

The Jewish National Fund: A Colonial Racist Instrument.

By Dr. Ismail Zayid.

The core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as stated by Dr. Uri Davis, a Palestinian Jewish scholar, is a conflict between the State of Israel as a settler racist colonial state in Palestine and the indigenous people of Palestine, the Arab-Palestinian people. The core of this conflict, like the core of the conflict in any confrontation between a colonial settler state and an indigenous people, lies in the claim of the colonial settler state to set aside the land for the use of the settler society and to dispossess the native population of their individual and collective property rights to the land of their ancestors.

The Jewish National Fund [JNF] is the essential instrument used to deprive the Palestinian people of their rights, and was created as the colonial arm of the World Zionist Organisation.

The JNF was established in April 1907 in England as an instrument of the [World Zionist Organization](#) (WZO) to acquire and colonize land. With the enactment of the Israeli [JNF Law](#) (1953), which states in clause 6 that it is permitted to set up an incorporated body in Israel for the continuation of the activities of the existing company that was founded and incorporated in Europe, JNF was registered as an Israeli company and the English company's assets were transferred to it. JNF is held by the state of Israel as a central tool of Judaization.

JNF aim is to acquire and develop lands exclusively for the benefit of Jews. It is a multinational project with offices in 41 countries, confirmed in 2005. It derives tax-deductible dollars from many of these countries including the USA, Canada and UK. A little known fact about the JNF in the UK is that three of its honorary patrons are prime minister Tony Blair, Charles Kennedy, the leader of the Liberal Democrats and Michael Howard, the then leader of the Conservative Party. These are the countries that claim to be able to play the role of honest broker in the Palestine/Israel conflict, if you can believe that.

The fact is that JNF, in its operations in Israel, had expropriated illegally most of the land of 418 Palestinian villages which had been ethnically cleansed by Zionist forces in 1948. The owners of this land are the Palestinian refugees. JNF had actively participated in the physical destruction of many villages, in evacuating these villages of their inhabitants and in military operations to conquer these villages. Today JNF controls over 2500 sq. km of Palestinian land which it leases to Jews only. It also planted many parks on Palestinian land. One of these parks is the infamous Canada Park, which I will refer to later.

In addition, JNF has a long record of discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel as reported by the UN. JNF also extends its operations by proxy or directly to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the West Bank and Gaza. All this is in clear violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention which forbids confiscation of property and settling the Occupiers'

citizens in occupied territories. Ethnic cleansing, expropriation of property and destruction of houses are war crimes. As well, use of tax-exempt donations in these activities violates the domestic law in many countries, where JNF is domiciled.

Israel's Jewish National Fund (JNF) has been planting the seeds of apartheid in the Middle East for the past century, "redeeming the land", as they call it, by dispossessing native Palestinians and instituting exclusionist "Jews Only" land laws. Ninety-three percent of the state's land is now owned by the JNF and its affiliates, the Israel Land Authority. The indigenous Palestinian population, even those that are Israeli citizens, can't buy, lease, rent, use or reside on JNF land. This Zionist system of racist exclusivism of the JNF and Israel's unabashedly ethnocentric Apartheid laws are clearly confirmed in the statements by the JNF and Israeli leaders.

From the early months of 1948 to this day, JNF has followed illegal practices in violation of international law and certain domestic laws where it operates. These can fall in the following categories:

Ethnic Cleansing and Destruction of Property

According to the Nuremberg Charter, War Crimes are defined as:

Violations of the laws or customs of war which include, but are not limited to, murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave-labour or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity.

