laureate (2001), titled “Development under Adversity: The Global Challenge”.

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**The 2020 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture”.**

was delivered by Dr. Mariana Mazzucato, Professor of Innovation Economics and Public Value at the University College London (UCL); Founder and Director of the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at UCL, titled “Rethinking Value Creation for Innovation-led Inclusive & Sustainable Growth”.

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**The 2018 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

was delivered by Prof. Erik S. Reinert, Professor of Technology Governance and Development Strategies at Tallinn University of Technology-Estonia, and founder and chairman of the “Other Canon Foundation”, titled “Post-Cold War Economics: Redefining International Trade Theory and Economic Development”.

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**The 2017 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

was delivered by Prof. Heiner Flassbeck, University of Hamburg, Director of the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), titled “Economic Policy in the New Age of Liberalism – Radical Rethinking is Unavoidable”.



**The 2016 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

was delivered by Prof. Atif Kubursi, Professor of Economics at McMaster University- Canada, titled “Why has Arab Development been so Elusive”.



**The 2015 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

was delivered by Prof. Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, titled “Trade Agreements and Their Impact on the Development Project”.



**The 2014 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

was delivered by Prof. Matthias Weiter, Professor of Development Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin, titled “A Three-Level-Model of Societal Change- to Analyse and Design Societal Change Processes”.



**The 2013 Yusif A. Sayigh  
Development Lecture**

was delivered by Prof. Robert Wade, Professor of Political Economy and Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science, titled “New Industrial Policy: the Entrepreneurial State as a Complement to Private Entrepreneurs”.

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**The 2012 Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture**

was delivered by Dr. George Abed, Senior Counselor and Director for Africa and the Middle East at Institute of International Finance-Washington DC, titled "The Political Economy of Change in the Arab World".



**The 2011 Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture**

was delivered by the eminent lecturer Prof. Issam Shahrour, Lecturer in Civil and Urban Engineering at the University of Science and Technology of Lille, France. Prof. Shahrour lecture was "Knowledge Society: Challenges and Opportunities for Economic and Territorial Development- Role of Higher Education and Research Institutions".



**The 2010 Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture**

was delivered by the eminent lecturer Prof. Mushtaq Khan, Lecturer of Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, who spoke on "Post-Oslo State Building Strategies and their Limitations".



**The Inaugural 2009 Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture**

was organized jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The distinguished Lecturer Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the United Nations, a prominent development economist and advocate, spoke on "Development Strategy Lessons from the Global Economic Crisis".

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## **Economics in the Face of Genocide Post-War Reconstruction and Development – Lessons from History and Policies for Palestine**

Delivered by

**Prof. Adam Tooze**

Professor of History at Columbia University

### **Abstract**

The subtitle of this Lecture, under which it was first announced, is familiar and almost “normal” sounding. After all, in a war, thinking about the post-war is a normal thing to do. Faced with destruction, thinking about reconstruction is a natural response. When faced with a nation at a certain level of income, development is simply what we think about next.

As for history, where else to look for insights and wisdom but to history? And isn't economic history the bedrock? Both the secure anchor and the driving force of the long *durée*?

If we were talking about Ukraine, or Myanmar or Sudan - I don't know that I would have good answers to give - but I would feel that I knew where to start in answering those questions, about “Post-War Reconstruction and Development. Lessons from History.”

### **This isn't by accident.**

Economics as we know it today was made to answer questions like these. Modern economics as a discipline has many different origins, but one powerful set of impulses driving the emergence of 20<sup>th</sup>-century macroeconomics were the urgencies of wartime mobilization and postwar reconstruction. There is a long lineage to draw on. The thinking of John Maynard Keynes after World War I and World War II might be one example.

There are even some philosophies of history – call it the *doux commerce* school – that see economics as the natural antidote to the passions that fuel war. So, turning from making war to thinking about postwar economics is itself a promising sign of escaping a crisis.

**MAS certainly has reason to seek solace in a title with a comfortingly familiar ring to it.**

But in the present moment, in relation to Palestine, the original subtitle - Post-War Reconstruction and Development. Lessons from History and Policies for Palestine – appears to me jarring, almost unbearably so. This Lecture will address a range of questions, for some of which there might not be any simple answers that we can all agree to.

