

JNF

Colonising Palestine since 1901

JNF eBook (Volume 1, January 2010)

Introducing the Jewish National Fund

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Second Edition
Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
ISSN 2042-9037 (Print) / 2042-9045 (Online)

Foreword

Israel was set-up in 1948 as an answer to the problem of Jewish persecution in Europe. The creation of a state for Jews where they could be safe was justified on this basis. But the new Israel also sought legitimacy for its choice of Palestine, a land already inhabited by an indigenous Arab people, through a series of myths, religious fantasies and distorted versions of history, many of which were swallowed whole, and continue to influence attitudes to Israel until today. Yet, Israel, whatever its pretensions, was quite clearly a settler colonialist creation engaged in the strictly un-mythological work of displacing the native Palestinian population and settling Jews in their place. This activity was a sine qua non of the Zionist project, without which there would not have been a Jewish state. And special agencies were created to develop the project and realise its objectives.

One of the most important of these was the Jewish National Fund. Set up at the very beginning of the Zionist movement, in 1901, the JNF was the chief agent for the colonisation of Palestine. Its infamous history attests to its key role in the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and its subsequent settlement by incoming foreign Jews. Following the destruction by Zionist forces of over 500 Palestinian villages whose lands were then appropriated by the new Israeli state, a 'Custodian of Absentee Property' was appointed to oversee the fate of these lands. The JNF purchased over 1 million dunams of these lands for the exclusive use of 'the Jewish nation'. The land could not be sold or leased to non-Jews, and it was developed into Jews-only settlements and new forests, all designed to prevent the return of the land to its original owners and to forestall their physical return.

After the establishment of the state of Israel, the JNF operated as a non-state, para-governmental organisation. This clever device enabled the Israeli government to behave as if the JNF's activities were autonomous, and thus the government could not be held formally accountable for them. Furthermore, the JNF's organisational structure was deliberately complicated, making it difficult to understand, but giving it an air of legitimacy. This is in line with Israel's need to present its institutions in a legal light, so as to obscure the true nature of Israeli colonialism.

The confiscation of Palestinian land continued even after the establishment of the state of Israel, making the Palestinian owners into internal refugees. The JNF was particularly active in the settlement of Jews on these lands, and the Palestinians, who made up nearly 20% of Israel's population, ended up owning only 3% of the land. By 2003, the JNF owned over 2 million dunams of previously Palestinian land, and had planted thousands of trees and scores of parks to obscure the sites of Palestinian villages. After the 1967 war, the JNF acquired more land in east Jerusalem, where more forests were planted. Through Himanuta, its arm on the West Bank, it was active again in settling occupied Palestinian territory with Jews.

Today the JNF directly owns only 13% of Israel's state lands, having relinquished the rest to the Israel Land Authority (ILA). This device confers a spurious legality to the

JNF's colonisation effort. But half the members of the ILA's board are appointed by the JNF, and the policy of denying Palestinians the right to buy or lease this 'Jewish' land has effectively continued. In 2005, the policy was challenged in the Israeli courts by Israeli civil rights organisations, and a relaxing of the policy resulted, though imperfectly applied. However, by 2007 a new law came before the Knesset, reversing this development and restricting the sale of land to non-Jews. The JNF went on to receive large areas of state land in the Negev for development in readiness for more Jewish settlement.

Despite this history of land exploitation and racist discrimination, as well as its campaign for further colonisation of the West Bank, the JNF's UK arm enjoys charitable status. It boasts as patrons the leaders of the three main political parties, including the current British prime minister, Gordon Brown. Pleas to him to desist, when he accepted the JNF's invitation to be a patron in 2007, have been ignored. Brown, described by the JNF as 'a good friend of Israel', has not revised his position – yet another stain on the British record in relation to the Palestinian people.

This book, and further volumes to follow, will explore the JNF from different dimensions, and provide an essential guide to the study of a subject that goes to the heart of the Zionist enterprise. It will help explain both the success and the unscrupulousness of this immoral project, and should become an indispensable part of the library of scholars and researchers, and a valuable resource for campaigners and activists.

Ghada Karmi, London

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1. Introduction

by Ilan Pappé

The Jewish National Fund was established in 1901 and was the principal tool for the Zionist colonization of Palestine. It was an agency with which the Zionist movement bought land and profited from transactions of the land purchased (1). It was inaugurated by the fifth Zionist Congress and remained throughout the Mandatory years, 1918-1948, the spearhead of the Zionisation of Palestine. From the onset of its activities it was destined to, and officially granted with the task of, becoming the custodian of the land in Palestine in the name of the Jewish people. It has not ceased to fulfil this role after the creation of the state of Israel, but with time other missions were added to this primordial task.

It is crucial to go back to its history and review it if one wishes to understand its present role. This is particularly important due to the image of the JNF today as a 'green' and ecological organization that safeguards Israel's natural landscape from being ruined by all the usual suspects – greedy contractors, government greediness and public indifference. In practice, its 'enemies' are Palestinian farmers and Bedouins who try to keep the little piece of the land they still have. Their remaining land is ostensibly needed as 'nature reserves', but in practice will be given to Jewish settlers. From 1901 to 2010 the JNF did not change its tactics, nor did it deviate from its role as the principal Judaizer of Israel/Palestine.

1.1 The JNF of Yosef Weitz

Let us then review its past activities. Most of the JNF's activities during the mandatory period, and circa the Nakbah, were associated with one person, the head of the settlement section of the JNF and the quintessential Zionist colonialist, Yosef Weitz. In 1940 he declared that the only solution for the conflict in Palestine "will be the transfer of the Palestinians out of Palestine" (2).

His focus during that time was to facilitate the eviction of Palestinian tenants from land owned by absent landlords who sold it to the Jewish Agency and community. The purchase of land did not automatically end with the removal of tenants. Weitz personally, or with the help of his closest aides, would appear on the newly purchased land and encourage the new Jewish owners to throw out the tenants, even if there was no use for all the land bought. One of his officials reported to him that unfortunately the tenants refused to leave and some Jewish owners were displaying cowardice and hesitation, allowing tenants to stay. This aide and others made sure that such weaknesses would not persist and ensured that evictions were comprehensive and effective.

Even after all the Zionist efforts to expand settlement on the land, the impact of such activities was limited because of Palestinian resistance and British restrictions, by the end of the Mandate all in all the Jewish community owned less than 7% of the land.

Towards the end of the Mandatory period Weitz shifted his interest and energy to a new project: contemplating the takeover of land and property as part of an overall scheme to uproot the local population in a prospective final showdown between the Jewish community and the indigenous population in Palestine.

Wietz was pencilling every location and village for future use. It is reminiscent of the British colonial geographical effort to list every village in India under the dominion. In his *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said dealt with this obsession when analyzing Kipling's *Kim*. In the novel's climactic last paragraphs Kim, the white boy in the heart of India, belongs to a continent that was surveyed by Colonel Creighton's Indian Survey "in which every camp and village is duly noted". Kipling, however, notes that the Lama's encyclopaedia also includes such a survey, but the British need their own almanac. Said cynically commented that this obsession testifies to "the positivistic inventory of places and peoples within the scope of British dominion" (3).

Said highlights how controlling a space and detailing its features and location are part of a takeover that includes actual power and control. The extra edge of Zionist colonialism lies in the apparent difference between British colonialism – wishing to register for the sake of control – and the Zionist one, wishing to register for the sake of dispossession. This is the result of the admixture of nationalism and colonialism that makes Zionism such a unique case of an invasive foreign body on an indigenous land.

Weitz stepped up his efforts when the British announced their intention to leave Palestine in February 1947 and when it became clear that the UN endeavours to solve the problem were to lead nowhere and produce a golden opportunity for the Zionist movement to take over as much of Palestine as it desired, Weitz demanded a systematic approach to the whole issue of expulsion and takeover. His most entrusted colleague in those days was another JNF official, Yosef Nachmani, a kind of kindred spirit, who shared his dismay in what they both saw as sloppy treatment of the issue by the Jewish leadership. Wietz wrote to Nachmani that the overall takeover of Arab land was a 'sacred duty'. Nachmani concurred and added that a kind of Jihad (he used the term 'milhemet Kibush' – a war of occupation) was required, and yet the Jewish leadership failed to see its necessity. Nachmani, a kind of alter-ego for Weitz, wrote that the "current leadership is characterized by impotent and weak people" (4).

Weitz was also disappointed by the leadership's inability to rise to the historical occasion. The leadership could not heed to these ambitious plans to commence takeover, mainly through purchase and sporadic takeover, for fear of the British reaction. Although the British were in the process of eviction ever since February 1947, they nonetheless rejected any actions on a large scale – from both sides of the conflict. In the eyes of the government in London, the massive sale of land to the Jews, or alternatively, the systematic takeover of land by force, had the potential of risking the pullout of the Mandatory troops and officials. Weitz doubted the seriousness of this decision had it been put to the test, but Ben-Gurion was willing to wait to the end of the Mandate, before launching more systematic operations of dispossession.

In January 1948 there was some consolation for Weitz when he was unofficially appointed as the head of operations to evict Palestinians by force and he felt elated when, on 10 Mar 1948, the Jewish leadership adopted Plan Dalet, a blueprint for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Officially, he remained the head of the land department within the JNF.

The two appointments fused into one, once Plan Dalet was enacted. This master plan was a blueprint for the takeover of all the Palestinian villages and urban neighbourhoods that were within, what the Jewish leadership regarded, as future Israel. It amounted to 78% of Mandatory Palestine and included 600,000 Jews and 1,000,000 Palestinians in hundreds of villages and dozens of towns. Weitz was following closely every takeover in rural areas, either personally or through loyal officials such as Nachmani. While the army was responsible for the eviction of people and the demolition of houses, Weitz tried to pass the villages into JNF custody.

1.2 The pillaging JNF

After the end of the 1948 war, the JNF had to compete for the role of principal divider of the spoils of the loot. In the final analysis it was a success story, but it took time.

All in all 3.5 million dunams were taken by Israel in rural Palestine: houses and fields of destroyed villages are included in this estimate from 1948. It took a long time until a clear centralized policy of how best to use this land was formulated. Ben-Gurion avoided a total takeover by private or public Jewish agencies, for as long as the UN discussed the fate of the refugees, first in Lausanne in 1949 and later on in futile committees that were established to deal with the issue of refugeehood. In the wake of the UN General Assembly's resolution, on 11 Dec 1948, which called for the unconditional repatriation of the refugees, formal and legal takeovers were seen as problematic in the eyes of the government.

So first the lands were put under the authority of a governmental 'Custodian of Absentee Property', pending decision. But typical to what was regarded 'pragmatism' of the Ben-Gurion years, the Custodian was allowed to sell land on behalf of the government (namely each decision of his had to be backed by the government). So a million dunams out of the 3.5 were sold directly to the JNF for a bargain price in December 1948. Another quarter of a million were passed to the JNF in 1949.

The limited budget of the JNF allowed other greedy agencies, such as the three kibbutzim movements, the moshavim movement and private real estate dealers to take a big share of the land as well. The army held on to a portion of land as training grounds and camps. In 2005 a survey in *Haaretz* estimated that half of the destroyed villages became JNF territory (5).

The complex set-up was further complicated in 1960: the government and the JNF signed a charter for the creation of the Israeli Land Authority. It allocated all the forests to the JNF and all the land – most of which originally belonged to the destroyed villages - to the new ILA. The ILA became the owner of 93% of the land

out of which only 13% was directly owned by the JNF (whereas until 1960 it directly owned half of these lands). But in order to ensure that the ILA would not sell land to Palestinians, half of the members of the ILA directorship were JNF people, mandated to safeguard the land for the Jewish people for eternity. The JNF was even more powerful in this new arrangement: 13% of the land was geographically in areas that were needed for Palestinian villages and towns to develop.

Before that could be done, Weitz used the JNF money to destroy evicted villages, flattening them, before deciding which area would become a Jewish settlement and which a forest (6). And so he reported to the government:

“We have begun the operation of cleansing, removing the debris and preparing the villages for cultivation and settlement. Some of these would become parks.” (7)

Visiting one of these villages Weitz boasted that the sight of tractors destroying villages did not move him. This takeover mission was from the onset described as something very different: it was depicted as an ecological assignment, for example to keep the country green. Thus, a principal means of Judaizing former Palestinian villages was either through resettlement of Jews or through forestation.

Forestation was not the first choice. The whole selection was done through ad-hoc decisions rather than a strategy. First there were the cultivated lands that could be immediately harvested, as the land was fertile and thus accorded to new Jewish settlements. The JNF could not stand the competition with the greedy kibbutzim movements, especially the socialist one, Hashomer Hatzair. They cultivated the lands of the villages even before they were permitted to take it over, and then on the basis of a contracted cultivation demanded possession. As a rule, the feeling in the government was that, first, land had to be allocated to existing Jewish settlements, then for the building of new ones and only as a last priority for forestation.

In 1950, the Absentee Property Law was passed in the Knesset and so the Custodian had introduced more order, which ‘benefited’ the ‘ecologically minded’ members of the JNF who were promised a greater share for forestation. But the criterion was still land that could not be cultivated (8).

1.3 The ravaging of the land

The decision on what to plant was in the hands of the JNF, but also the Ministry of Agriculture had its own forestation section. The decision was to plant pine and cypress trees instead of the natural flora. In part this was an attempt to Europeanize the scenery, although this does not appear as a goal in any documented way, and partly, and this was overly stated, these trees were to be used by the wood industry in generations to come. With time, the special section in the Agriculture Ministry was abolished and the forests planted on lands confiscated from Palestinians in the 1960s were exclusively the production of the JNF (9).

The JNF was also involved in the establishment of new settlements; its officials were the ones who coordinated the naming operation. This mission was accomplished with the help of archaeologists and bible experts who volunteered to be members of a Naming Committee in order to Hebrewize the Palestinian geography. The committee was established in July 1949. Some of the Palestinian villages were probably built on the ruins of early and even ancient civilizations, including the Hebrew one. This was a limited phenomenon and apart from obvious cases such as Zipori (that became Saffuriya) and villages around Safad, it dated back to such hazy ancient times that there was no time to properly establish it – in any case the motive for Judaizing the evicted villages was ideological and not scholarly. The narrative accompanying this expropriation was very simple:

“Throughout the years of foreign occupation of Eretz Israel, the original Hebrew names were erased or garbled, and sometimes took on an alien form.” (10)

Indeed, the desire was to reproduce the ancient map of Israel that in essence was a systematic, political and military attempt to de-Arabize the terrain, the names, the geography and above all the history. The naming committee was in fact an old outfit already in place in 1920 when it acted as an ad hoc group of scholars that granted Hebrew names to lands and places purchased through sale, and continued to do it for lands and places taken by force during the Nakbah. When it was officially convened by Ben-Gurion in July 1949 it was established as a sub-division within the JNF.

In the early 1960s, before the final division of land between the ILA and the JNF, the latter launched operation ‘Finally’ (Sof-Sof in Hebrew), which meant to dispossess further land from Palestinians in the Galilee that was still in the villagers’ hands. They were willing to buy land or exchange it with lesser land. But villagers refused in one of the heroic struggles for Summud that is not mentioned anywhere. Summud in Arabic is steadfastness and it became a term describing the Palestinian national struggle – the ability to remain on one’s own land despite the Israeli policies of dispossession. The struggle included, especially later on in the 1970s, a Palestinian initiative of planting olive trees in a challenge to the Israeli policy (of plantation) aiming to Europeanize Palestine (11).

But they relented when the JNF built special military posts on entrances to the ‘stubborn’ village, exerting psychological pressure on the villagers. It achieved its goal, but only in some cases. Arnon Sofer, a professor of Geography from Haifa University, commented on these actions:

“We were murderous, but it was not malice for the sake of malice. We acted out of a sense of being exposed to an existential threat. And there were objective reasons for this emotion. We were convinced that without Jewish territorial continuity – especially along the national water carrier (running from the Lake of Galilee to the south) the Arabs would poison the water.”

The absence of any fences or guarding posts, at any given moment in time, raises doubts about the sincerity of this concern. The need for 'territorial continuity' on the other was the main excuse used in 1948 for massive operations of expulsions.

The latter task of forestation was achieved through the planting of European trees on the ruins and lands of the villages. Indeed keeping the country Jewish and green became one and the same. Overall, throughout the country, the forest includes 11% of the indigenous trees and only 10% of the forests are from before 1948 (12).

The most illustrative case is in the over-planting of pine trees instead of olive groves. In the new development town of Migdal Ha-Emek, the JNF was doing its best to cover the ruins of the village Malul on the eastern entrance to the place with rows of pine trees (not a proper forest but just a small wood). Such 'lungs' can be found in many of the development towns that cover destroyed villages (Tirat Hacarmel over Tira, Qiryat Shmoneh over Khalsa, and Ashkelon over Majdal). This particular breed failed to adapt to the local soil and after recurring treatment the illness infected the trees once more. When I visited the place in 2004 with relatives of the original population some of the pine tree were literally split and broken forth. In the middle of these trees, olive trees popped out in defiance of the alien flora that was planted above them 56 years ago.

The JNF, as mentioned before, was busy confiscating land in the 1950s and the 1960s, but it did not end there. It owned land in the greater Jerusalem area, which it received from the Custodian of absentee lands after the 1967 war. In the early 1980s, the land was passed by the JNF to Elad, the settlers' NGO that is devoted to the Judaization of east Jerusalem. The NGO focused on Silwan and declared openly that its goal was to cleanse that village from its inhabitants. This operation has recently been extended to include other neighbourhoods such as Al-Sheikh Jarrah.