JNF had followed systematically in 1948, and thereafter, practices which fall in the above prohibited categories. Quite early, before the 1948 hostilities in Palestine began, JNF conspired with the Israeli "military experts" to conquer, evacuate, and settle new Jewish immigrants in Palestinian villages,

In the period preceding the 1948 War, almost all of the new settlements were established in response to decisions by the Jewish political leadership, based on plans drawn by military experts. The role of the settlement agencies (JNF, the Jewish Agency, and the settlement movements) was reduced to determination of the exact locations for new settlements and allocation of resources...[JNF] Committees actively engaged in settlement planning early in the war laid out a plan calling for the establishment of more than a hundred new settlements intended to absorb 1 million or 1.5 million new immigrants in the space of three years...{ Meron Benvenisti, "Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land. Berkeley, University of California press, 2000}

The objective was to seize Palestinian villages and ethnically cleansing them. This is what actually happened. Yosef Weitz, director of the JNF's Land Department and a key land-purchasing and settlement executive, a man described as "the originator and indefatigable

champion of state seizure of Arab land", wrote about his ethnic cleansing (Transfer) plan as early as 20 December 1940:

"If the Arabs leave it, the country will become wide and spacious for us...The only solution is a Land of Israel, at least a western Land of Israel [i.e., Palestine], without Arabs. There is no room here for compromises...There is no way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them, save few." {Benny Morris.The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited. Cambridge University Press, 2004}

JNF pursued relentlessly its plans of ethnic cleansing. Meron Benvenisti, former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem stated:

"Josef Weitz of the JNF...pushed hardest for Israel to get rid of the Arabs and take possession of their land...This man had worked for the expulsion of the Arabs with a zeal that his superiors tried to restrain. Despite that, he succeeded in mobilizing people and institutions to implement both "retroactive transfer" and the transfer that he himself had initiated.."

Discrimination and Apartheid against the Palestinian Citizens of Israel

JNF acts on behalf of "the Jewish people" everywhere in the use and exploitation of expropriated Palestinian land in Israel and discriminates against the non-Jewish Palestinian citizens of Israel. The use of Palestinian land expropriated by the state of Israel was challenged by the non-Jewish citizens before Israeli courts. **Uri Avnery**, the Israeli peace activist, stated, "**[JNF] has become an instrument for institutionalized discrimination**" { Uri Avnery "Dunam After Dunam" Israel Horizons, Spring 2005}

The racist Apartheid policies of the JNF is confirmed in their statement before the Israeli High Court, in answer to the charge made by ADALAH, the Arab Centre for Arab Minority Rights group in Israel, which was challenging the policy of discrimination:

"The JNF is not required to act for the good of all of Israel's citizens. It is forbidden to act to allocate lands to all of the state's citizens... The JNF's loyalty is not and cannot be for the benefit of the Israeli public."

(Jewish National Fund statement to the Israeli High Court as reported in Ha'aretz, Dec. 17, 2004)

The fact that these racist policies are accurately defined as Apartheid policies is best confirmed by the then prime minister of Apartheid South Africa, Hendrik Verwoerd, who on visiting Israel in 1961 testified to the exact parallel stating: " The Jews took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs lived there for a thousand years [sic]. Israel, like South Africa, is an Apartheid state."

Similarly, **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, during a Christmas visit to Jerusalem in 1989, stated: "**I am a black South African, and if I were to change names, a description of what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank could describe events in South Africa.**"

Violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled on July 9, 2004 as follows:

101: *In view of the foregoing, the Court considers that the Fourth Geneva Convention is applicable in any occupied territory in the event of an armed conflict arising between two or more High Contracting Parties. Israel and Jordan were parties to that Convention when the 1967 armed conflict broke out. The Court accordingly finds that that Convention is applicable in the Palestinian territories which before the conflict lay to the east of the Green Line and which, during that conflict, were occupied by Israel, there being no need for any enquiry into the precise prior status of those territories.*

Thus the West Bank and Gaza Strip are "occupied territories" and the Fourth Geneva Convention applies. The Statute of Rome of July 1998 prohibited ethnic cleansing or removal and replacement of the inhabitants in very strong terms. **Article 8 (War Crimes) of Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court** defines "war crimes"

Para 2, a, iv: *...extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly...*

Para 2, b, viii: *The transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory.*