Is what Palestine is suffering, is what Israel is inflicting, a war? If there is destruction, what is its purpose? Is it military? No, its announced aim is ethnic cleansing at a level and intensity that meets the standard of genocide.

As it is still ongoing, is it even permissible to talk of reconstruction? Relief and recovery will surely remain top priorities for many months, even if the guns fall silent.

Does the very idea of “reconstruction” need, first and foremost, to be defended against projects that are euphemistically dubbed “reconstitution,” i.e., erasure, incorporation, and settler-colonial annexation? Tellingly, it is not reconstruction but reconstitution that is the aim of the GREAT Trust plan (Gaza Reconstitution, Economic Acceleration and Transformation (GREAT) Trust), one of the ghastly whims being pushed by the Trump administration.

Don't such grandiose externally imposed Plans place the very existence of a distinct Palestine radically in question and thus also the entity to which development policy would be applied, its independent State?

So, will there be a macroeconomics of Palestine to speak of in the coming years, or merely the microeconomics of survival, displacement? At what point is it euphemistic to talk in terms of a national economy, rather than a patchwork of enclaves?

As for the promise that economic history might anchor some confidence-inspiring grip on reality or even might itself constitute a “path to peace”, maybe we should recognize that conceit, as itself historical? Does it not belong to the bygone era of the “two-state solution” and the 1990s promise of the “New Middle East”?

Without prejudging the answers, if we are to do justice to the extremity of the current moment, it seems essential to insist on such questions and try to provide some reasonable answers.

In this lecture, I feel compelled to ask:

- ◇ How should we think about economics if we abandon the comforting framing of a “post-war” to come?
- ◇ What if we don’t reflexively reach for the familiar ideas of “reconstruction”?
- ◇ What if we face the fact that “development” is not an escape from the logic of force, but an attempt to reconfigure those forces?
- ◇ How can scholars undertake economic analysis and understand economic history in the face of a genocidal project of erasure, an active and ongoing assault supported by some of the richest economies and greatest powers in the world?



## **Adam Tooze**

**Professor of History  
Columbia University**

Tooze is the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of History at Columbia University, where he serves as the Director of the European Institute and the chair of the Committee on Global Thought. Before joining Columbia, he taught at Yale and the University of Cambridge.

He is the author of five prize-winning books. His history of the financial crisis of 2008 and after, *Crashed: How a decade of financial crises changed the world*, was awarded the Lionel Gelber Prize for 2019. He is currently completing a book on the global political economy of the climate crisis. Tooze is a podcaster and columnist for the *Financial Times* and *Foreign Policy* magazine. He writes the [Chartbook](#) newsletter.

Tooze received his B.A. in Economics from King's College, Cambridge, and his Ph.D. in Economic History from the London School of Economics.

His other publications include:

- ◇ *Shutdown: How Covid Shook the World's Economy* (September 2021).
- ◇ *Wages of Destruction: the making and breaking of the Nazi economy* (2006).
- ◇ *Deluge: the Great War and the remaking of the global order* (2014).



## **Yusif Abdallah Sayigh**

(1916-2004)

### **Biography**

Yusif Sayigh was born in 1916 in Al-Bassa, in the Palestinian Galilee and he lived and worked in Palestine from 1925 until the Nakba in 1948. He received his Bachelors in Business Administration in 1937 and his Masters in Economics from the American University in Beirut (AUB) and his PhD in Political Economy in 1957 from Johns Hopkins University.

While working in Jerusalem in 1946, Professor Sayigh authored a monograph on “Arab Land Hunger in Palestine”, which was included in the Report submitted to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry by the Arab Office. In it he devised an original system for evaluating land. In the final year before the Nakba he was appointed Director of the Beit al-Mal (National Treasury), where he worked out an ingenious taxation system combining poll and income taxes.

Upon his return to the AUB he became Professor of Economics from 1957 to 1974 and during that period was a visiting scholar at Harvard, Princeton and Oxford Universities. He subsequently acted as a consultant to a number of economic organizations such as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Arab Oil Producing Countries (OAPEC), the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Oxford Energy Centre, among others.