1.4 The 2010 JNF

So today the JNF directly owns 13% of the land, but has through its membership in the ILA controls over 93% of the land. Privatization initiatives by Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon began to diminish this control – but not significantly, so far at least. The leaders of any Likkud government will always be torn between Zionism and capitalism and time will tell how much will remain in the hands of the JNF in the future. What will not change is the fact that beneath half of Israel's forests lay the ruins of Palestinian villages.

What does this history tell us? First that the 'green lungs' of Israel have been created as part of the colonization of the country and the dispossession of the Palestinian people – and not out of care for ecology and nature. Yet this is not its image abroad, let alone in Israel itself. From this perspective the JNF is the organization that planted throughout the years forests, reconstructed local flora and paved the ways to scores of resorts and nature parks endowed with picnic facilities and children's playgrounds.

But it is time to tell the truth about the green lungs that were created and are now kept preciously by the JNF. The lungs consist not only of picnic areas, playgrounds, parking lots and natural scenery, but also of visible items that tell a history – a ruined house, a fortress or an orchard.

These recreational sites are not so much commemorators of history as much as they are erasers of it. They are deniers of a local history; this is an intentional act of erasure not as part of a need to tell a different story in its own right, but in order to obscure the Palestinian villages that existed where now the green lungs prevail. Beneath the swings, the picnic tables and European forestry lay the houses of the Palestinians who were cleansed in the 1948 Catastrophe by the Israeli army.

As long as this mechanism of denial and erasure continues, simple political agreements and military arrangements will not be enough as bricks in any significant edifice of reconciliation. Any book on the Jewish National Fund drives one clear message home: without acknowledgment of the crimes of the past and without unmaking the lies of the present there is very little hope for peace in Israel and Palestine. Hopefully this book contributes further to this sacred mission for the benefit of Jews and Palestinians alike.

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 2. Yosef Weitz, 20 Dec 1940, *My Diary*, Vol 2, p181 (manuscript in Central Zionist Archive, A246)
 3. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books: London & New York, 1979, p172
 4. Benny Morris, *Tikkun Taut*, Am Oved: Tel Aviv, 2000, p62, notes 12-15
 5. Note: See *Haaretz*, 4 and 11 Feb 2005.
 6. Yosef Weitz, 30 May 1948, *My Diary*, Vol 3, p294
 7. David Ben-Gurion, 5 June 1948, *War Diary*, Vol 2, p487
 8. Benny Morris, *Tikkun Taut*, Am Oved: Tel Aviv, 2000, pp236-8
 9. Note: Dr Michal Oren was quoted in *Haaretz*, 4 Feb 2005.
 10. Meron Benvensiti, *Sacred Landscape: the Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948*, California University Press: Berkeley, 2000, p25
 11. Note: The Israeli Supreme Court began, and continues today, to deliberate over litigation against the policy of plantation, submitted by the NGO Adam, Teva va Din (Man, Nature and Justice) on 29 Aug 2001.
 12. <http://www.kkl.org.il>

2. Exclusive Plans

by Abe Hayeem



Figure 2.1 – Early Zionist watchtower

2.1 The JNF and the architects

The Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet Leyisrael in Hebrew, JNF-KKL) started buying land for exclusive Jewish settlement in 1901 “to be held in perpetual trust for the Jewish people”. Arab resistance to Zionist settlement in remote parts of the country began to increase, culminating in the Great Arab Mutiny in Jaffa in 1936. At the same time, Zionist organisations developed a settlement offensive plan, to create a chain of settlements throughout Palestine on JNF purchased land. These were fortified against attacks using a form of pre-fabricated construction called the ‘Wall & Tower’ or ‘Tower & Stockade’ (Homa Umigdal in Hebrew).

This settlement model, the earliest evidence of Israeli architecture initiated by the JNF, set the pattern for settlements after 1948, and for the future fortified outposts and settlements throughout the West Bank post 1967 – including the Separation Wall of recent years with its massive battlements and circular watchtowers. Homa Umigdal was invented in 1936 by members of Kibbutz Tel Amal in the Beit Shean valley, but particularly by Shlomo Gur, and developed by the architect Yohanan Ratner. Gur was responsible for planning the defence and construction of many settlements, including within the Old City (1).

The purpose of Homa Umigdal was to establish a presence on land that had been purchased, but was not yet populated. These fortified settlements were to be erected

quickly, easily defended, and within sight of other settlements. The same strategy of civilian-military planning was employed throughout Israel after 1948 in the form of the mitzpim (lookout settlements) on land confiscated from existing Arab towns and villages. The Jewish settlements took commanding positions, overlooking the neighbouring Arab communities. This process continued after 1967 with the development of illegal settlements on hilltops in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, in line with Ariel Sharon's edict to "grab every hill", whose radial designs along the contours, described in Eyal Weizman's *Hollow Land*, enabled visual observation and monitoring of the Palestinian neighbourhoods, to deter "terrorist elements" and to "inform the authorities of any suspicious movement". Thus the Israeli government was:

"... enlisting its civilian population to act as its agents alongside state power and serve the state's security aims. The task of the civilian settlers is to help turn the occupied territory into an optical matrix radiating out from a proliferation of lookout points/settlements scattered across the landscape." (2)

The first Homa Umigdal outpost in Kibbutz Tel Amal in the Jezreel Valley was built to ward off and remove armed Bedouin who were grazing the land around the kibbutz. The land had been purchased by the JNF from Arab landowners outside Palestine. Thus began the pattern of driving the indigenous population off the land and the expansion of Jewish settlements. Today, settlers of the West Bank, supported by Israel's Civil Administration in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), continue to expropriate Palestinian lands, often terrorising Palestinian farmers off their fields.

2.2 The politics of Israeli architecture

The synergetic link between the JNF and the acquisition and expropriation of land, involving the military and defence forces (later the Haganah and then the Israeli Defence Force) and the Israeli architects (adrichalim) of the kibbutzim, moshavim (agricultural villages), towns and cities, is what makes every act of building so political and controversial in Israel and the OPT.

Again, as Eyal Weizman says in *Hollow Land*:

"Most Israeli architects building in the West Bank do not see the panorama as constituting a strategic and defensive category. They have simply internalised the security discourse of the state and have learned to use it when discussing matters with state agents in order to get their projects approved. When they have designed neighbourhoods and settlements overlooking the surrounding landscape, they have generally done so in order to provide residents with views of the landscape." (2)

David Ben-Gurion recognised the importance of the adrichalim when he placed the state Planning Department directly in the Prime Minister's office in 1948. He oversaw the work directly; ever since, every act of building in Israel and the OPT has been politically charged.

As Zvi Efrat has written, Arie Sharon, an architect of the Bauhaus school, was:

“... commissioned to establish ... an overall master plan for Israel ... providing temporary housing solutions for the masses of new Jewish immigrants and settling the country’s borderlands in order to stabilize the 1948 ceasefire lines, prevent territorial concessions and inhibit the return of the Palestinian war refugees. The planners accomplished this by drafting a state-wide network of civil frontiers composed of transit camps and agrarian outpost settlements, as well as re-settling deserted Arab villages with new Jewish immigrants ... a long-term mission, for the country’s intense and comprehensive development which would reach all its corners ... with the moral and material support provided by the world’s superpowers for the new state ... a project of construction (and obliteration) – more daring than any of its imagined precedents.” (3)

The Israeli architect and writer Sharon Rotbard has commented especially regarding the Western trained architects who responded to this highly politicised situation where they were mobilized to serve the Zionist project:

“They attempted to allow political ideology to infiltrate through the architectural forms and enabled architectural doctrines to express themselves through programmes inspired or even dictated by politics. In Israel, political ideology and architectural doctrine are dependent on one another and are in a constant and complex dialogue of justification and argumentation ... besides relinquishing the universal viewpoint held by western (and some Eretz Israeli) architects that was rooted in the dialectics between theory and practise, the Israeli ‘Adrichalut’ is rooted between politics and architecture ... and lacks a reflexive, comprehensive view of itself; mobilized by the political ideologies, it establishes facts cast in concrete that are inherently political, but lacks political awareness entirely”. (4)

This is why Israeli architects never seem to question the morality or methods by which the land on which they are building was acquired, or that what they are building consolidates and entrenches an apartheid system that dispossesses and denies land and property rights to Palestinian citizens of Israel and the OPT.

2.3 Land acquisition and building

Prior to 1948, the JNF (and its predecessor the Jewish Colonisation Association) was the main instrument of land purchase, mainly from absentee Arab landowners residing in Beirut, which “necessitated the forced removal of the Palestinian peasantry ... by heavily armed paramilitary groups” (5). Then, only 5.5% of Palestine (approx 3000 sq-km) was under Jewish ownership. In 1948 the highly trained Haganah carried out Plan Dalet (6) under the leadership of Ben-Gurion and the Israeli generals, fighting rag-tag Arab armies and amateurish, ineffective village resistance. The geographer Salman Abu Sitta became a refugee and was a witness to the events: 675 Palestinian villages and towns were destroyed, their inhabitants driven out, making 750,000 refugees (7).

At the end of the 1948 war, 93% of Palestinian land on the Israeli side of the armistice line was sequestered to the Israeli state using a whole series of 'Kafkaesque' forms of legislation (e.g. the Absentee Properties Act, The Present Absentees classification, and Land Acquisition Orders). The best real estate, mainly from the destroyed villages and their farmland, was acquired or 'sold' to the JNF (about 13% of all the land, with funds from diaspora Jewry). 'Internal' refugees were denied return to their villages and land, which were allocated to kibbutzim. A close alliance was formed between the state-owned Israel Land Administration (ILA) and the privately owned JNF, such that the JNF collectively owns and manages the 93% with the state (the JNF has half the seats on the board of the ILA).

In May 1948, the Jewish population of the new Israeli state numbered 650,000, scattered over some 305 towns. 235 of these towns stood on JNF land. The land sequestration has no validity under international law. This applies to the 'no-man's land' in Jerusalem, yet, after the 1967 war, Israel treated this area along the interim armistice Green line as if it owned it, and illegally annexed east Jerusalem and the Old City. Major developments here, like Mamilla (once a thriving 'mixed' town, now mostly demolished) in Jerusalem were carried out by the world famous architect Moshe Safdie. As Ilan Pappé says:

"The JNF also owned land in the Greater Jerusalem area – after the 1967 war. In the early eighties this land was passed on to Elad, the settler's NGO, devoted to the Judaization of East Jerusalem ... who stated openly that it wanted to cleanse Silwan from its original Palestinian inhabitants." (8)

This unfortunately is now proceeding in leaps and bounds, aided by Israeli architects and archaeologists under the control of Elad, to establish the 'City of David'. Moshe Safdie is also designing the 'King David Park' in threatened Silwan, involving mass demolition of Silwan residents' housing to create parks and routes linking all the sites relating to Jewish biblical narrative, which will encircle or exclude Silwan residents.

These important facts show that it would be difficult to find any development designed by Israeli architects and planners that does not involve the JNF, which, instead of being dissolved after the foundation of the Israeli state, continues to play a key function in land ownership and development on both sides of the Green Line. It even played a central role in establishing the first modern Jewish city Tel Aviv. The JNF was also involved in establishing new Jewish settlements on the lands of destroyed villages.

2.4 Non-state Jewish organisations

Like the JNF, the Jewish Agency is part of the parent World Zionist Organisation of Israel and the Jewish diaspora. These organisations are not state agencies; they operate parallel to the state. The Jewish Agency promotes and manages aliyah (Jewish immigration) to Israel and settlements in the OPT, purchases land in Israel for settlers through the Jewish National Fund, and often decides the location of new settlements.

Susan Nathan writes about these non-state organisations:

“... they have the power to exercise great control over the management of resources but cannot be held to account through the normal channels ... This means that the JNF can act without penalty as a kind of bullying overlord towards the country’s Arab citizens, constantly seeking to confiscate private land on the flimsiest pretext and transfer it to its own or state ownership for the sole benefit of Jews. There are few restraints on the JNF’s behaviour and even fewer recourses to law open to Arab citizens when it behaves in an arbitrary fashion.” (9)

Today, 93% of Israel’s land is reserved for Jewish Israeli citizens only to lease or buy. In 2004, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that it was illegal for the Israel Land Authority to refuse to sell or lease land to an Arab. The Attorney General held that this ruling also applied to the JNF. However, the Israeli government has been introducing new legislation to counter these developments. The Knesset passed the first stage of the Jewish National Fund law, which reverses the Supreme Court’s ruling and allows the JNF to continue selling and leasing land only to Jews (10).

Haaretz recently reported that Jewish settlers have been busy taking over agricultural lands and preparing them for new plantings for the illegal settlement of Ofra, “establishing facts in fields”. When challenged:

“... the Civil Administration responded that Ofra Plantations is located in an area registered to Himanuta (a subsidiary of the Jewish National Fund) which transferred it to the government authority for the West Bank. They then leased the land to a Jewish Agency department which transferred it to settlers from Ofra.” (11)

The Ministerial Committee for Legislation rejected a bill proposed by MK Ahmed Tibi (Ra'am-Ta'al party) proposing that the state enforce equal allocation of land to Jews and Arabs. Tibi said in response to the ruling:

“Yet again, the Israeli government has proven that it is avoiding the principle of civil equality ... The government ... ignores Arabs’ rights, and hasn’t approved the building of a new Arab village since 1948’ ...

“Tibi’s proposal was intended to counter a bill that states that reception committees of Israeli communities can decide who will reside in their towns. One consequence of that bill is that Israeli Arabs would not be able to live in those towns if the reception committees decide so.” (12)

2.5 Erasure of Palestinian landscape and history

Relating how in fact even the small percentage of Palestinian owned land is under threat, Susan Nathan describes how a Palestinian neighbour of hers, in the village of Tamra near Haifa, was harassed endlessly by a JNF official to sell off his precious

land on the edge of the village. This land bordered the Jewish-only cooperative settlement Mitzpe Aviv, and was the remnant of already part-confiscated land that had not been cultivated. It was planted with the JNF signal brand of pine trees to define the Jewish homeland, and devious methods were employed to ban him from accessing his land. To prevent its takeover, he planted olive trees, which Palestinians identify as a symbol of their steadfast, historical connection to the land. Against all odds he was determined to resist (9).

Olive and other fruit trees usually demarcate the borders of a Palestinian village, whereas pine trees have been used to demarcate the extent of an Israeli settlement. These pine forests, as described by Eyal Weizman, were planted on areas declared as 'state land' mainly around Greater Jerusalem, in order to prevent Palestinian planting, and to create land reserves for new settlements or the expansion of existing ones. The fruitful mixed planting on the lands of Palestinian villages were bulldozed and planted over with pine forests by the JNF. The resulting "pine deserts" made the land unusable for Palestinian shepherds, depriving their flocks of pasture, due to the acidic deposits of pine needles (2). The planting of pine forests thus became an instrument of dispossession, uprooting the natural vegetation of olive, carob and fruit trees to negate the indigenous character of Palestinian agriculture and farming, and prevent their resettlement.

The erasure of Palestinian history and culture is exemplified in the Palestinian village of Ein Hod, in the Carmel Ridge, which, though intact, was taken over by Israeli artists, who transformed into a "Mediterranean Village", devoid of its Palestinian heritage and character. The original inhabitants, who were expelled, tried to set up another village on land they owned further up the Carmel slopes, calling it Ayn Hawd, its original Arabic name. Because this was not registered as one of the 123 'recognized villages' under the Planning and Building Law in 1965, and it had been declared 'state land', every attempt was made to remove them, by fencing them tightly around their concrete-built homes. After five decades of struggle and steadfastness, it has now been grudgingly provided some services, denied to all 'unrecognised villages', yet its houses are still 'illegal' and its tight boundary still intact.

After 1948, every Arab village allowed to be registered in the master plan had 'blue line' borders drawn closely around them leaving no room for development, while Jewish settlements and communities had generous lines with plenty of room to expand. This method is still used for the illegal West Bank settlements with huge municipal boundaries, while Palestinian villages have their farmland sequestered for the Wall and apartheid highways, and for Jewish settlers' expansion. Within Israel itself, although the Palestinian Arab population is seven times greater than it was in 1948, their towns and villages are still confined to their original boundaries (minus their farmland), and, as Ahmed Tibi says, not one new Arab community has been built since.

When the necessary plans for every 'recognised' community are drawn up by Israeli architects, they contradict planning norms of population density and overcrowding, and do not provide for natural growth, meaning they will have to build close and high, with no public open spaces. The architects refuse to speak out for fear they will be

denied work from the state. They invariably follow the agenda of the Interior Ministry, of the 'maximum number of Arabs on the minimum amount of land', and, vice versa for Jewish communities.

2.6 Judaization of the Negev Desert

These same policies are now being deployed in the massive 'Judaization' plans for new Jewish-only towns in the Galilee and, more extensively, in the Negev Desert (13). The JNF (for the US) website proclaims:

"Today, the long-term vision for Israel's future is being realized through Blueprint Negev, JNF's 10-year, \$600 million initiative to revitalize, develop, and preserve the Negev Desert, 60% of Israel's land mass but home to only 8% of its population. JNF is supporting a new generation of Israeli pioneers in fulfilling David Ben-Gurion's vision of making the desert bloom, ensuring Israel's vitality for generations to come." (14)

This will be done in conjunction with huge programmes for reservoirs, afforestation (with pine forests) and water conservation. Of course none of this will benefit the 150,000 Bedouin citizens of Israel living in the Negev, 50% of who live in villages that the government deems 'unrecognized' (15). Many Palestinian villages in Israel are classified by the government as 'unrecognized', and lack even the most basic government services and support (running water, electricity, roads, sewer systems and trash removal). Being unrecognized means that they are 'illegal', and that their residents are not allowed to build new structures without permission – a permission that is never given.