It is in the context of the role of the Canadian JNF in the Israeli violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the war crimes committed where Canada is complicit in these war crimes, by allowing the so-called charitable status of the Canadian JNF to use Canadian tax-deductible dollars and Canada's name to be used in the infamous war crime, called Canada Park, that I wish to discuss. This infamy was constructed on the ruins of the three villages, Imwas [Emmaus], Yalu and Beit Nuba [my own hometown]. These three villages were systematically dynamited and bulldozed on June 6, 1967, on the direct orders of Yitzhak Rabin, the then chief of staff of the Israeli army, in the war of aggression committed by Israel on June 5, 1967, against Egypt, Jordan and Syria. These three villages were bulldozed without a single shot being fired, and their population of over 14 thousand expelled from their land, a clear war crime.

The arrogance of the JNF and its inhumanity was highlighted by its refusal to put signs at the sites of these villages, as called for by the Israeli activist group, Zochrot [We Remember], in a gesture of reflecting true history and remembrance. In response to this JNF defiance, Zochrot took the issue to the Israeli Civil Administration and the High Court. It is reported that signs are now placed at the sites of these villages.

The Canadian JNF[CJNF] was involved in collecting 15 million dollars, from Canadian contributors responding to the invitation by the CJNF to build Canada Park on the ruins of these illegally occupied and demolished villages. My direct involvement in the campaign against the CJNF as a registered Canadian charity started on Dec. 4, 1978, when I read in an article in The Halifax Herald, reporting the Negev Testimonial Dinner, honouring Peter Herschorn for his 'humane' activity in building Canada Park. Peter Herschorn is a past regional chairman of the CJNF and chairman of the Halifax-Israel bond campaign. The dinner and the honouring process was attended by the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Clarence Gosse, the premier, John Buchanan and the Mayor of Halifax. I wrote to these men expressing my horror that they would allow their names to be associated with such a war crime. I said, since when has the destruction of thousands of innocent peoples' homes and their expulsion from their land is considered "a humane" activity, which in fact is an example of "Zionist callous disregard to all human values." I received an apology from the Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Clarence Gosse, but no reply from the others.

Since then, I have been writing to various ministers of National Revenue and Canadian prime ministers, protesting the granting of the charitable status to the CJNF and allowing our tax-deductible dollars to be used in this war crime, as defined by international law and in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, to which our country is a signatory. In response I get a letter stating ; "The officials of Revenue Canada, taxation, have been asked to review the matter raised in your letter and the Minister will provide you with a reply as soon as possible." Months later, I would write asking for the outcome of the promised review, and the regular answer, from the then Minister, would be ".that the confidentiality provisions of the Income Tax Act prohibit me from discussing the taxation affairs of any registered charity." And this went on for years. I received honourable support from the late Senator Heath Macquarrie and R.A.Corbett, MP, who wrote to Ministers of Revenue Canada quoting my letters. They, too, received similar answers.

My activities on this issue, on the other hand, received the characteristic Zionist callous disregard for humanity and insolence, by sending me a certificate, from the CJNF, stating that: "A tree has been planted in Canada Park, Israel, in tribute to Dr. I.Zayid." I responded to this insult by rejecting their inhumanity, stating: "**The trees that my forefathers and I have planted on our land have been uprooted, together with our homes, by Zionist bulldozers in my village Beit Nuba after the 1967 war. You may be assured that I shall plant my own trees on my own land when we return to Palestine, our homeland, and WE WILL RETURN.**"

Regardless of this insolence, we are still working in the campaign to see to it that the government of Canada will not continue to allow this outrageous status for the CJNF to remain as a registered charitable society. We have this year established a group, in cooperation with Dr. Uri Davis, the Palestinian Jewish scholar who has maintained a life-long campaign against Apartheid Israel. We are also, in the process of seeking legal advice in the hope to take this matter to the court of law.

This effort must remain as a part of our continuing struggle to combat Zionism and regain our fundamental rights in our homeland, Palestine. And I assure you that Zionism is running against the natural course of history and will face the same destiny as that of Apartheid South Africa. Our struggle must continue, and we shall overcome.