



Press Release

MAS's Researcher, Sobhi Samour, Was Awarded a Ph.D. Degree



Mr. Sobhi Samour, who has recently become one of MAS's research team, was awarded a Ph.D. degree in Economics from the University of SOAS, London. His thesis titled "The Palestinian Economy between Settler Colonial Invasion and Neoliberal Management" develops a theoretical model informed by historical experiences of settler colonial movements' various approaches towards the challenges posed by the indigenous societies' material

base of their reproduction, and their labor power in particular. Historically, settler colonial movements either developed a structural dependence on indigenous labor and thus integrated it into the settler economy (with the apartheid economy of South Africa as a classical example) or consciously avoided such dependence and excluded indigenous labor from the settler economy, often with fatal consequences for the indigenous society as a whole (the North American colonization model as the most prominent case). The nature of the Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine, in its historical but also contemporary form, is situated between these opposite poles of settler colonialism's approach towards the labor question and discusses its wider effects on the Palestinian economy.

Moreover, the thesis assesses the material and economic factors that made the Zionist movement – and by extension the Israeli state – depend on and exploit Palestinian labor at certain periods of its development, and exclude labor within a broader strategy of economic separation at other times. It argues that these historical shifts provide a mirror image to understand the wider colonization strategy pursued by the Zionist movement and subsequently the Israeli state. Israel's current colonization strategy follows a bifurcated road in which West Bank land continues to be dispossessed with Palestinian labor included in the Israeli economy, while the Gaza Strip has ceased to have any



value to the colonization, and its labor force force is consequently banned from working in Israel. Given Israel's strategy for the West Bank, the thesis analyzes how a range of neoliberal development programs and economic policies pursued by various actors since the Oslo Accords structurally intersect with the aims and outcomes of the Israeli settler colonialism. The thesis thereby contributes to an understanding of contemporary Palestinian economic and social conditions by combining and synthesizing the insights developed through the recent surge of studies utilizing settler colonialism as an analytical framework and, respectively, neoliberalism as a form economic governance.