The objective is to force the Bedouin off their ancestral lands and to concentrate them in urban townships, regardless of their wishes or their culture. There are no options for living in the 'recognized' towns that the government has built. As the families of the Twail Abu-Jarwal village discovered, there are no available plots of land for them to build on. Therefore the government can 'legally' demolish the homes of 80,000 Bedouin, while they cannot build one 'legal' home.

Many of the unrecognised villages have been ruthlessly demolished by the IDF, before the JNF forest planting begins (16). This policy forms the background to the 'Negev Challenge', which the JNF Charitable Trust in the UK is supporting (17). To raise funds for these projects, advertisements were placed in the Jewish press, claiming that the JNF "since 1901 has helped build a country out of nothing" and that their "vision is ... to move thousands of families from the overcrowded cities of central and northern Israel down south into the 60% of the country that remains virtually uninhabited – the Negev Desert". A complaint (sadly not upheld) was launched with the Advertising Standards Authority (see Appendix 3).

2.7 Professional codes of conduct

Like other developments in Israel and the OPT funded by the JNF, the new communities being created in the Negev are exclusively Jewish. Israeli architects

and planners design the new settlements and towns, which require that the Bedouin be ethnically cleansed from the 'unrecognized' villages.

Israeli architects have gone along with this situation without protest. Their professional body, the Israeli Association of United Architects (IAUA), has displayed a chilling detachment from the consequences of their work. They deny any political involvement, when in fact the whole agenda of building supports occupation, including the use of overwhelming military force to grab land, to displace and oppress Palestinians.

The International Union of Architects (UIA) has recently condemned such projects.

"The UIA Council condemns development projects and the construction of buildings on land that has been ethnically purified or illegally appropriated, and projects based on regulations that are ethnically or culturally discriminatory, and similarly it condemns all action contravening the fourth Geneva Convention."

This should bring home to the IAUA and Israeli architects that unacceptable and long-standing breaches of professional and ethical practice brings the humanitarian aims of architecture into disrepute. Further, they operate within a highly racist and discriminatory system of oppression against a whole people. The situation gets worse by the day, in an agenda of total impunity and arrogance, reminiscent of apartheid South Africa.

Western support for Israel is strong – clinging to the mythology of 'plucky little Israel' standing with the West against terror. The same respect holds for institutions like the JNF. The British Prime Minister is of course a patron of its UK arm, the JNF Charitable Trust. Despite our protestations against such support (see Appendix 2), the myths will be difficult to dislodge. It will be a long struggle to get a response and achieve justice for the Palestinians and an equitable peace for all in the Middle East.

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- (1) Note: Shlomo Gur was later involved in the plans for the Hebrew University and the Knesset.
 - (2) Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, Verso: London, 2007
 - (3) Zvi Efrat, "The Plan", in: *A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture* by Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman (eds), Verso: London, 2003
 - (4) Sharon Rotbard, "Wall and Tower, The Mold of Israeli Adrichalut", in: *Territories* (Exhibition Catalogue), ICA Berlin, 2003
 - (5) Film: Jeff Halper, *An Israeli in Palestine*, Google Videos, 16 Nov 2008 – he describes the beginnings of the Zionist policies of 'transfer', that initiated the Arab resistance to Zionist colonisation
(<http://www.video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7371453458938002617>)
 - (6) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plan_Dalet
 - (7) Film: Salman Abu Sitta, *The Geography of Occupation*, YouTube, 20 Sep 2006
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJrW-BhgMx0>)
 - (8) Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oneworld: Oxford, 2006

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- (9) Susan Nathan, *The Other Side of Israel: My Journey Across the Jewish-Arab Divide*, HarperCollins: London, 2005
- (10) <http://www.adalah.org/eng/jnf.php> – JNF Bill
- (11) Akiva Eldar, “Natural grape growth”, *Haaretz*, 18 Aug 2009
(<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108326.html>)
- (12) Jonathan Lis, “Knesset rejects bill for equal Arab-Jewish land distribution”, *Haaretz*, 7 Jan 2010 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1140380.html>)
- (13) Erez Tzfadia, “In the name of Zionism”, *Haaretz*, 21 Sep 2008
(<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1022588.html>)
- (14) <http://www.jnf.org/about-jnf/history/index.html#100th>
- (15) <http://www.theunrecognized.org>
- (16) Ben White, “Shattering Israel’s image of ‘democracy’”, *Guardian*, 3 Dec 2009
(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/dec/03/israel-negev>)
- (17) <http://www.jnf.co.uk/negev.html> – Negev Challenge

3. The British Park

by Uri Davis

3.1 Introduction

In 2004 there was an exchange of correspondence between the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (SPSC) and the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in the UK – see Appendix 1. The JNF threatened to issue legal proceedings against the SPSC for defamation, following a press release by the SPSC deploring the decision of the entertainer Ruby Wax to appear at a JNF fundraising dinner in Glasgow.

Specifically, the threat of legal action related to the claims made by the SPSC that the JNF supports ethnic cleansing, segregation and discrimination against Palestinians. I was happy to lend my expertise (1) as a witness for the SPSC case in defence of these claims. Unfortunately, the JNF did not pursue its legal action in the end.

I embarked upon the present study to demonstrate that the JNF-UK has funded the development of a British park upon the ruins of ethnically cleansed Palestinian villages. This serves to cover-up and deny the crimes that took place there, and violates the rights of the Palestinian refugees, who still have legal claim under international law to the land on which the British Park stands.

3.2 The JNF in their own words

The JNF projects itself as an organization that is concerned primarily with environmental sustainability:

“... to protect the land, green the landscape and preserve vital ecosystems ... planting seedlings, maintaining forest health, combating desertification, protecting watersheds and managing water flow ...

“... balancing the phenomenal growth and development Israel has experienced in the last decade with the maintenance of an ecologically sound environment ...

“... strengthening the ties between man and land ... with the advances of man and technology on the environment, JNF’s role as guardian of the land becomes ever more critical.” (2)

It is in this connection that the JNF portrays its afforestation activities and developments such as the British Park. We are further informed that:

“Israel ... is the only country in the world that will enter the 21st century with a net gain in numbers of trees. JNF has planted over 220 million saplings, providing luscious belts of green covering more than 200,000 acres.” (3)

“... family life in the centre of one of the most explosive geo-political hot spots in the world can be difficult ... The land, with its parks, forests, historic sites and recreation areas developed by JNF, provides much needed respite.” (4)

3.3 The JNF tourist guide to the British Park

The signpost at the entrance of the British Park (see Figure 3.1) proclaims the park as “a gift of the Jewish National Fund of Great Britain”.



Figure 3.1 – Signpost at the entrance of the British Park

The British Park has been planted by the JNF-UK since the mid-1950s:

“... in the heart of Judean Plain ... dotted with archaeological remains, dugout caves and abandoned fruit gardens ... The JNF maintains the park, installs lookouts and outdoor recreation areas, marks trails and scenic routes ...

“ ... somewhat west of Moshav Zecharia ... near the recreation area, you will see a cistern carved into the rock and covered with a grate ... On the southwest slopes of the tel, you will again cross a terrace opening ...

“... you will come across another wine-press with three puzzling, connected grooves near the treading area. At a guess, they may have held the grapes prior to treading. The trail follows the course of a reconstructed terrace ...

“Below you are large fruit gardens of the abandoned village of Ajjur, which is where the trail is leading ... straight down to the Oak Recreation Area, named for the tree here that grew to uncommon proportions ...

“Beneath the oak, there is a mound of stones, probably denoting a sheikh’s tomb or other holy spot, which may explain why the oak, too, is considered holy and was therefore left untouched to grow so big ...

“... continue down the vale, parallel to the sabra hedges, passing another well, in which a fig tree grows ... near the large terebinth tree ... amid terraces and fruit trees, to the hill where the centre of Ajjur village once was ...

“... there is a cave opening ... inside there are fine remains of an olive press, including the catchment and crushing stones, as well as part of the beam on which weights were hung for the extraction of juices ...

“... the trail rises northward from the large terebinth and reaches another deep well ... up to the two large almonds trees in the fruit garden, and continue straight on to the Five-Way Junction, where you left your car.” (5)

3.4 The Palestinian village of Ajjur

How was the Palestinian Arab village of Ajjur “abandoned”? Who tended the many fruit trees – almond, olive, fig, as well as sabra hedges? How come the “Ajjur vale contains a very deep well, carved into the rock” (5)?

Where are the Muslim communities whose Sheikh lies in the tomb? Where are the shepherds who left the deep grooves on the top course of the stones, made by the ropes with which they had “raised pails of water from its depths” (5)? Who built, maintained and operated the olive press?

As the JNF narrative itself suggests, the British Park is planted inter alia on the lands of Ajjur. There still remain structures of the Palestinian village of Ajjur (see Figure 3.2) within the outline boundaries of the settlement of Moshav Ajjur. The latter was built in 1950 for Jewish residence only, close to the ruins of the Palestinian village of the same name.

According to the Palestinian historian Walid Khalidi (6,7), the relevant statistics and facts for the village of Ajjur read as in Table 3.1 below. The remaining structures on the village land are as follows:

“Only three houses remain; two are deserted and one has been turned into a warehouse. One of the deserted houses is a two-story stone structure that has a large, triple-arched front porch.” (6,7)



Figure 3.2 – Remains of the Palestinian village of Ajjur

Prior to the ethnic cleansing of 1948, Ajjur was one of the larger Arab rural localities in the country. Today, the indigenous Palestinian people of Ajjur are stateless refugees, living mostly outside the 1949 armistice line (the so-called Green Line) in Dheisha and Arrub refugee camps, south of Bethlehem.

Some of the former residents of Ajjur remain, perhaps, as internally displaced persons, inside the state of Israel, known as 'present absentees' under the Absentees Property Law of 1950. They are 'present' as tax-paying citizens in Israel, yet 'absent' in that they are not allowed access to their properties; their homes, lands, bank accounts, safe deposits, jewellery etc have been confiscated by the state.

Table 3.1 – The village of Ajjur, before and after 1948

Ajjur (District of Hebron)

Before 1948

Distance from district center : 24 km northwest of Hebron

Elevation from the sea : 275 m

Population before 1948 : 2,917 in 1931 (includes Khirbat al-Sura); 3,730 in 1945 (includes Khirbat Anunuriyya)

Number of houses : 566 in 1931 (includes Khirbat al-Sura)

Schools : The village had two schools, one was a private school known by Abu al-Hasan school, and the other was founded in 1934

Religious institutions : Ajjur had two mosques, one was an old mosque which was built during the Fatimid period, the other was built during the British Mandate period

Shrines/maqams : Ajjur contained four shrines within its borders

Archeological sites : Ajjur was the site of the battle of Ajnadin (AD 634), in which the Muslim Arabs triumphed over the Byzantines; it contains 22 other archaeological sites

Land ownership before 1948 in dunums : Arab 44,771; Jewish 0; Public 13,303; Total 58,074 (27,655 of which cultivable)

After 1948

Israeli occupation date : July 23-24, 1948

Israeli military operation : Operation Yo'av

Israeli attacking brigade : Fourth Battalion of Giv'ati Brigade

Village defenders : Egyptian Muslim Brotherhoods, local Palestinian militias and some Arab Liberation Army volunteers

Ethnically cleansing : Ajjur inhabitants were completely ethnically cleansed

Village remains : After destruction by Israelis Ajjur was mostly destroyed with the exception of three houses remain standing to this date

Israeli settlements : Moshav Ajjur (established 1950), Agur, Tzafririm, Giv'at Yesh'ayahu, Li-On (established 1960, now renamed Saraigi) & Tirosh

3.5 The Palestinian village of Zakariyya

A second Palestinian village, Zakariyya, is alluded to in the JNF tourist guidenotes:

“At the upper wine-press, the trail splits. Continue up to the Shiklon Ruins on the left (eastern) fork. At the top of the ruins you will see a handsome, carved wooden pillar, the vestige of a grand building, probably a church. This could be the church that appears on the Madaba map, near the settlement of Beit Zecharia. According to the map, which was sketched into a mosaic floor in Byzantine times, a grand church in memory of St Zecharia stood here. Behind the pillared front of the building, you will find a yard in the shape of a semi-circle, probably the holy man's burial place. Prof. Avi Yona surmises that the church was dedicated to Zecharia, father of John the Baptist. The top of the ruins offers a fine view of the Ela Valley and Mt. Hebron.” (5)

An additional reference to the settlement of Beit Zecharia appears in the official signpost for the ruins of the fortress city of 'Tel Azeqah', decorated with three official logos – the JNF, the Antiquities Authority, and the Society for the Protection of Nature (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3 – Signpost for the ruins of Tel Azeqah in the British Park

The Hebrew text of the signpost is translated:

“An important fortress city in the patrimony of the Tribe of Judeah ... mentioned in the of the wars of Joshua against the five kings of the Amorites as well as the battle between Israel and the Philistines, where David killed Goliath ...

“The Philistines collected their forces for war and massed at Socoh in Judah; they camped between Socoh and Azeqah at Ephes (First Book of Samuel, Chapter 17, Verse 1) ...

“Azeqah is mentioned in an Assyrian clay tablet describing the conquest of the city by King Sennacherib, and later the Prophet Jeremiah describes the city in connection with the campaign of devastation led by King Nebuchadnezzar ...

“In the years of the return to Zion, a number of families from the tribe of Judeah returned to settle in Azeqah, and the locality remained settled also in the Roman-Byzantine period ...

“In the Medsaba map of the sixth century AD the name of Azeqah does not appear, instead the Byzantine name of the settlement is given – Beit Zecharia – a name preserved until today in the name of Moshav Beit Zecharia ...

“The mound of the ruins rise of the height of 347 meters above sea level. In the slopes of the mound, hideaway systems of subterranean caverns and halls were uncovered, probably from the Bar Kokhba period.”

(More about the “hideaway systems of subterranean caverns and halls”, below.)

What the signpost above omits to mention is that the settlement of Beit Zecharia was built in 1950 for Jews only, upon the ruins of the indigenous Palestinian village of Zakariyya. The relevant statistics and facts for the village of Zakariyya (8,9) are provided in Table 3.2.

The remaining structures on the village land are:

“The mosque and a number of houses, some occupied by Jewish residents and others deserted, remain on the site. Large sections of the site itself are covered with wild vegetation. The mosque is in a state of neglect and an Israeli flag is planted on top of the minaret.” (8,9)

Table 3.2 – The village of Zakariyya, before and after 1948

Zakariyya (District of Hebron)

Before 1948

Distance from district center : 25 km northwest of Hebron

Elevation from the sea : 275 m

Population before 1948 : 742 in 1931; 1,180 in 1945

Number of houses : 189 in 1931

Schools : The village had two schools, one was a private school known by Abu al-Hasan school, and the other was founded in 1934

Religious institutions : One mosque (still standing)

Town's name in history : Zakariyya was known to the Romans as Caper Zacharia

Archeological sites : According to the Bible David fought Goliath at Tall Zakariyya

Land ownership before 1948 in dunums : Arab 15,311, Jewish 0, Public 9, Total 15,320 (of which 7,484 cultivable)

After 1948

Israeli occupation date : October 23, 1948

Israeli military operation : Either Operation ha-Har or Operation Yo'av

Israeli attacking brigade : Possibly Giv'ati Brigade's Fourth Battalion

Village defenders : Egyptian Muslim Brotherhoods, local Palestinian militias and some Arab Liberation Army volunteers

Ethnically cleansing : Zakariyya was completely ethnically cleansed on June 9, 1950 based on the orders of Yosef Weitz, a JNF official

Village remains : After destruction by Israelis Zakariyya was partially destroyed, and all the remaining houses and its mosque became the property of the JNF and Israeli government. Some Kurdish or Khazari Jews have taken residence in some of its houses

Israeli settlements : Moshav/Beit Zecharia (and possibly Beit Shamesh)

2.6 The British Park in relation to international law

The JNF-UK, as in other countries in Europe and the Americas, is a registered charity. The planting of the British Park over the lands of destroyed Palestinian villages, including Ajjur and Zakariyya, can in no way be described as ‘charitable’. Rather it ought to be classified as an act and as a policy of complicity with war crimes. The British Park and the recreational facility developed in the shade of its forest trees serve to veil from critical public view war crimes perpetrated by the Israeli army in the course of, and in the wake of, the 1948 war. This policy of complicity with war crimes has been maintained by subsequent Israeli Governments, underpinned by Acts of Parliament such as the Jewish National Fund Law of 1950 and the Covenant signed between the JNF and the state of Israel in 1961.

The demolition of a civilian locality; the razing to the ground of its residential structures; the denial of the right of the civilian inhabitants of the locality concerned to the titles of their properties and to return to the localities where properties to which they hold titles are situated; and the arbitrary alteration of the usage of the said properties. Each and every one of these represents a gross violation of UN resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine and constitutes a war crime under international law. War crimes are not subject to the rules of legal limitation.

The relevant articles of international law include the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (10) and Convention 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (11), specifically article 4:

1. Special measures shall be adopted as appropriate for safeguarding the persons, institutions, property, labour, cultures and environment of the peoples concerned.
2. Such special measures shall not be contrary to the freely-expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.
3. Enjoyment of the general rights of citizenship, without discrimination, shall not be prejudiced in any way by such special measures.

In addition the British Park veils other, no less pernicious, violations of international law, namely, depositions of illegally stockpiled nuclear weapons (in “the hideaway systems of subterranean caverns and halls”) in the locality of Zakariyya (12,13).