Yusif Sayigh was a lifetime member of the Palestinian National Council since the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964 and was elected as member of its Executive Committee from 1968-1969. He established the PLO Planning

Centre and was its first Director, from 1968-1971. He subsequently was president of the PLO's Palestinian National Fund and member of its Executive Committee from 1971-1974. From 1990-1993, Professor Sayigh assembled, supervised and led the PLO team of economists and other experts who prepared the Palestinian Development Programme that was designed to guide the construction of a new Palestinian economy. He was also a founding member of the Centre for Arab Unity Studies, the Arab Thought Forum and the Economic Research Forum.

Professor Sayigh's writings focused on the challenges of development in Third World countries and in the Arab world in particular. He wrote about the oil economies and the prospects for Arab economic integration among other things. In addition to over 70 scholarly articles in English and Arabic, Professor Sayigh published 28 books, and is most remembered for ground-breaking contributions such as:

- ◇ The Economic Impact of the Arab Refugee Problem on Lebanon, Syria and Jordan (1955)
- ◇ The Israeli Economy (1963 and 1966, in Arabic)
- ◇ Entrepreneurs of Lebanon: The Role of the Business Leader in a Developing Economy (1962)
- ◇ The Economies of the Arab World (1978)
- ◇ The Determinants of Arab economic Development (1978)
- ◇ Arab Oil and the Palestine Question in the 1980s (1981, in Arabic)
- ◇ The Arab Economy: Past Performance and Future Prospects (1982)
- ◇ Arab Oil Policies in the 1970s (1983)
- ◇ The Economic Underpinnings of an Independent Palestinian State (1991, in Arabic) and Elusive Development: From Dependence to Self-reliance in the Arab Region (1991)



## **Yusif Sayigh's Contribution to Palestinian Development Economics**

**Raja Khalidi**

Director General of MAS

Among his many contributions to Palestinian development thought, two specific concepts are especially notable in Yusif Sayigh's work on the subject. In both cases, his elaboration of the basic truths about the relation between development, sovereignty and freedom are relevant to any people, with or without a state, struggling to develop a vision of economic self-determination in an increasingly open and interdependent global economy. And in the Palestinian context they have endured the test of time and actual experiences since then.

Professor Sayigh's first in-depth analysis of the Palestinian economy under occupation was published in the mid-1980s. He had already distinguished himself with his dogged insistence that development was incompatible with foreign occupation: in his words, "prolonged occupation provides a hostile terrain for development". While economic growth may have been witnessed under Israeli occupation since 1967, Sayigh was one of the few observers at the time to point out that this did not add up to development. In those years, when some Palestinian economists and NGOs believed that there might be room for "Development under Occupation", Sayigh was not convinced. For him, developmental resistance and steadfastness (*soumoud*) was a better, and the only feasible, economic policy goal in the absence of national sovereignty. "It is a futile exercise to speculate whether self-reliant development can be achieved in the Occupied Territory Only after the disappearance of the occupation can nationally conceived and designed, well-integrated and energetic development be sought and pursued with a degree of hope".<sup>(1)</sup>

Unfortunately, this wisdom was not translated into a concrete economic vision and policy in Palestine after signing of the 1993 accords between the PLO and Israel.

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1 «Dispossession and pauperization: the Palestinian economy under occupation» in Abed, G. (ed), *The Palestinian economy: studies in development under prolonged occupation*, (New York, Routledge, 1988) pp. 279-280.

Instead, too many policy-makers, economists and international institutions chose to ignore the obvious and simple lesson of the preceding two decades of occupation. They pursued shaky concepts and frameworks for managing development under occupation and more recently, “reform” of pre-State institutions in conditions of prolonged conflict. By then, Sayigh had completed his greatest achievement, the preparation of the PLO’s “Programme to Develop the Palestinian Economy 1994-2000”. This ambitious and vast undertaking, which only somebody of his intellectual and national credentials could lead, was the original PDP. The PDP has been replicated in name only by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in subsequent years under different wording, from the Palestinian Development Plan (PDP) of the mid-1990s to the more recent Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP). Unlike these latter-day PDPs, which largely aimed to match PNA funding needs with donor-driven reconstruction priorities, the original PDP expressed a strategic national vision with coherent sectoral programmes- a statement of economic principles and practices directly relevant to the needs of an economy emerging from prolonged occupation.