(This chapter is based on a report originally published by MAIAP in June 2004 – see reference 13 below. The author would like to thank Itai Afeq, Susi Mordechai, Raid Salame and Ashraf Abu Muhh for their assistance with fieldwork in the environs of the Israeli British Park; in the UK thanks go to Ivan Clark, John Harrison and Judith Perera for IT support, and to Sophia MacLeod and Mick Napier for their hospitality.)

(1) Walter Lehn, Uri Davis, *The Jewish National Fund*, Kegan Paul: London, 1988

- (2) <http://www.jnf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=workinisrael>
- (3) http://www.jnf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Forestry_and_Ecology
- (4) http://www.jnf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Tourism_and_Recreation
- (5) <http://www2.kkl.org.il/tyul/english/trip6.htm>
- (6) <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Hebron/Ajjur/index.html>
- (7) Walid Khalidi (ed), *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, Institute for Palestine Studies: Washington DC, 1992, pp206-7
- (8) <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Hebron/Zakariyya/index.html>
- (9) Walid Khalidi (ed), *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, Institute for Palestine Studies: Washington DC, 1992, pp224-6
- (10) Note: The Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War was adopted on 12 August 1949 by the Diplomatic Conference for the Establishment of International Conventions for the Protection of Victims of War, held in Geneva from 21 Apr – 12 Aug 1949, and entered into force on 21 Oct 1950.
- (11) Note: Convention 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries was adopted on 27 June 1989 by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation at its seventy-sixth session and entered into force 5 Sep 1991.
- (12) <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/israel/facility.htm>
- (13) Uri Davis, "Research Report on the Subject of the British Park funded by the Jewish National Fund UK", Movement Against Israeli Apartheid in Palestine, June 2004, pp11-14

4. Patron Brown

by Susannah Tarbush

4.1 Letter to Brown

The international pressure group Architects & Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP) sent a letter to the new British PM in 2007 describing as “disturbing” his decision to become a patron of the Jewish National Fund:

“Your becoming a patron of JNF-UK can be seen as a tacit acceptance of an unacceptable status quo, and also places you in the position of not being an unbiased mediator in the peace process.” (Appendix 2)

Among those signing the letter were the APJP chairman and secretary, Abe Hayeem and Haifa Hammami respectively. Another signatory was the Israeli architect Eyal Weizman (1), director of the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths College London.

Copies of the letter were sent to the foreign secretary David Miliband, and to the Africa/Asia minister Lord Mark Malloch Brown (former deputy secretary-general of the UN).

The letter called on Gordon Brown to withdraw his patronage of the JNF. Brown became a patron of the JNF-UK after its president Gail Seal wrote to him conveying her good wishes the day after he took office in 2007. Brown said that he was “delighted to accept your offer to become a patron of JNF UK”.

A spokesman for Brown told the weekly London *Jewish Chronicle* that he had agreed to become a patron of the JNF “in order to encourage their work to promote charitable projects for everyone in Israel” (2). But as the letter from APJP to Brown makes clear, the JNF benefits only Israeli Jews and not Palestinian citizens.

The *Jewish Chronicle* report added, “Brown has long been known for his support of Israel”. He joins an illustrious list of patrons including former PM Tony Blair, opposition leader David Cameron and chief rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, who is a ‘close personal friend’ of Brown.

The APJP letter to Brown said that his agreement to become a patron of the JNF comes at an “unfortunate time”. The Israeli Knesset had just approved its preliminary reading of a “racist bill”, prohibiting the sale of lands registered in the name of the JNF to Palestinian citizens of the state.

The JNF, together with the Israel Land Administration, appears to control 19,508 sq-km (3) out of a total Israeli land mass of 20,770 sq-km (4) – more than 93%. This land is demarcated for the establishment of exclusively Jewish communities.

In its letter, APJP notes that the state of Israel transferred around 2 million dunams (2,000 sq-km) of land seized and confiscated from Palestinian 'absentee' owners to the JNF in 1949 and 1953 via arbitrary laws:

"The Knesset's attempt to enact the JNF's policy into law does not absolve Israel from its obligations under international law to refrain from legislating racist laws or including discriminatory bodies in official decision-making institutions ...

"This new bill, alongside the racist Citizenship Law that prevents the unification of Arab families in Israel, are primarily and directly targeted against the native inhabitants of the country ... both possess the basic characteristics of colonial laws ... that perpetuate not only the Occupation, but treats a large minority of its citizens in a way that no truly democratic state would accept." (Appendix 2)

4.2 A separate development

Also in 2007, the APJP chairman sent a letter to the London *Financial Times* (5) in relation to the Israeli architect Moshe Safdie. Safdie's blueprint to expand Jerusalem westwards, away from Palestinian areas, had recently been rejected by the Israeli government.

The *Financial Times* had written that Safdie had been drawn into a national controversy about the future of Jerusalem, "as Israelis grapple with whether and when they will divide the land, including Jerusalem, with the Palestinians".

The Safdie blueprint was part of a project to re-create the mythical 'City of David', involving a settler group, Elad, which has been buying and expropriating houses in Palestinian neighbourhoods for many years. The project involved demolishing 88 houses, making over 1,000 Palestinians homeless. The European Union had condemned the project.

Safdie had told the *Financial Times* that he "laments" the separation wall and the damage being caused to Palestinian villages and communities. However, he had failed to mention the damage – as a result of his own architectural plans – caused to the al-Bustan neighbourhood of Silwan in occupied east Jerusalem.

APJP chairman Abe Hayeem explained:

"We oppose the illegal construction of settlements and infrastructure that contravenes professional codes of conduct and international law, and are challenging the complicity of Israeli architects and planners in occupation and oppression." (5)

4.3 Petition

A petition was signed by more than 260 professionals around the world, including some of Britain's most famous architects and a number of Israeli architects. They stated that the actions of Israeli architects and planners, who work in conjunction with the Israeli policy of occupation and settlement, are "unethical and contravene professional codes of conduct and International Union of Architects (UIA) codes".

The petition condemned those "projects that make Israeli architects, planners and design and construction professionals complicit in social, political and economic oppression, in violation of their professional ethics" (6).

The petition presented a challenge to the Israeli Association of United Architects (IAUA), demanding that it adhere to UIA codes. It called on the IAUA "to declare their opposition to the inhuman Occupation, and to end the participation of their members and fellow professionals in creating facts on the ground with a demographic intent that excludes and oppresses Palestinians".

Those signing the petition included the president (in 2007) of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Jack Pringle, as well as three former presidents and the president-elect, Sunand Prasad.

The lobbying group British Architect Friends of Israel counter-petitioned the UIA – unsuccessfully – calling for it to suspend the membership of RIBA on the grounds of "national discrimination and anti-Semitism" (7). Jack Pringle rejected any charge of anti-Semitism as "very offensive to me and quite absurd as a glance at the petition with its many Jewish co-signatories will show. Indeed, many Jewish agencies support the petition, and its main promoter is Jewish himself" (8).

(This chapter is based on an article originally published in *Al-Hayat* on 25 August 2007 and *Electronic Intifada* on 10 September 2007.)

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- (1) Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, Verso: London, 2007
 - (2) Daniella Peled, "Brown takes on JNF role", *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 July 2007
 - (3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Land_Administration
 - (4) http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/world_statistics_by_area.htm
 - (5) Abe Hayeem, Letter, *Financial Times*, 16 Aug 2007
 - (6) Note: Three particular projects were identified: the E1 plan to expand the largest illegal settlement Ma'ale Adumim to link it with metropolitan Jerusalem, the Silwan project, and the development upon the destroyed village of Lifta.
 - (7) Simon Wiesenthal Centre & British Architect Friends of Israel, Letter to International Union of Architects: "Suspend your UK affiliate until it disassociates itself from political campaign against Israeli architects", 1 June 2007 (<http://www.kintera.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=fwLYKnN8LzH&b=4423615&ct=3932561>)
 - (8) Note: This quote was taken from the president's blog at RIBA at the time of writing the original article in *Al-Hayat* on 25 Aug 2007.

5. The Honourable Australian PM

by Sonja Karkar

There is something worrying about a Prime Minister of a liberal, democratic country who imposes values on his country's citizens and those who wish to become citizens, yet does not adhere to those values when he regards it politically expedient to ignore them.

The former Prime Minister of Australia John Howard was guilty of such hypocrisy when he accepted the 'honour' of having a forest named after him in the Negev Desert and also the Jerusalem Prize for his support of Israel and its "values". And John Howard is in good company: Sir Robert Menzies and Bob Hawke – both former Australian Prime Ministers – also have forests in Israel named after them, as well as a former governor-general, Sir Zelman Cowen.

The naming of the John Howard forest was arranged by the quasi-private land agency, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), which deliberately discriminates against non-Jews in its allocation of long-lease agreements. This arrangement services Israel's apartheid policies aimed at bringing about the Judaization of all of the land originally known as historic Palestine.

The Israeli government relies on the JNF and international Zionist organizations to bring in Jews from abroad to settle on land forcibly taken from the non-Jewish inhabitants – a practice which is discriminatory and illegal under international law. Together with the state Israel Land Administration (1), the JNF holds approx 94% of the land within present-day Israel.

Since 2003 it has been promoting its 'Blueprint Negev' as "a miracle in the desert". Its aim is "developing new communities" but only Jews will have access to the new developments – in keeping with the JNF's charter, which is focused on the exclusive welfare and land settlement of Jews.

The Negev Desert was and is the home of the indigenous Bedouin Arabs who are now third class citizens of present-day Israel (other Israeli Arabs being second-class citizens and Israeli Jews being first-class in terms of political representation). Some 80,000 have been living in 45 unrecognised villages in the southern Negev Desert. Although they have a right to vote in Israel's national elections and have a duty to pay taxes if they work, they have been consistently marginalised each time the Israeli government approves of planning projects for new Jewish communities.

Bedouin lands have been systematically confiscated and thousands of Bedouin have been forced to live in poor and densely populated shantytowns that are anathema to their traditional life on the land. These shantytowns are totally neglected by the Israeli government and the Bedouins have no access to even basic infrastructure like water, electricity and sewage.

The JNF claims on its website that it works with the Bedouin in the Negev:

“The work of JNF benefits all Israelis. Blueprint Negev looks to bring real change to the lives of the residents of the Negev, including the 160,000 Bedouin, most of who suffer from high unemployment and low levels of education.” (2)

“In coordination with the Abu Basma Regional Council, which represents 80,000 Bedouin, JNF and its partners are seeking funding for projects in infrastructure development and education advancement much needed by this Negev population. The cornerstone is the Abu Basma Regional Council Complex/Medical Centre. The land has already been donated by JNF, which will also provide infrastructure development and landscaping. This centre would become a focal point for centralized services, and a medical clinic would help alleviate the overcrowding at area hospitals as well as create a training ground for new doctors and nurses from the Bedouin community. Proposed additional services include a fire-fighting station and employment-training centre.” (3)

Contrary to JNF claims, medical and welfare services are highly restricted and there is no municipal authority to administer services to the Bedouin. The so-called “Abu Basma Regional Council” referred to above does not represent the Bedouin residents of Abu Basma. The residents have been denied the right to elect representatives to this regional council. Instead, it is administered by a Jewish committee headed by Amram Kalaji, who is associated with the Jewish-Orthodox Shas party (4).

The Bedouins have no access to any authority that might issue permits for building. When out of necessity they do build, they live in constant fear of having their homes destroyed. They are subject to arbitrary land confiscations as a result of JNF-funded activities under the guise of cultivating or foresting the land. They are also deprived of access to flowing water (see Appendix 4).

The condition under which the Bedouin Arabs live is similar to that suffered by black South Africans during the Apartheid era. Like the white South Africans, Jewish Israelis seek to preserve their privileged position in Israel at all costs, to the detriment of non-Jewish citizens. All Israeli policies are geared to ensure the exclusivity and security of the Jewish state. Thus, mass expulsions followed by home demolitions and razing of villages is a familiar story in Israel just as forced removal was the modus operandi in South Africa.

Under Israel’s former PM, Ariel Sharon, a five-year plan was approved by the Israeli cabinet to force the Bedouins living in ‘unrecognised’ villages (5) to leave. There was no consultation, just a gradual increase in house demolitions, the spraying of herbicide on crops to stop land cultivation and the filing of eviction suits. Places were renamed and Jewish towns, villages and cooperatives were built in place of the Bedouin villages. The Bedouins, who once owned over 90% of this land, have had

their land declared state property. They now own less than 3%, and those who refuse to leave their unrecognised villages are deemed to be squatters.

The JNF – which has marketed itself in the last decade as the premier Zionist environmental organization – plans to settle half a million Israelis in the Negev in 25 low density housing communities over ten years. But, what the JNF calls the last great natural reserve of Israel, has been the subject of legal proceedings by Bedouin Arabs wanting to reclaim their land. John Howard’s forest sits right in the middle of this disputed land.

It would have been far more prudent for our former Prime Minister to decline these honours than associate himself with a state that practices racial discrimination and human rights abuses against its own (non-Jewish) citizens. After all, Howard was at great pains to stop the Australian cricket team from playing in Zimbabwe as a protest against Robert Mugabe’s “grubby” regime.

Equally and clearly, the JNF’s activities on behalf of Israel do not measure up to our Australian values of a fair go, tolerance and inclusion. The former PM should bring his values into line with the rest of Australia, instead of associating himself so unreservedly with Israel.

(This chapter is based on an article originally published in *Electronic Intifada* on 21 May 2007.)

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- (1) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel_Land_Administration
 - (2) <http://www.jnf.org/work-we-do/blueprint-negev/>
 - (3) <http://www.jnf.org/work-we-do/blueprint-negev/working-with-bedouin.html>
 - (4) Jonathan Cook, “Bedouins in Israel denied elections”, *The National*, 7 December 2009 (<http://www.jkcook.net/Articles3/0439.htm>)
 - (5) <http://www.theunrecognized.org>

6. Kings Forests in Galilee

by Ben White

“In 1976, the King Forest was launched in memory of the slain civil rights leader, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Then, 39 trees – symbolizing each year of his life – were ceremoniously planted in the southern Galilee. Today that forest boasts thousands of trees.” (1)

In 2007, the Associated Press filed a story reproduced by, amongst others, *Haaretz* (2), reporting that “Israel will name a forest in northern Galilee after Coretta Scott King” (who died in 2006). This was part of a wider campaign to replant “thousands of trees destroyed during last year’s war with Hezbollah”. At least 10,000 trees will be designated as a “living memorial to King’s legacy of peace and justice”, according to US Israeli ambassador Sallai Meridor.

Although it was a small story that merited a few paragraphs of a news agency feed, unpacking this publicity stunt can be instructive in understanding just how successful Zionist propaganda has been in tapping into US culture, appropriating iconic symbols of popular struggle for Israel’s benefit (see Figure 6.1).

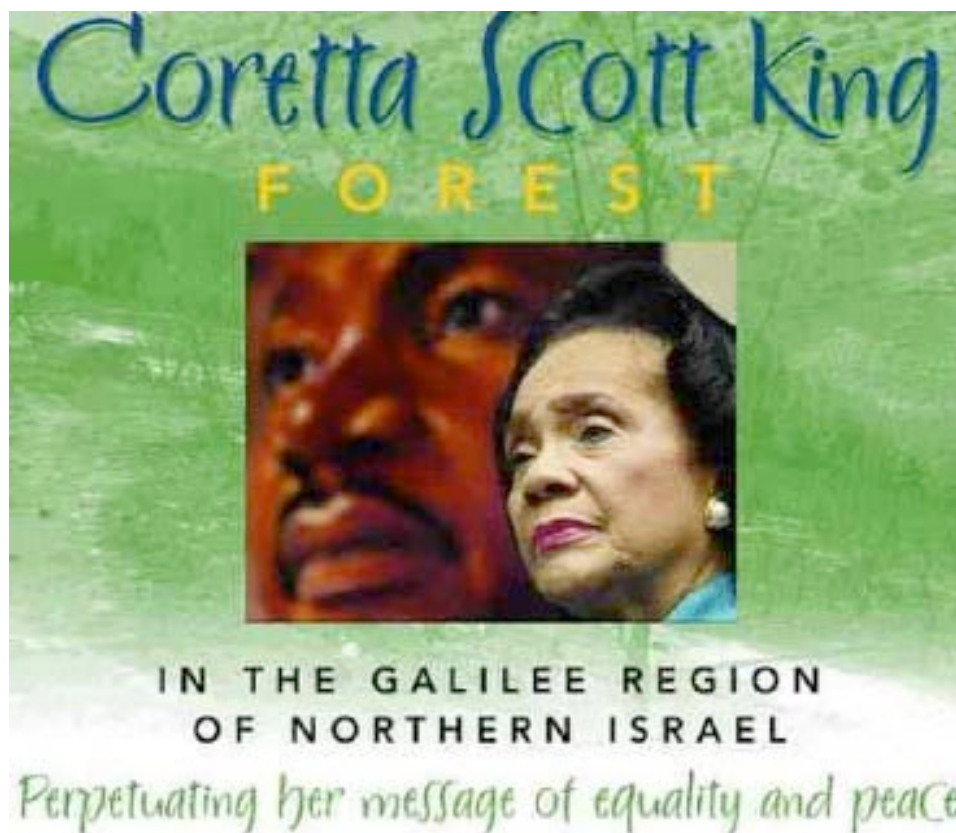


Figure 6.1 – The JNF’s advertisement for the Coretta Scott King Forest

The choice to name the forest after the late wife of Martin Luther King resonates with Americans on three levels, each with specific propaganda value. Firstly, it suggests a shared struggle between African Americans and Jews against persecution, a historical and contemporary reality that is both true and false at the same time. The news of the new Coretta forest was accompanied by a tree planting in Washington DC, attended by two black members of Congress; one, Rep. Alcee Hastings, commented how “Jews and blacks share a common historical bond of persecution and perseverance” (1,2).

In one sense African Americans and Jews have been and are subjected to persecution by state and non-state actors. Yet there is also a level of meaning that is explicitly Zionist – that the modern state of Israel is a besieged haven for worldwide Jewry, at once the saviour and the persecuted. In a complete inversion of reality, the Israeli state is associated with the US civil rights movement in order to appropriate a symbol of the weak’s struggle against the strong: Israel the coloniser becomes Israel the ‘victim’. It is a move that Zionism has attempted before, as Joseph Massad notes:

“Naming the ‘Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel’ as the ‘Declaration of Independence’ is then to be seen as an attempt to recontextualize the new Zionist territorial entity as one established *against* not *via* colonialism.” (3)

This strategy has been given a new lease of life in recent times. Many left-liberals in the UK and elsewhere have been busy propagating the story of an existential battle against ‘Islamofascists’. Lately, this has involved a chaotic attempt to reposition Israel as a bulwark against fascism, imperialism and, of course, ‘jihadi terror’.

Secondly, it is also significant that the symbolic tree-planting took place at a church. Most analysis of Christian Zionist support for Israel in the US has concentrated on the typical image of white evangelical southerners, yet black-majority Protestant churches, often rooted in the Pentecostal tradition, can be more fervently Zionist. Surveys conducted by the Pew Forum have found support amongst African-Americans for views, such as, “Israel fulfils the prophecy of the second coming” to be higher than the average on both a national level, as well as amongst Protestants (4).

The Israeli ambassador to the US, in the officially released report of the tree-planting, said how he was “inspired by the Kings as a young child in Israel”, who “made the world a better place, and we think made all of us better human beings”. The official site of the JNF announces that naming a forest after Coretta Scott King is part of “perpetuating her message of equality and peace” (1,2).

Thirdly, this publicity stunt is custom-made to chime with other aspects of US culture. You can tick the box for the favourite issue of the day, the environment. “By planting trees in Israel”, the JNF reminds us, “you have helped curb global warming”. The Israeli embassy goes one step further, suggesting Israel’s entire history as a state has been to the environmental advantage of mankind:

“Israel’s forestation efforts help the entire region. Far from greening Israel alone, the hundreds of millions of trees planted in Israel over the past century have provided environmental benefits that know no borders.” (5)

The JNF’s work in cultivation, forestation and other ways of “preserving and developing the land of Israel” strikes a chord with the north American mythologized history of the frontier and the Wild West. On their website, the JNF proudly states that its “singular task” has been the “reclaiming of the Land of Israel”. In this respect, Zionists are in the process of repeating the north American colonial project, which previously reclaimed the frontier-land from the native Americans. The JNF describes its role as “supporting Israel’s newest generation of pioneers in developing the Negev Desert, Israel’s last frontier” (6).

Less than a fortnight after the Coretta forest announcement, an illustration of the real nature of the policies the JNF is implementing was reported in *Haaretz* (7). The demolition of a Bedouin village in the Negev left 100 people homeless, an all too common event. The Israel Land Administration (ILA) described the event as the evacuation of “invaders”. Welcome to life on Israel’s new frontier where, as soon as the Arabs are cleansed, the JNF is ready to move in to make the desert bloom once again.

Despite the JNF’s public image, the organisation has played a key role in Israel’s appropriation of lands belonging to Palestinians, both in the major expulsions of 1948, as well as the piecemeal ethnic cleansing that has continued ever since. The official line hints at the truth: the organisation defines its modus operandi as being “to serve as caretaker of the land of Israel, on behalf of its owners – Jewish people everywhere”. Thus the Middle East’s ‘only democracy’ is not, in fact, a state for all its citizens (i.e. native Palestinians), but is ‘owned’ by Jews worldwide, a claim contested by both Jews angry at the presumption, as well as the Palestinians whose land has been stolen.

On the rubble of Palestinian villages, the JNF planted forests; on the remains of village schools, picnic parks sprung up. Maps were redrawn, Arab place names erased, and soon, all that remained were piles of stones, the fragments of structures, and the memories of the exiled. Uri Avnery describes what happened in the years following Israel’s creation:

“[The] new state transferred to the KKL millions of dunams of land expropriated from Arabs – the refugees who were not allowed to return (‘absentees’ in legal language), those who had remained in the country but were absent on a given day from their villages (‘present absentees’), as well as Arabs who became citizens of Israel.” (8)

Avnery notes that the JNF’s statutes “explicitly prohibit the sale or rental of land to non-Jews”, meaning that a Palestinian in Israel “whose forefathers have lived here for hundreds – or even thousands – of years, cannot acquire a house or an apartment on its land”, in contrast to a Jewish New Yorker who decides to emigrate.

Uri Davis also explains the disparity between the JNF's public face, and the reality of their operations:

"[The JNF] projects itself as an environmentally friendly organization concerned with ecology and sustainable development. It plants forests and establishes recreation facilities open to all. Well, it is the case that JNF forests and facilities are open to all, but it is equally the case that that most – almost without exception all – of these forests are planted on the ruins of Palestinian Arab villages ethnically cleansed in the 1948-49 war." (9)

One example of these forests is Biriya in northern Galilee, planted on the ruins of ethnically cleansed Palestinian villages. And it is here, within Biriya Forest, that Israel will pay homage to Coretta Scott King. What better example, not only of the Palestinian Nakbah, but also the extent to which Zionist propagandists will not only deny the ethnic cleansing, but also repackage colonialism as the victory of the colonised.

(This chapter is based on an article originally published in *Electronic Intifada* on 15 May 2007.)

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- (1) http://www.jnf.org/about-jnf/news/press-releases/2007/pr_israeli-forest-to-be-planted.html
 - (2) "Israel to name Galilee forest after Martin Luther King Jr's widow", *Haaretz*, 27 April 2007 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/852791.html>)
 - (3) Joseph Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians*, Routledge: New York, 2006
 - (4) "Many Americans Uneasy with Mix of Religion and Politics", Pew Forum Survey, 24 Aug 2006 (<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=153>)
 - (5) <http://www.israelemb.org/articles/2007/April/2007042600.htm>
 - (6) http://support.jnf.org/site/PageServer?pagename=PR_Article_Cleveland
 - (7) Mijal Grinberg, "30 structures in unrecognized Bedouin village in Negev demolished", *Haaretz*, 8 May 2007
 - (8) Uri Avnery, "Abolish the JNF", *ZNet*, 21 April 2007 (<http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/1535>)
 - (9) Uri Davis, *Apartheid Israel: Possibilities for the Struggle Within*, Zed Books: London, 2004

7. South American Connection

by Rahela Mizrahi

The Jewish National Fund Law and the Covenant between the Government of Israel and the Jewish National Fund (JNF) are central to the Israeli legal apartheid system (1). The JNF offices located in the capitals of Venezuela and Bolivia – like all of the JNF offices around the world – raise funds that are used to further entrench an apartheid system and to erase the signs of Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people and Jews of Arab origin.

This chapter is directed toward the governments of Venezuela and Bolivia, headed by Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, whose avowed aims are to release their own people from colonizing forces. These governments should act in solidarity with the occupied and dispossessed Palestinian people and publicly denounce the crimes of the ongoing Zionist colonial project – e.g. by rejecting the association of their heroes of liberation, such as Simon Bolivar, with JNF-funded activities (see sections 7.2 and 7.3) and closing the JNF offices in their countries.

The Zionist movement is a Jewish European colonial movement that was established at the end of the 19th century by European Jews (Ashkenazi Jews), serving European colonialism and supported by it. In particular, Zionism was initiated and facilitated within the framework of British imperialist and colonialist intentions toward Palestine and other Arab countries. Since the middle of the previous century the Zionist movement has committed crimes against humanity that have affected two communities – firstly, the people of Palestine and, secondly, the Jewish communities from various Arab countries (see below).

7.1 The crimes against both the Palestinian and the Arab-Jewish peoples

The first crime is the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, the beginnings of which are marked by the expulsion of close to 800,000 of the indigenous people of Palestine from their 13 cities and more than 500 of their villages in 1948 (a historical event known as the Nakbah or Catastrophe). This was accompanied by the organised massacre of over 30 Palestinian communities and the demolition of most of their villages (2).

The state of Israel, which the Zionist movement established in the ethnically cleansed territory of Palestine, subsequently persecuted and killed refugees in order to prevent them from returning to their land. In 1967, Israel occupied the remaining Palestinian lands in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as the Syrian Golan heights. This was accompanied by the demolition of an additional 19 Palestinian villages, 170 Syrian villages, and one Syrian town, and the expulsion of the Palestinian and Syrian inhabitants.

These crimes have continued to unfold for at least 60 years. Today, Israel continues to steal lands from the Palestinian people who remain, to demolish their houses, persecute the refugees in the refugee camps in Gaza and Lebanon, and to simultaneously deny the crime of ethnic cleansing. These crimes are committed in full view of the US and European governments and, in many cases, with their support.

The second crime is the destruction of ancient Jewish civilisations all over the Arab and Muslim world (e.g. the Jewish civilisations of Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Lebanon and north Africa). This involved transferring these communities to Palestine by means of terror (3) and by the exploitation of their deeply rooted religious relationship with Palestine or the ancient 'Land of Israel' (4,5). The transfer of the Arab-Jewish communities was accompanied by the looting of their property in their former homelands. This crime was committed under the aegis of the British Empire.

The oppression and exploitation of Arab Jews continues today in Israel. After the expulsion of the Palestinians from their villages in 1948, many of the immigrant Arab-Jewish communities settled upon the ruins of the Palestinian villages. The Israeli state continues today in expelling Arab-Jewish residents from their homes in the former Palestinian villages. The evictions of Arab Jews from Moshav Tohelet (Asaferiya as it was called in Arabic) in 1976, Yamin Moshe in 1968 and the Mamilla neighborhood of Jerusalem in 1988 are well documented.

Recent cases include the expulsion of Arab-Jewish communities from the villages of Kfar Shalem (Salameh) in 2008 and Kfar Gvirol (Al Qubeiba) in 2009 (6,7).

Furthermore the Israeli state blocks access of Arab Jews to institutions of higher education. Hence, Arab Jews in Israel have been pushed into unemployment, poverty, crime and drugs. The state systematically implements policies to eradicate their Jewish cultures because they also embody Arab cultures (8) and are deeply rooted in Islam (9).

7.2 The role of the Jewish National Fund

The JNF was established in 1901 by the 5th Zionist Congress in Basel. It was registered in Britain under English law as a company under the name Jewish National Fund Ltd in 1907, and in Israel by power of the Jewish National Fund Law, in 1953. Prior to the declaration of the establishment of the state of Israel, the JNF had already succeeded in purchasing approximately 7% of the land in the British Mandate of Palestine.

The Jewish National Fund Law of 1953 and the Covenant between the Government of Israel and the JNF of 1961 are central to the Israeli 'legal' system of apartheid. Together they define 93% of the entire territory that Israel acquired in 1948 as 'national lands'. These lands are legally designated for the exclusive use of those persons defined under the laws of the Israeli state as Jews.

The JNF has been instrumental in covering up the ruins of many, if not most, of the Palestinian localities that were ethnically cleansed by the Israeli army in 1948. It accomplishes this task by planting forests and developing recreational facilities on the lands that were cleansed, and over the remains of the historical villages (1).

After the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian villages in 1948, the Zionist movement housed the transferred Arab Jews in these villages. The JNF employed the Arab-Jewish immigrants in the planting of pine forests over the ruins of Palestinian villages. Pine trees, planted in the millions, became a predominant flora, forcing out the indigenous flora and likewise serving to veil the crimes of expulsion and expropriation committed there. These crimes continue to this day.

A prime example of the double crime being committed is Eshta'ol Forest. Most of this forest occupies the lands of the two villages of Işlin, where 280 Palestinians used to live, and Ishwa, where 680 lived. The inhabitants of these lands were expelled by arms by the Har'el Brigade of the Plamah, which departed from Kibbutz Zora'a in the framework of the Dani operation on the morning of 18 July 1948. The Eshta'ol forest also occupies the lands of two other villages – Beit Mahsir, where 2620 inhabitants were expelled on 11 May 1948, and Beit Susin, where 230 inhabitants were expelled on 20 April 1948 (2).

Moshav Eshta'ol, built on the ruins of the Ishwa village, is a village of immigrants from Yemen, who were transferred to Palestine directly after the 1948 cleansing. In the transfer camp in San'a, Yemen's capital, the Zionist Agency looted more than 50 tons of their ancient sacred books and manuscripts (10) and several tons of the products of their craft as goldsmiths (11), a craft in which this community specialized. In the transfer camp, children were kidnapped and delivered for adoption (12), a colonial practice similar to the way in which British missionaries kidnapped the children of aboriginal Australians.

In Moshav Eshta'ol, the community has restored a part of its life as it was in Yemen. The return of the Palestinian refugees to their land would not necessarily mean another dispossession of the Yemeni community. On the contrary, it may open an opportunity to establish neighbourhood relationships that may heal the wrong that was done to both the Palestinian refugees and the Arab Jews by the Zionist movement. Indeed, it may strengthen the culture of the Yemeni Jewish community, which were always nurtured in relation to the Arab and Muslim civilizations in their country of origin. It might also serve to strengthen their Arab dialect of Hebrew, which the Israeli Ashkenazi cultural establishment attempts to marginalise.

7.3 The appropriation of south American symbols of liberation by the JNF

In Eshta'ol Forest, there stand three courts, which are signposted as in Figure 7.1 (next page). The first one of these courts is in the memory of the liberator of south America from the European colonialism in the 19th century, Simon Bolívar; it stands on the land of the village Ishwa. The other two courts are in memory of another liberator of south America from the same period, the Venezuelan General José de

San Martin; they stand on the land of Beit Mahsir. A number of other sites are reportedly named after the country of Venezuela (13).



Figure 7.1 – Signpost for the Bolivar & San Martin courts in Eshta'ol Forest

We call on to the two governments who liberated Venezuela and Bolivia in our time – countries which themselves suffered under violent European colonial occupations, involving the seizure of land and the extermination of civilizations, cultures and populations, and until recently, suffered under US neo-colonialism that trampled their peoples and looted their resources. These terrible regimes, serving US interests, were succeeded recently by governments established to serve their own peoples.

This is an appeal to refuse complicity in the Zionist double crime and its cover-up. This is a call to Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales to refuse complicity in the colonialism that is taking place in Palestine – they must close the JNF offices in the Venezuelan and Bolivian capitals and demand the removal of the names of their countries and their heroes of liberation from the colonial projects funded by the JNF.

We call for an act of solidarity toward the occupied and dispossessed Palestinian people, as well as the Arab Jews who were transferred. This solidarity will feed our hope for the replacement of the Zionist regime by a regime that will provide the indigenous Palestinian inhabitants their rights to their land. This is an appeal to feed the hope of the marginalized inhabitants of the region who lived together for thousands of years, so that we may live again in peace and dignity.

(This chapter is based on articles originally published by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network on 22 July 2009 and the *Electronic Intifada* on 13 August 2009.)

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 - (2) Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oneworld: Oxford, 2006, p135
 - (3) Yehuda Shenhav, "The Perfect Robbery", Ha-Keshet, 16 April 1998 [in Hebrew] (http://www.ha-keshet.org.il/articles/lands/perfect_yehuda-shenhav.htm)
 - (4) Film: *Cut* by Nizar Hassan (director), Israel/Palestine, 2000 (<http://www.nfct.org.il/siteFiles/1/193/4312.asp>)
 - (5) Film: *The Pioneers* by Sigalit Banai (director), Israel, 2008 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0LM-AqOvLY>)
 - (6) "Housing Demo in Kfar Shalem (Salameh)", Occupied (Yuditilany Blogspot), 30 Aug 2009 (<http://yuditilany.blogspot.com/2009/08/housing-demo-in-kfar-shalem-salameh.html>)
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 - (8) Shimon Ballas (interview), *Al Karmel* (Palestinian periodical), Issue 60, Summer 1999, pp211-233 ("I am an Arab-Jew", p214)
 - (9) Rabbi Haim Ovadia, "The Bridge with Islam", *The American Muslim*, 9 Jan 2008 ("I am a Jew of Islam")
 - (10) Amos Nevo, "That's how they robbed the immigrants", *Afikim* (Israeli periodical), September 1991, pp14-16
 - (11) Smadar Lavie, "Cultural property rights and the construction of the Mizrahi race as a commercial symbol", in: *Rainbow of opinions: Mizrahi agenda for the Israeli society* by Yone, Na'aman and Mahleb (eds), Jerusalem: November Books, 2007, pp. 198-204
 - (12) Shoshana Madmoni, "The Missing Yemenite Children: Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction", *The News From Within*, February 1996
 - (13) Note: Other sites are reportedly named after the country of Venezuela, although the author has not verified the following claims: Venezuela is named on a commemorative wall near the offices of the JNF in Golani Junction (in the Upper Galilee); there is the Venezuela Park in Hanita Forest in Upper Galilee; a forest on the Tura'an Mountain in Lower Galilee is named after Venezuela; a commemorative sign under the name of Venezuela was a recent addition to the national forest surrounding Moshav Yishi.