Among its distinctive features, the original PDP upheld the intellectual tradition already established by Professor Sayigh, as well as the basic political truths he had already enunciated. As a corollary of his earlier vision about occupation and development, Sayigh sought to identify the underpinnings and principles for economic viability, or as he termed them, the “muqawwamat” (fundamentals) of Palestinian development. Here again he left no room for confusion: despite the “interim self-governing arrangements” bequeathed by the Oslo Accords, only through achieving sovereignty would viable and sustainable development prospects emerge for Palestine. And until then, only a national programme and a heterodox economic restructuring and reconstruction policy could hope to steer the economy towards sovereignty and development. This vision, so evident and yet neglected in the 20-odd years since it was elaborated, is Yusif Sayigh’s enduring legacy in the arena of Palestinian economic development thought. Through the years of “self-government” prior to the Al Aqsa Intifada as well as those since of tentative preparations for statehood, his most important lesson still awaits recognition.



## **Yusif Sayigh's Contribution to Arab Economic Integration**

**Leila Farsakh<sup>(2)</sup>**

Associate Professor and Chair of political science  
at the University of Massachusetts Boston

Yusif Sayigh was a classical development economist and one who was profoundly Arab nationalist. Already in 1961, he wrote that development is not just about wealth or growth but about having a “better distribution of income and increased welfare for the masses”. Only then, he continued, “can such a society be said to have achieved development in a full sense of involving both economic and social progress...the content of development is social, political and technological as well as economic”. Sayigh saw development as both an individual quest and a collective/national project of economic and social empowerment. It is about social justice and redistribution of wealth, but in much more comprehensive terms than what is meant today by the “trickle-down effect of growth”.

Sayigh was concerned with sustainable or, what was then called, balanced growth. At a time when development economists such as W.W. Rostow and others were stressing the importance of industrial growth in developing countries, Sayigh was emphasizing the importance of developing agriculture. Like Arthur W. Lewis before him, he argued that agriculture played a central role not just in providing food to the population but also in channeling savings and inputs to industry. Above all, agricultural growth was central to distributing wealth to the poor and thus creating a more equitable and just society. He had no qualms about advocating land reform and argued against relying merely on market forces to induce agricultural productivity and welfare. His writings on the Arab oil economies in the 1970s focused on the necessity of integrated development between the various sectors of the economy, or investing oil revenues in developing the industrial and manpower sectors in these countries. He lamented the failure of Arab

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2 Adapted from «Development and Occupation: Revisiting Palestinian Economy in Light of Yusif Sayigh's Legacy», in Michael Hudson (ed.), *Palestine and the Palestinians Today*, (London: Routledge, forthcoming 2010)

oil producing countries to diversify their economic production, to create a productive- rather than consumerist- labor force, and to invest in the economic complementarity of their neighboring Arab countries. He predicted the ephemeral (short-lived) growth in Arab oil producing countries would be a result of their over reliance on oil price fluctuations and their accumulation of financial capital, that ended up mostly being invested in the West rather than in Arab land.

When it came to defining the means to achieve development, Sayigh was an advocate of state led development. Like most of development thinkers in the 1950s and 1960s, he believed that the market cannot create sustainable equitable growth on its own. Sayigh was conscious of the specific challenges that the Developing World faced as late industrializers, as they faced stronger international competition than their predecessors. Sayigh also argued that developing nations faced more difficult domestic problems, ranging from the resistance of traditional leadership to change, to fast population growth rates and strong popular demands for income redistribution. These conflicting demands were not easily reconcilable through the market.

Coming from a developing country, Sayigh saw a key role for nationalism, as an ideology and as a policy, in bringing about sustainable development. While aware that state led development can go wrong, since it can foster clientelism and inefficiencies, he believed that a responsible and accountable national leadership would prevent corruption and ensure that development would be sustainable and equitable. Development could not be dissociated from democracy in his view, for it necessitated the existence of a vibrant responsible opposition force. His idealism and hopes of the 1960s were dashed by the failures of oil producing states' leaders of the 1970s, namely their lack of vision for falling in the trap of becoming rentier economies, despite all their nationalism. He also lamented the limits put on popular participation in decision making process, which he thought prevented people from holding their leadership accountable to their promises of development.