8. Closing Remarks

by Bob Williamson and John Goss

The phone call came at 10.45am. Just as we were preparing to head out to execute a hastily developed plan to break in and disrupt the Jewish National Funds annual conference, where war criminal Tzipi Livni was due to speak, the voice on the other end changed our plans and made everything a lot easier. “Mr X?” “Yes?” “I’m ringing from the JNF, did you not receive your invitation to attend today’s conference?” There had been a computer error – neither of us had been told until now that our application for tickets had been successful. No need to break in; we were already on the guest list.

Arriving at the Hendon Hall Hotel in north London at around 1.30pm, we passed a small army of private security guards and police and found ourselves in the plush confines of the hotel’s conference facility just as lunch was finishing.

Hearts racing, we surveyed the scene: this was Zionism’s heartland. Surrounding us were die-hard supporters of the idea of a racially exclusive Jewish state wiping historic Palestine off the map, funders of an organisation established to acquire and administer land for Jewish use only. This was a central hub of the worldwide machine driving the dispossession, suffering and pain we had both seen in occupied Palestine.

Who are these people? Where do they come from? Why are they all so old? They can’t have been much under 60 on average, maybe older even. Where are the young Zionists, Israel’s next generation of defenders? Perhaps they are elsewhere, affiliated with other organizations. Or maybe, hopefully, younger Jews are simply more turned off by Zionism than their parents, unable to reconcile their liberal values with continued support for Israel and its behaviour.

Free orange juice in hand, Jaffa branded no doubt, we walked through the smallish conference room, slightly cramped with an abundance of wide screen televisions and sound equipment amongst the 130 or so seats. Trying to get as close to the front as possible, we ended up parked between a group of pensioners discussing their latest visit to a Kibbutz near Haifa and another group discussing the phenomenon of the ‘self-hating’ Jew.

Studying the programme that had been included in our delegates pack (1-6), it became evident that Livni would speak later in the day. The event was running behind schedule and we first had to listen to Moshe Berniker, a leader from a Negev community supported by the JNF, Avraham Duvdevani, fervent Zionist leader and head of KKL-JNF (7,8), the chief rabbi Jonathan Sacks, a JNF video and the Israeli Ambassador to the UK Ron Prosor, as well as a panel of ‘experts’ for a question and answer session. Their mission: to sell the Israeli government and JNF’s vision of bringing an extra 300,000 Jews to the Negev desert by 2020.

First up was Moshe Berniker, a tall, gurning lump of a man, who seemed uncomfortable in his pressed suit, more at home out in the fields than in an up-market London hotel. He told the history of his home community of Halulzit in the northwest Negev, started by former Gush Katif settlers after Israel withdrew its civilian population from the Gaza strip in 2005. Some of the residents had also been former settlers in Yamit (9), and much talk was of the “outrage” of them having already been forced to “start from scratch” three times following various withdrawals from territories illegally seized by Israel. Of course nothing was mentioned of the legal status of Gush Katif or Yamit. He talked with a messianic zeal about the land, about how the settlers viewed where they live as their “mission”, and how the JNF had helped them settle and “reclaim” the land.

Avraham Duvdevani, affectionately introduced by the chair as ‘Duvdud’, carried on the theme. ‘Duvdud’ spoke mainly in long-winded metaphors, arguing that the settlers are the unsung heroes of the state of Israel and that Israel could not exist without them. He, like Moshe, referred to the Negev communities as “settlers”, in “settlements” – these were Israeli citizens, living within the green line, being referred to as “settlers”. It seemed odd at first; that word is supposed to describe another people entirely – the Israeli population living in the occupied territories. But that really is the heart of Zionism, a movement that cares not for green, blue or purple lines, that defines its citizens not by their legal status but by how far they are pushing the boundaries of the state’s existence. For Israel is not a regular western style nation-state of its citizens. It is rather a movement, a fluctuating entity driven by a simple, never-ending desire for greater expansion and greater racial exclusivity, and whether its settlers are displacing Palestinians in the West Bank or Bedouin in the Negev, it doesn’t matter; all that matters are that they are ensuring Jewish hegemony in a larger and larger area. And ‘Duvdud’ is absolutely correct in his assertion that without these people out there at the extremities, keeping alive the myth of the brave pioneer who redeems the barren land, the whole thing would collapse like a house of cards.

For Israel needs to propagate certain myths in order to maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of the world, as any racially exclusive state would. The myth of the ‘virgin land’ encountered by the early Zionists is essential in suppressing knowledge of the injustices ravaged upon the indigenous communities in the course of the state’s creation, expansion and maintenance. In order to keep the myth alive you also need to mythologize the ‘brave settler’ who heads out to ‘reclaim’ the land. If you are successful in mythologizing the settlers of old, people are going to want to do the same in the modern era, especially as historic Palestine has yet to be completely colonised. If they are not doing so the myth has failed. No settlers, no myth, no Israel: whether they are settling inside the green line or out, Israel could indeed not survive for long without these people.

One of the main themes of the conference during the afternoon was the question of fresh water, specifically for developing settlements in the Negev. A four-way panel convened, comprising of ‘Duvdud’, Samuel Hayak, Alon Tal and an unidentified Israeli water official, to field questions on this and other issues. Some interesting points arose; Israeli desalination technology will apparently be providing over half of the country’s fresh water in 2010, and it was alleged that Israel apparently sells

desalination technology to Arab states using front companies – which would be in violation of the Arab league boycott of Israel.

One person asked about the possibilities of conflict with Syria and Jordan over fresh water, and the availability of fresh water in the West Bank. This was the only question where the chair limited the response time to a minute, and the answer was in fact cut short before the panellist could address the question of Syria and Jordan. Regarding the West Bank, it was stated that since Hamas took over (?), negotiations over water arrangements had halted and this needed to be resolved. No mention was made of the fresh water that Israel takes from the West Bank; indeed the panellist claimed that the overwhelming majority of Israel's non-desalinated water comes from the Sea of Galilee, ignoring the West Bank's massive underground aquifer. Nor was any mention made of the sewage that is pumped from Israel into the West Bank, although it was stated that sewage in the occupied territories was seeping into the soil and polluting Israeli water supplies.

The only other 'difficult' question was on the subject of the impact of the Negev development on the Bedouin population. In fairness, the chair didn't have to read that question out (it was submitted by a member before the event), but the response was an echo from the past, straight from the colonialist's handbook. When Alon Tal answered that the "Bedouins would benefit greatly from Israel's development of this barren desert" you could hear the French in Algeria, Boers in South Africa, indeed Israelis in the 1970s talking about the newly occupied West Bank. Of course no mention was made of how just two months ago hundreds of Bedouin marched in el-Malichi el-Arakib under the banner of 'Israel and the JNF – land robbers', nor how decades of Israel's 'urbanisation' policy, land theft and denial of building rights has decimated the Bedouins' traditional lifestyle and how 300,000 Israeli Jews brought to 'develop the area' will deal a death blow to the community. Just 'the natives will benefit from the development we will bring', and the matter's closed.

Next to speak was the chief rabbi. In a disconcertingly low baritone he suggested that the withdrawal from Gaza was one the most traumatic events in Israel's recent past, but that it had been carried out with "typical moral courage and fortitude", neglecting of course to mention how much moral courage is required to establish an asphyxiating blockade of the Strip in the wake of the withdrawal and then launch an illegal and bloody three-week attack on its civilian population a few years later. The majority of his speech was taken up with bland, generalised praise for Israel – the most inventive and vibrant place in the world that god had chosen as his children's promised land, shown by the fact that they would require miracles to live off its barren and rugged terrain. Here again was Israel the myth. Not the place, not the country, not the state, but the idea – an entity that embeds itself in the spiritual identity of its supporters. The plucky settler, the land redeemed, a nation reborn, gods prophesy fulfilled; the all-encompassing mythology of Zionism blinds its adherents to the destruction it ravages on the indigenous population of lands under its control.

After a slick JNF promotion video, we found out that Livni would be speaking to the conference via video link. Disappointed at not having the chance to shout at the grade-A war criminal, we settled for the next speaker, Israeli ambassador Ron

Prosor. About 30 seconds into his talk, it was time for our closing remarks. One of us jumped up and addressed him as an “apologist for war crimes” and an “accomplice to ethnic cleansing”, calling the crowd a bunch of racists and generally heckling for about 20 seconds before being dragged out by security chanting “Free, Free Palestine”. The other, sensing that he had been rumbled, immediately did the same, getting punched and kicked by a member of the progressively more irate crowd as he was being dragged out by security. The cops took our details but thankfully neither of us was arrested.

(This chapter is based on an article originally published at UK *IndyMedia* on 15 Dec 2009.)

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- (1) http://www.4shared.com/file/173492295/6617d493/arad_foundation.html
 - (2) http://www.4shared.com/file/173492416/334a7393/jnf_education_-_water_module.html
 - (3) http://www.4shared.com/file/173492454/b928d7bb/jnf_newsletter.html
 - (4) http://www.4shared.com/file/173492470/8c737120/kkl_newsletter.html
 - (5) <http://www.4shared.com/file/173492472/627d100c/programme.html>
 - (6) http://www.4shared.com/file/173492476/6510d415/speaker_bios.html
 - (7) http://www.kkl.org.il/kkl/kklmain_blue_eng.aspx
 - (8) Note: The KKL is the Hebrew abbreviation of the JNF; the KKL is registered in the UK as KKL Charity Accounts (Charity Commission registration no 1105998) and based in JNF House in Middlesex; it raises money for KKL-JNF projects in Israel through wills, donations and gift aid.
 - (9) Note: Yamit was an Israeli settlement in the Sinai before Israel withdrew from the occupied Sinai in exchange for a peace treaty with Egypt in 1978.

About the Authors and Editor

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Appendix 1

Ruby Wax in Controversial Fundraiser / Threat of Legal Action by the JNF

Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (SPSC)

What happened:

1. Scottish PSC accused the JNF of funding ethnic cleansing of Palestinians (on the occasion of a JNF fundraiser in Glasgow attended by Ruby Wax).
2. Solicitors for JNF threatened Scottish PSC with legal action for defamation etc and denied any role in ethnic cleansing.
3. Scottish PSC wrote to the JNF welcoming legal action in order to expose JNF support for ethnic cleansing in front of a British jury.
4. JNF quietly retreated from its threats and abandoned its preparations to sue SPSC for damages and costs, despite SPSC's contention that such silence would be taken as evidence that the JNF is guilty of "racist activities and the ongoing programme of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians".

1. PRESS STATEMENT BY SPSC

24 March 2004

Ruby Wax Supports Racist Organisation

Ruby Wax will be attending the Jewish National Fund dinner this coming Sunday evening (March 28th) at the Glasgow Hilton. The Jewish National Fund (JNF) is an extremist racist organisation which promotes the 'ethnic cleansing' of Palestinians from their land. The Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign with other human rights campaigns is calling for a huge demonstration at the Glasgow Hilton.

The JNF has frequently broken the law by dispossessing peasant cultivators from their customary lands. Most of the lands acquired by the JNF since 1948 are lands which belonged to the refugees forced to flee in 1948 or lands expropriated by the government from Arab citizens. *Once acquired by the JNF, land becomes an inalienable part of the Jewish national heritage – that is, it may not be sold or leased to non-Jews.*

The JNF has the right of first refusal when any public lands not owned by it outright are sold or transferred. The JNF has exclusive responsibility for land development. *Non-Jews, regardless of their citizenship status, are not eligible for JNF services. This means they cannot lease or sublease JNF-owned lands and cannot work as hired labourers on these lands.*

The JNF supports the occupation and helps to finance the illegal settlements in the territories. Since 1978 most JNF activities have been involved in acquiring and developing land for Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. The JNF has collaborated with the Israeli authorities in *expropriating Palestinian lands, razing cultivated fields and bulldozing orchards, and denying equal access to water sources.*

In December of 1998, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, under the aegis of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, issued a scathing

report on Israel's violations of its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in both Israel and the territories it still occupies.

The magnitude and extent of this discrimination is further underlined by Israeli practices with regard to land ownership as evidenced in the activities of the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency. Although these organizations are chartered under private law, the Government of Israel works collaboratively with them, facilitating their activities and often exercising a decisive influence on their policies. As stated in the UN report:

"The Committee notes with grave concern that the Status Law of 1952 authorizes the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency and its subsidiaries, including the Jewish National Fund, to control most of the land in Israel, since these institutions are chartered to benefit Jews exclusively."

The activities of these groups with regard to the land are particularly troubling. The Committee noted that:

"Large-scale and systematic confiscation of Palestinian land and property by the State and the transfer of that property to these agencies constitute an institutionalized form of discrimination because these agencies by definition would deny the use of these properties to non-Jews. Thus, these practices constitute a breach of Israel's obligations under the Covenant."

For further information please contact Mick Napier:
Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
c/o Peace and Justice Centre, Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4BJ
Tel: 0795 800 2591 / 0131 620 0052
Email: secretary@scottishpsc.org.uk
www.scottishpsc.org.uk

2. THREAT OF LEGAL ACTION FROM JNF

24 March 2004

Dear Sirs,

We act for the Jewish National Fund (JNF), a charitable organisation.

Today, 24 March 2004, we have been referred to an article on the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign Website set up or caused to be set up by you on the World Wide Web system. On the Internet address <http://scottishpsc.org.uk> you published the following words defamatory of our client:

- "Ruby Wax to support ethnic cleansing in Glasgow."
- "The Jewish National Fund (JNF) raises funds for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians."
- "The JNF is a quasi-official organisation of the Israeli state that exists to raise funds for the acquisition and development of land for Jewish settlement. As such, it provides one of the main mechanisms through which Israel's system of ethnic segregation and discrimination is enforced."

These words meant and would have been understood to mean that our client supports the unlawful expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from their homelands. This slur is particularly

damaging because of the inference that our client is abusing its charitable status. The allegation and the imputation and/or inference are each entirely false.

Our client has never raised funds or used their funds for the purposes of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians or indeed of any ethnic group.

Your publication of these allegations on the Internet on a Website which is readily accessible to users of the system constitutes a very serious libel and has caused our client very serious embarrassment. The extent of the damage caused to our client's reputation is evidenced by the fact that in the course of 2 hours your Website has been accessed over 100 times as recorded on the Websites' front page.

In the circumstances our client requires you to remove the Website or at least the words referred to above and any similar words or phrases. Also our client requires as a matter of urgency a full and unequivocal retraction and an apology in terms to be approved by us together with an undertaking not to repeat these allegations. Our client is also entitled to substantial damages upon which we invite your proposals. In addition, our client will also require payment by you of all legal costs it has incurred in this matter.

We look forward to hearing from you without delay. If we do not receive a constructive response to this letter by 12 noon on 25 March 2004 our instructions are to issue proceedings for damages, costs and to apply for injunctive relief. In that eventuality, we would be obliged if you could indicate to us as quickly as possible the name and address of a solicitor who can accept service of proceedings on your behalf.

In the meantime our client reserves all of its rights.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIPPSOHN CRAWFORDS BERWALD
Samantha Thomas

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3. REPLY FROM SPSC TO JNF

25 March 2004

We have received a letter from your lawyers threatening to sue us and demanding damages and apology from the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign on the grounds that we have stated publicly that "the Jewish National Fund (JNF) raises funds for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians".

As you know, every word we have written is true and we look forward to meeting representatives of your racist organisation in front of a British jury. We will produce witnesses to verify that they personally have been, and remain to this day, the victims of ethnic cleansing by the Israelis, which is supported by the Jewish National Fund. They will testify that this ethnic cleansing has gone on for over 56 years and continues to this day.

Hell will freeze over before we part with one penny to your Fund, which would only go towards the further violation of the human rights of Palestinians.

Your demand for damages is an impertinence – your organisers deserve to be in prison for the human rights violations they have encouraged and supported.

We stand by our statement and many similar statements and will continue, with many others committed to opposing Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people, to publicise the evidence of your involvement in the world's longest-running, unfinished programme of ethnic cleansing.

The pathetic nature of your 'case' is made clear by your sleight of hand, namely, that we implied that the JNF "supports the unlawful expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from their homelands." Far from being unlawful, your atrocious violations of Palestinian human rights are perfectly legal in the racist state of Israel.

We are a campaign for the human rights of all; our supporters, Muslim, Christian, Jewish and many of no religious persuasion, are determined to see the end of a fund which violates in Israel/Palestine every generally accepted norm of human rights with the assistance of generous subsidies from Gordon Brown and the British taxpayer.

The JNF is the only group of organised racists we have corresponded with and it is not a pleasant experience. Please do not write back except to inform us of the date of the first court appearance.

Any decision on your part not to proceed with your threats of legal action will be taken as an admission that you are indeed, as we claim and insist, involved in racist activities and the ongoing programme of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

Mick Napier, Chair, Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
Caroline Greaney, Secretary, Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
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Appendix 2

Letter to Gordon Brown PM

Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP)

Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AA

9 August 2007

Dear Prime Minister

RE: Being a patron of JNF-UK

The recent report in the Jewish Chronicle (27 July 2007) that you “are delighted to become a patron of JNF-UK” on invitation from its president Gail Seal, is disturbing. Ms Seal says she is “very proud” you have agreed to be a patron as it “will enhance what is already a close relationship with the Jewish community and help us progress in our tremendously successful campaign to bring new communities to the Negev”. JNF UK’s activities, both in its ‘charitable’ form of fighting poverty, and in its land acquisition, is for Jewish citizens of Israel, and not for its Arab-Israeli citizens and will not, as you say “encourage their work to promote charitable projects for everyone who lives in Israel”.

Your patronage comes at an unfortunate time when, despite a ruling in 2004 by the Israeli Supreme Court, in the Qa’adan case, that it was illegal for the Israeli Lands Authority to refuse to sell or lease land to an Arab, and the Attorney General held that this ruling also applied to the JNF, the Israeli Knesset last week passed the first stage of the Jewish National Fund law which reverses the Court’s ruling and allows the JNF to continue selling and leasing land only to Jews.

To quote Adalah (The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights) regarding land ownership and the JNF:

“On 18 July 2007, the Israeli Knesset approved on preliminary reading a racist bill that prohibits the sale of lands registered in the name of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to Arab citizens of the state. According to the legislature’s logic, the JNF acquired these lands using Jewish money for the sake of Jews only. Firstly, this is untrue as the State of Israel transferred approximately two million dunams of land – seized and confiscated from Arab “absentee” owners – to the JNF in 1949 and 1953, via arbitrary laws. Secondly, the Knesset’s attempt to enact the JNF’s policy into law does not absolve Israel from its obligations under international law to refrain from legislating racist laws or including discriminatory bodies in official decision-making institutions. Israeli law allows the JNF to hold decision-making positions in the Israel Land Administration, for example. Significantly, two months ago the UN rejected the JNF’s application for consultative status on the ground that the JNF violates the principles of the UN Charter regarding human rights. Today, the JNF controls 13% of the land in the state, which allows for the establishment of Jewish-only towns. This new bill, alongside the racist Citizenship Law that forbids the unification of Arab families in Israel, are primarily and directly targeted against the native inhabitants of the country. They aim to preclude the development of the native inhabitants and to enable Israel to maintain control and ethnic supremacy for Jews in the fields of

natural resources and entry into the state. Thus both possess the basic characteristics of colonial laws. " (<http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/jul07/1.php>)

The planting of pine trees "to make the desert bloom" among the key operations of both the KKL-JNF and JNF UK is done in fact on parks planted over the ruins of destroyed Palestinian towns and villages. The new communities being created in the Negev, funds for which are being supplied by JNF UK, are for Jewish immigrants only. At present, as part of an on-going campaign to dispossess the Bedouin of the Negev (and also in the "Judaisation" drive in the Galilee and Jordan valley), brutal destruction of their "unrecognised" villages are being carried out. These villages are denied services and social and educational support, and even in 'recognised' towns, land supplies are limited, so that the inhabitants are repeatedly made homeless on land they had existed on long before the foundation of the Jewish State. These actions are carried out by the Israel Land Administration, sometimes even against decisions by the High Court after being petitioned by Bedouin land-owners, that demolitions should not go ahead.

Please refer to this link for graphic evidence of these demolitions:

http://www.assoc40.org/nenglish/main.php?news_id=126&start=0&category_id=&parent_id=&arcyear=&arcmonth=

We are Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP), an organisation that considers the importance of professional ethics of architects and planners in Israel and their compliance with the International Union of Architects Code of Conduct. They design the new settlements and towns being funded by the JNF and JNF UK, set up for only one privileged section of society on the basis of race and religion, and perpetuate the continual injustice of the living conditions for the Arab-Israelis and the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Architects and planners in Israel will be designing these new towns and housing areas in the Negev and Galilee, which include the ethnic cleansing of Bedouin "unrecognised villages".

We wish to express our concern and hope for international pressure to reverse this unjust situation. Your becoming a patron of JNF-UK can be seen as tacit acceptance of an unacceptable status quo, and also places you in the position of not being an unbiased mediator in the peace process.

We ask you to kindly withdraw this patronage and in fact use the UK's position as a key member of the EU in Quartet to hold Israel to account in its activities that perpetuate not only the Occupation, but treats a large minority of its citizens in a way that no truly democratic state would accept. We recommend your patronage instead of some of the NGOs that bring Israelis and Palestinians together like ICAHD-UK (Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions), which is resisting the demolition of Palestinian house in occupied and illegally annexed Jerusalem. We would appreciate your response to this letter.

Yours sincerely

Abe Hayeem, Chair APJP, RIBA

Haifa Hammami, Secretary APJP, RIBA

Hans Haenlein, RIBA

Eyal Weizman, Director, Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths College

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Kelvin Bland, RIBA

Martin O'Shea, RIBA

John Lynes, CPT Hebron

Steven Rose

Hilary Wise

Mike Moran
Zahira Nazer
John Hodge, RIBA
Mustafa Chaudhary, RIBA

Cc:

David Milliband, Secretary of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Lord Malloch Brown, Minister for Africa, Asia and the UN

M. Davies
Direct Communications Unit
10 Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AA

21 October 2007

Dear Ms Davies

RE: The Prime Minister's patronage of JNF-UK

Thanks for your acknowledgment of 22 August to my letter of 9 August regarding the Prime Minister's patronage of JNF-UK. You say its contents were noted, hopefully by the Prime Minister himself.

We were expecting to hear some more about what the PM was going to do about this serious matter, which, as can be seen from the latest report in the Jewish Chronicle (enclosed), has been raised by other individuals and organisations. The answer to this request, if the reports are accurate, is that there is "no question" that Mr Brown would stop being a patron of the fund, and that "the Prime Minister supports a number of charities, but does not necessarily support every policy or decision they make. He agreed to become a patron of JNF-UK in order to encourage their work to promote charitable projects for *everyone* [my italics] who lives in Israel".

The Prime Minister's adamant stance is disconcerting, since it appears that he has not taken note of the evidence in APJP's letter that shows the controversial aspect of JNF-UK that he would seem to be encouraging. Although he may wish to support the charities of different communities, surely any elements of those charities that involve the result of ethnic cleansing, and a racist approach that benefits only Jewish residents of the State of Israel, and not everyone, should be a cause for concern?

Since Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP), an organisation that considers the importance of professional ethics of architects and planners in Israel, we would draw the Prime Minister's attention to the EU's Association Agreement with Israel that appears to be breached by the JNF's and the State's policies of forced removals, land expropriation and war crimes that were committed in taking over the land of destroyed Palestinian villages since 1947, and a housing policy that discriminates against non-Jewish citizens of Israel.

In line with the new generation of Association Agreements between the EU and its Mediterranean partners, the preamble and Article 2 emphasise the importance of the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly observance of human rights, democratic principles and economic freedom ... whose principles guide the internal and international policy of both Israel and the Community and constitutes an essential and positive element of

the Agreement. At Israel's request, there is a Joint Declaration on the importance both parties attach to the struggle against xenophobia, anti-Semitism and racism.

The Prime Minister's insistence (and those of other party leaders) to be patrons of JNF-UK and organisations like Labour Friends of Israel, which may be based on a traditional support of an Israel viewed as a plucky little state in 1948, must now be re-assessed in view of Israel's continual breaches of human rights and international law that is well documented, and as such a breach of the Association Agreements. Such support can be seen as complicity in unacceptable activities of one side in this conflict, supporting terrible sanctions, collective punishment and humanitarian disaster inflicted on the Palestinians by Israel. It is indicative of the total lack of progress in the peace process due to inaction by the UK and western powers in the last forty years that has led to the resistance and acts of terror in response by Palestinians to state brutality and use of force, and exponential illegal settlement expansion. This land theft is ongoing, and the JNF is part of its process.

We again ask the Prime Minister to reconsider and kindly withdraw this patronage and instead show an unbiased and truly ethical approach in the UK's position as a key member of the EU in the Quartet, to hold Israel to account in its activities that perpetuate not only the Occupation, the destruction and negation of a viable Palestinian state, but endangers world peace.

Yours sincerely

Abe Hayeem
Chair, Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine

Appendix 3

Complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority (UK)

Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP)

October 2007

The text of the fundraising ad campaign by JNF-UK for projects under the title of “Negev Challenge” breaches the following Committee of Advertising Practice codes:

- Code 2.1 (“All Marketing communications should be legal, decent, honest and truthful.”)
- Code 2.2 (“All marketing communications should be prepared with a sense of responsibility to consumers and society.”)
- Code 3.4 (Substantiation – “affecting the accuracy or perception of the marketing communication in any material way.”)
- Code 5.1 (“Marketing communications should contain nothing that is likely to cause serious and widespread offence ... and will be judged on the context, medium, audience, product and prevailing standards of decency.”)
- Code 6.1 (“Marketers should not exploit the credulity, lack of knowledge or inexperience of consumers.”)

The main theme of the ad is that the JNF “Since 1901 has helped build a country out of nothing”. This is to perpetuate the myth of “a land for a people for a people without a land” and that Palestine was mostly uninhabited. Palestinians existed in town, cities and villages right across the country, which contained a rich variety of agriculture. The JNF only owned 7% of the land before 1948. The JNF was responsible for taking over much of the land on over 400 destroyed and ethnically cleansed Arab villages and also for planting pine forests where once existed a rich variety of agriculture.

The Negev desert, pictured in the ad, contained thousands of Bedouin who are now being ethnically cleansed, their ‘unrecognised’ villages destroyed. See:

http://dukium.org/modules/coppermine/albums/userpics/pdf_files/CERD_ENG_web.pdf

It is with this backdrop that the new Jewish-only settlements will be built. The JNF can only lease land to Jews, and recently the Knesset brought in a bill to confirm this, even though the Supreme Court judged this illegal.

So the ads depend on the misconceptions of the Jewish Diaspora who donate money for acquiring land and building settlements for Jewish immigrants, while the Bedouin, the indigenous inhabitants are displaced, their homes, shops and mosques demolished, and their crops and fields sprayed with herbicide, and their being denied health, education, water and electricity for the ‘unrecognised’ villages.

Discrimination against the Bedouin is enforced by State Law, by the Ministry of Justice using “Land Counter Claims”.

So the claim in the JNF-UK ad “to transform desert wilderness into homes, schools and hospital for thousands of families” are for Jewish families only – “families crowded out of Israel’s overpopulated Northern cities” – must be particularly cruel for the Bedouin who are denied these very facilities, even in the poorly serviced ‘recognised’ towns.

So the whole ad is misleading, untrue and offensive to Palestinians, Bedouin and those who are knowledgeable about the history of the JNF and aware of the myths surrounding its origins and activities. See:

<http://www.adalah.org/eng/jnf.php#bill>

This ad should be withdrawn, especially as it is intended to be used in future campaigns, and as a text in the ads shown in cinemas, and on the website.

Further comments

The new communities being created in the Negev, funds for which are coming from JNF UK, are for Jewish immigrants only. Israeli architects and planners design the new settlements and towns being funded by the JNF and JNF UK, and will be “designing these new towns and housing areas in the Negev, which include the ethnic cleansing of Bedouin ‘unrecognized villages’”. See:

<http://www.icahd.org/eng/news.asp?menu=5&submenu=1&item=392>

<http://www.icahd.org/eng/news.asp?menu=5&submenu=1&item=452>

http://www.seamless-israel.org/images/Destruction_Negev/Destruction_Negev_low.pdf

Watch “The Unrecognized” – a short documentary, highlights the plight of Bedouin Israeli citizens living in the Naqab (Negev) desert. Approx 70,000 live in the poverty of ‘unrecognized villages’, denied essential public services, facing fundamental human rights violations due to institutionalized discrimination –

<http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/jul07/1.php>

<http://www.theunrecognized.org>

Please refer this link for graphic evidence of these demolitions:

http://www.assoc40.org/nenglish/main.php?news_id=126&start=0&category_id=&parent_id=&arcyear=&arcmonth

Further background

In 1948, on the eve of the establishment of the State of Israel, there were about 110,000 Bedouins in the Negev. Following the war, there was an ongoing evacuation of the Bedouins from southern Israel.

A census made in 1960 reveals that only 11,000 Bedouins remained. During the early 1950s, the State of Israel concentrated the Bedouins in the area of the Sayag. Entire tribes were displaced from their lands in the western and southern Negev and transferred to the Sayag area. The state declared a large part of the Sayag area to which the Bedouins had been moved as lands over which there was no municipal government. The planning and building law legislated in 1965 zoned all of these lands as agricultural, so implicitly building was forbidden there. Every house already built was therefore considered to be “illegal”. Thus with a single sweeping political decision, the State of Israel transformed the entire Bedouin population into law-breakers, though the Bedouins’ only crime was to exercise their basic human right to housing as citizens of Israel.

In the late 1960s, a new stage commenced, in the policy of concentrating the Bedouins into narrower areas. The government started to establish a small number of townships, in which it intended to concentrate all the Bedouins. In order to encourage them to move to these townships, it began a policy of demolishing houses, destroying crops, confiscating herds of sheep and goats and denying basic services such as water, electricity, access roads, schools, clinics, sewage systems, etc. Only after public and legal struggles was the

government obligated to build twenty regional schools and eight clinics for these unrecognized villages, and to connect some of the villages to the water system. Not only were the lands of the Bedouins nationalized and expropriated so that few of their lands remained available to them, but this rapacious policy of expulsion was accompanied by an enormous publicity campaign and by demonization of the Bedouins.

The townships have been a failure from every point of view – they remain a pocket of unemployment and welfare assistance, blighted by problems of hard crime and violence, and suffering from a dearth of workplaces, public transportation, banks, large businesses, industrial zoning, basic infrastructure, etc.

Bedouin tribes that were once dispersed throughout the entire Negev, and intensively used about 2,000,000 dunams (200,000 hectares) of land, live today on about 240,000 dunams (24,000 hectares) and struggle to preserve ownership of a further 450,000 dunams (45,000 hectares). Today, the Negev Bedouins number about 160,000, out of which about 80,000 live in dozens of unrecognized villages and the rest in the eight new townships. If the state succeeds in concentrating the Bedouins into the townships (of which another nine are planned), the area remaining available to them for sustenance (grazing flocks, cultivating crops, etc.) will be reduced dramatically.

It can be seen from the above that the State of Israel is engaged in persecuting its Bedouin citizens, while coveting their remaining lands. The terrible situation in the townships proves that these were established not out of concern for the Bedouins, but from the desire to evict them from their lands.

How can it be that Israel has villages inhabited by hundreds and sometimes thousands of Israeli citizens but which remain unrecognized by its government? How can it be that tens of thousands of Israeli citizens are denied the simple right to a roof over their heads, to running water for their houses, to electricity, health services, roads or sewage systems, simply because the Israeli government wishes to force them into townships? How can it be that there are Israeli citizens who are denied the opportunity to choose the way in which they wish to live?

Having already transferred entire tribes of Bedouins from their lands to elsewhere in the Negev, how can the Government then fail to recognize the new villages thus created? Why does the Government refuse to return these inhabitants to their original dwelling places despite promises to do so? Why is the State of Israel unwilling to recognize villages that were already there, on their lands, even before the State's establishment? Is it permissible for the State of Israel to persecute these citizens because they were born as Bedouins and not as Jews? Did this policy come about in order to snatch from the Arab Bedouins their remaining lands in the Negev, just as the majority of their lands were expropriated long ago?

Israel being a nation that (justifiably) struggles against anti-Semitism around the world, it is difficult to understand how it can harm Israeli citizens in this way, simply because they are Bedouin rather than Jewish. The Bedouin should be permitted to live in their dwelling places according to their needs, their traditions and desires, as is permitted to every Jewish citizen of Israel.

Acknowledgement: Some of the above text is from "Jewish Voice for Peace" on the Negev Bedouin.

Appendix 4

Jews and Arabs Rally in the Negev

Gush Shalom

Press Release: 4 October 2009

STOP THE LAND ROBBERY, STOP THE DENIAL OF FLOWING WATER, STOP THE DISCRIMINATION!

Hundreds of Negev residents, Jews and Arabs, as well as friends and supporters from all over the country, gathered Saturday afternoon in the lands of el-Malichi el-Arakib, near the Lehavim-Rahat junction in the Negev.

They have gathered to support the struggle of el-Turi, el-Ukbi, el-Talalka and other Bedouin tribes – with the support of the el-Arakib Land Defence Committee and the Recognition Forum – against the government of Israel and the Jewish National Fund, which seek by force and deceit to take over the Bedouin land in the Negev.

In the past year, the Jewish National Fund has started to cultivate the el-Arakib area lands, despite the fact that Bedouin residents are in the midst of a judicial process, aimed at proving their ownership of the land.

The JNF is creating a fait accompli, aiming to turn the judicial process meaningless by taking over the land and planting trees.

The big demonstration started with a water convoy, comprising water tankers, cars, tractors, and horsemen, moving in parallel with the Tel-Aviv–Be'er Sheva highway, between the Lehavim junction and the Goral junction. The water convoy was aimed at protesting the deprivation of many citizens in the Negev from the right to have flowing water in their homes. Afterwards a mass protest rally was held, attended also by Knesset Members Dov Khanin, Hannah Sweid and Taleh Bassana. Khanin said: "The struggle of the Bedouins in the Negev is a struggle for the most basic things: the right to a home, the right to water, the right to land, and the right to justice. This is a struggle for the character of the Israeli society which must be supported by all people of conscience. Only a just and egalitarian society can have a real future."

Yusuf Abu-Zeid, of the Al-Arakib Committee, said: "What happened two weeks ago on this land is totally unacceptable. They bring in an enormous number of police, together with the JNF people, and taking over the land. We had people wounded, we had people detained, we have to pay enormous fines and it is all because people want to protect their land. We call upon the Jewish public to join us in the just struggle for the future of all of us. They want to close us in a narrow cage where you can't live. Stop the detentions, stop stealing the land from its owners!"

Chaia Noach, of the Negev Coexistence Forum, said: "We are here to call upon the JNF to stop immediately all their activity in Al-Arakib, until a definite ruling has been made about the ownership claim of the Bedouins here and in the Negev in general. The whole attempt of the JNF that they are just a sub-contractor doing work on behalf of others is an unconvincing fig-leaf over the nakedness of ethnocracy. People who donate to the JNF should be aware of what is being done with their money, and decide whether they want to have part in it. They need to know that this forest which is planted by the JNF in the middle of the desert is not an innocent forest but a means of stealing the little bit of land which the Bedouins have left. It is

a forest aimed at stealing life, stealing away of life, stealing a tradition, stealing dignity and livelihood, stealing the land of the Bedouins of the Negev!”

Dr Awad Abu-Freih, of the Al-Arakib Land Defence Committee: “We have waited 61 years for justice and we saw that justice does not arrive. Instead of justice we see a facts created on the ground by the JNF land robbery and therefore the time has come to move on to new levels of struggle. We will absolutely not accept the present situation and we will do everything needed to prevent the JNF from taking over our land.” All speakers emphasized that it is vital to have close cooperation between Jews and Arabs in the struggle which touches upon the future of everybody.

After the demonstration, the members of the Recognition Forum went on for a solidarity visit to the protest tent of the al-Karnawi tribe near Kibbutz Mishmar HaNegev. Land which has been taken from the el-Karnawi tribe was cultivated by the Mishmar Hanegev kibbutzniks, with the consent of the el-Karnawi Bedouins. However, now this agricultural land is earmarked to become an exclusive neighborhood of villas. The land for the villa of half a dunam will be marketed at the price of 300,000 Shekels, while the Bedouins were offered a ‘compensation’ of 2,800 Shekels for a whole dunam. This ‘compromise’ is totally unacceptable to the Bedouins. Talal el-Karnawi, former mayor of Rahat, said: “Rahat and Mishmar Hanegev had until now excellent neighborly relations. Now, because of their real estate deals, they are willing to put these relations in jeopardy.”

Recognition Forum, P.O. Box 130, Omer 84965, ph: 050-7701118/9, e: info@dukium.org, www.dukium.org

Association of the Forty, ph: 04-8362381, fax: 04-362361, e: assoc40@assoc40.org, www.assoc40.org

Participating organizations: Association of the Forty, Bustan, Gush Shalom, Association for the Defence of Bedouins Rights in Israel, Alternative Information Center, Yesh Gvul, Committee Against House Demolitions, Negev Coexistence Forum, New Profile, Women’s Coalition for Peace, Rabbis for Human Rights, Ta’ayush

Appendix 5

Previous Challenges to the Registration of the JNF Charitable Trust

UK Charity Commission – Freedom of Information Request

18 November 2009

Subject: Request for information under the Freedom of Information Act
Case Ref: AB-225910/C-281002-K5D8-LCD

FOI request for information concerning:

- *Current and previous objections or challenges to the registration of the JNF Charitable Trust (225910) and the JNF Educational Trust (290267) with the Charity Commission.*
- *The Charity Commission's deliberations and responses to such objections and challenges.*

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION HELD:

Summary of complaint starting in 2001

The complainant first raised concerns about the activities of the JNF Charitable Trust in 2001, stating that the charity should not have charitable status. In March 2002 the complainant stated that some of the JNF Charitable Trust's projects were illegal under international law, the charity was undertaking unacceptable political activity and was breaching its principal object.

We replied in May 2002 and said that while the JNF Charitable Trust's objects were not in the Commission's view illegal under international law it would be contacting the trustees about certain aspects of the complaint. On the same day the Commission wrote to the charity. The Commission subsequently entered into further correspondence with the complainant and the charity.

At around the same time the Commission also received complaints about the charity from other sources. Exchanges between the Commission, the charity and other interested parties continued throughout 2002 and into 2003. The matter appeared to be reaching some sort of conclusion with the Commission seemingly ready to conclude its interest subject to certain assurances being received from the trustees.

The complainant wrote again in January 2003. We responded in February 2003, confirming that the Commission had no jurisdiction over the organisation known as the Jewish National Fund. The Commission said that it had thoroughly researched the JNF Charitable Trust's activities and was satisfied that the charity's funds were being used in an exclusively charitable manner. The Commission also asked the trustees to ensure that the charity's website was clear on the distinction between the JNF Charitable Trust and the Jewish National Fund.

In July 2003 the complainant wrote again to complain about the charity and the purchase of land and property in Israel. The complainant wrote again in January 2004, focusing on the relationship between the JNF Charitable Trust and KKL. The Commission indicated that it would not enter into any further correspondence on matters affecting the charity. The complainant again complained that the JNF Charitable Trust was failing to clearly distance itself from the Jewish National Fund. We wrote back in May 2004 saying that as we had

already provided guidance to the charity, it would not be appropriate or proportionate to pursue the matter further.

The Commission continued to receive enquiries and complaints about the JNF Charitable Trust and it appeared that there was still confusion about the JNF Charitable Trust and the Jewish National Fund. The Commission appears to have responded to enquiries by setting out the status of both organisations and signposting those with an interest to the JNF Charitable Trust's trustees.

The complainant wrote in June 2004. We wrote back having reviewed earlier correspondence and revisited two concerns that the complainant felt had not been sufficiently addressed – these being land purchased using charity funds and links between the charity and the Jewish National Fund. We said that the trustees were responsible for managing the charity and taking decisions on how the trust funds should be applied.

The same complainant made a separate complaint about the charity in July 2004 stating that the charity was funding projects in a discriminatory manner, based on race. We replied to this saying we would not raise this with the charity.

The complainant then made an overall complaint about and to the Commission, using the complaints procedure then in place, that the Commission was not prepared to question the running of the JNF Charitable Trust and had not found a problem in the charity's relationships and dealings with KKL. We explained our role in investigating complaints and the types of complaints we would investigate. We concluded that the Commission had considered the concerns appropriately and followed its usual practice and procedure in dealing with the case.

The complainant was unhappy with the Commissions' response but because their request to move to the next stage of the Commissions complaints handling procedure was after the cut-off point we did not re-examine the complaint.

Case no. 396455

We received 6 complaints about the JNF Charitable Trust in April 2004 which had been sent to the Scottish regulator, who had responded and forwarded the complaints to us for information. The complaints covered allegations of racism, the charity misrepresenting itself as a charity, suspected political activities in funding the Negev settlement, and questions about educational activities. There were also allegations that the JNF Charitable Trust was involved in ethnic discrimination, the destruction of Palestinian land, and buying land and forcing Palestinians off the land. It was claimed that the JNF Charitable Trust was using money to buy land and that this was political and not charitable. Complainants requested that the Commission should revoke the JNF Charitable Trusts' charitable status or investigate the charity.

Our replies stated that there was confusion between the JNF and the JNF Charitable Trust which were not the same; we were satisfied that the JNF Charitable Trust's activities were charitable. We said that similar issues were raised in 2002, when we had provided guidance to the charity, so it was not appropriate for us to take issues up with the JNF Charitable Trust again. We said we were satisfied that the charity's activities were charitable and it was acting within its objects and within the law.

Case no. 443900

We received a request to investigate the JNF Charitable Trust in November 2004. We replied in December 2004 explaining the role of the Commission and when we can get involved. We have no other details on this case and cannot clarify therefore whether the

complaint related to the registration/objectives of the JNF Charitable Trust or to some other matter.

Case no. 447724

We received a complaint in December 2004 that the JNF Charitable Trust was a racist organisation. Our reply covered the JNF Charitable Trust's objects, when the Commission will register charities and the role of the Charity Commission regarding complaints. We closed our case but reopened it in January 2005 when the complainant wrote again saying that the JNF Charitable Trust's objects were against the law and asking that the charity be deregistered. We replied again stating that the purposes of a charity need to be charitable under law.

Case no. 466360

In February 2005 we received a request to investigate the JNF Charitable Trust's charitable status. The complainant said that the JNF Charitable Trust was condoning and being complicit in ethnic cleansing.

We replied in March 2005. We said that we appreciated that the issue was a sensitive one and confirmed that the Commission had previously considered the charitable nature of the JNF Charitable Trust's activities and its relationship with KKL in some depth. We said that our previous considerations had satisfied us that the JNF Charitable Trust's activities fell within UK law and the charity's objects. Although the JNF Charitable Trust did work with other agencies in Israel, some of whose activities were not charitable, the charity monitored the use of its funds to ensure that they were only used in connection with projects which were charitable under UK law. We said that at present we could see no cause for concern that would justify us raising further matters with the charity. We had previously advised the JNF Charitable Trust that its activities must be charitable, and that we couldn't determine land issues. We said that the trustees have broad discretion to manage the charity as they see fit and that we could not direct trustees to adopt a particular policy or cause of action. It was not within the jurisdiction of the Commission to establish title to land; such questions would be a matter for the trustees and any challenge to such title should be pursued through the court with the appropriate jurisdiction.

Case no. 525821

We received an allegation in December 2005 that the JNF Charitable Trust was a discriminatory organisation and had racist policies. The complainant also asked what could be done to have the JNF Charitable Trusts' charity status cancelled.

We replied in January 2006. We provided a brief outline of the Commission's policy in dealing with complaints. We said that the Commission is unable to consider cases where the complaint is about policies pursued or actions taken by trustees within the law and provisions of the charity's governing document. We stated that the Commission does not have discretion to overrule a charity's policies or actions, which have been validly agreed and pursued within its powers, on the grounds that opposition exists alone. We explained that our powers of intervention are specifically designed for use in circumstances where there is a grave, general risk to a charity's interests and are designed principally to protect the charity and its assets. We said that generally speaking the complaints we take up are where there is a serious risk of significant harm or abuse to the charity, its assets, beneficiaries or reputation where our use of powers of intervention is necessary to protect them, and where this represents a proportionate response to the issues in the case. We provided a link to our complaints guidance. We said that from the information that the complainant had provided it did not appear that this was a matter in which it would be proportionate for the Commission to become involved and we did not propose to approach the charity. We said that if we received evidence which suggested that the trustees had acted outside of the range of reasonable discretion which the law allows to them we would

reconsider the matter. We suggested that the complainant might wish to contact the charity directly and gave contact details.

The complainant responded, stating that they had already contacted the JNF Charitable Trust and were still unhappy.

We replied in February 2006. We explained that political activity may be carried out by recognised charities as a way of furthering their charitable purposes. We gave a link to our guidance on campaigning and political activity by charities. We also said that *“According to the charity’s website, the charity raises funds in the United Kingdom and remits them to agencies in Israel, with strict instructions on how they are to be applied. Although some of these agencies carry out some activities which would not be regarded as charitable under UK law, the website explains that any funds remitted by the charity to any agent in Israel are used only for projects which are charitable under IUK law. The charity is legally required to check that the charitable projects in Israel for which it remits money are faithfully carried out and reports that it does so systematically.”*

The complainant responded on 25 February 2006. They said that the JNF Charitable Trust could be shown to be racist by asking questions; a list of questions was attached. They asked if the UK should be subsidising the charity in terms of tax status.

We replied on 9 March 2006. We said that we cannot normally reconsider issues. We suggested that the complainant direct their questions to the charity if appropriate. We also sent a link to the Commission’s internal complaints procedure.

Case no. 537334

We received a complaint in February 2006 which stated that the JNF Charitable Trust was supporting a state which was ignoring international law and engaging in barbaric practices. We replied in March 2006 to the complainant. We said that it is not open to any charity to support any particular state or country as this does not denote a charitable purpose. We said that in order to be charitable an organisation’s purposes must be exclusively and legally charitable and must be for the benefit of the community or an appreciably important section of it.

The complainant wrote back in April 2006. The complainant did not accept that there was any charitable purpose in funding projects which removed a minority community from their land in order to make way for members of the majority community. The complainant did not accept that the action of the JNF Charitable Trust, which indirectly resulted in the removal of the indigenous Bedouin from their land, was charitable in nature. Additionally one of the JNF Charitable Trusts’ projects was to establish a Jewish-only settlement in the Halutz dunes area of the Nege. This was an area of land offered to the Palestinian people at the Camp David and Taba summits as part of the peace proposals. If the JNF Charitable Trust went ahead with this project it would be undermining peace proposals.

We wrote back in May 2006. We said that there was no evidence that the JNF Charitable Trust was undertaking noncharitable activities or activities outside its purposes. We said that the Commission cannot take forward complaints about policies pursued or actions taken by the trustees within the law and the provision of a charity’s governing document. The Commission does not have the discretion to overrule a charity’s decision, validly taken within its powers, on the grounds that others hold a different view, however strongly held.

The complainant wrote back in May 2006 asking for clarification of the Commission’s views. We wrote back in June 2006 saying that in this instance we understood that the complainant was of the view that the JNF Charitable Trust’s activities have an indirect impact on the Arab Bedouin and the peace process. However there was no evidence that the JNF Charitable

Trust was pursuing these aims or undertaking non charitable activities that were outside the charity's purposes. The Commission's view was that the complainant had not raised any issues of regulatory concern that we needed to take up with the JNF Charitable Trust. We suggested that the complainant highlight their concerns to the charity.

Case No. 591279

We received a complaint in December 2006 about the JNF Charitable Trust's charity status. The complainant claimed that *"The JNF has been a major beneficiary of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians perpetrated by the Israeli state. Following the removal of the inhabitants, the state "privatised" their lands by a transfer of ownership to the JNF and related bodies. Such lands may now under the JNF charter, be returned or even sold or leased to their original owners. Millions of Palestinians languish in refugee camps as a result."* The complaint asked the Charity Commission to investigate the charitable status of the JNF Charitable Trust and to verify that it met the Commission's requirements. The complainant was upset with the JNF Charitable Trust receiving funds from British taxpayers' money. The complainant said that the JNF Charitable Trust was a racist organisation committed to ethnic cleansing.

In our reply in January 2007 we outlined the role of the Commission and the role of charity trustees. We also referred to our approach to dealing with complaints about charities. We quoted the JNF Charitable Trust's objects. We confirmed that the Commission had previously considered the charitable nature of the activities of the JNF Charitable Trust and that these considerations had satisfied us that the charity's activities fell within English and Welsh law and the charity's objects. We said that although the JNF Charitable Trust did work with other agencies in Israel, some of whose activities are not charitable, the charity monitored use of its funds to ensure that they are only used in connection with projects which were charitable under English and Welsh law. We said that the Commission had received no new information that the charity was undertaking non-charitable activities or activities outside its purposes. In light of this it was our view that the complainant had not raised any issues of regulatory concern that we needed to raise with the charity. We referred the complainant to contact details for the charity in case they wanted to highlight their concerns directly to the charity.

Case no. 671938

We received correspondence in March 2008 asking if the JNF Charitable Trust was lawfully describing itself as a charity. The complainant also said that they believed that the JNF Charitable Trust held land in Israel for the sole benefit of Jewish people or selling to Jewish people only. They said that this appeared discriminatory and contrary to the spirit of public benefit. We replied in April 2008. We asked the correspondent to confirm whether they had raised these issues with the charity (they did not get back to us on this). We also confirmed that a charity's benefit class could be defined by reference to race, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

Case no. 696920

We received a request in October 2008 that we carry out an investigation into the 'tens of millions of pounds' which had been transferred to unknown recipients in Israel each year by UK registered charities, including the JNF Charitable Trust. The complainant alleged that the purposes for which the funds had been transferred could include funding Israeli government policies to build illegal settlements in breach of international law. The complainant did not provide us with any documentary evidence so we did not take this further.

Case no. C-198454-G33X

A letter was sent to the Commission in May 2008 regarding the objects of the JNF Charitable Trust. We do not have a copy of the letter. We have an incomplete draft copy of a reply which we sent in June 2008. The reply states the objects of the JNF Charitable Trust and refers to the charity's governing documents. The reply states that the trustees have a

power to acquire or hire property of any kind in furtherance of the JNF Charitable Trust's objects. We state that the most recent copy of the JNF Charitable Trust's accounts can be found on the Register of Charities via the Commission's website. We state that we think that there may be some misunderstanding as to the objects of the JNF Charitable Trust. We then go on to outline the cases in which we can become involved, which are generally only those cases where:

- The purposes of a charity are not being carried out;
- The assets of a charity are substantially at risk
- The charity trustees are acting outside of their powers or are in other ways breaking charity law; or
- The administration of a charity has completely broken down.

We also explain that charity trustees must run their charities according to the rules set down in their governing document and must follow charity law requirements. We then say that, within this framework, charity trustees have a wide freedom as to how they run a charity and apply its money.

The complainant responded in July 2008, stating:

"If I am right in thinking that charitable status depends on some contribution to the "general good", then I do not understand how the quotation you gave me from the 'object' of the charity is consistent with the criterion of 'the general good'. The object 'relief of poverty' is compatible with 'the general good', but the qualification that follows, 'especially such charitable purposes as benefit persons of Jewish race or religion', seems to me to contradict the general benefit of 'relief of poverty'. The contradiction is especially obvious in relation to the chief function of the JNF, the purchase of property which is to be inalienably Jewish. This excludes from benefit some 20% of the Israeli population which is Arab not Jewish. Since officers of the JNF sit by right or custom on the board of the Jewish Land Administration, I assume that significant amount of land in Israel is owned by the Fund, and especially benefits Jewish citizens whether poor or not. It seems to be that either the purposes of the charity are not being carried out or the purpose as defined does not qualify for British charitable status."

There is no record as to whether we responded to this letter.

CORRESPONDANCE RELATING TO THIS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST
FOLLOWS:

From: Mortaza Sahibzada (Westbourne Grove, London)
To: Freedom of Information Officer, Charity Commission (PO Box 1227, Liverpool)
Date: 27 Oct 2009
Re: Freedom of Information Request

I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act. In order to assist you with this request, I am outlining my query as specifically as possible. If however this request is too wide or too unclear, I would be grateful if you could contact me as I understand that, under the act, you are required to advise and assist requesters.

I request information relating to two particular charities, the JNF Charitable Trust (reg no 225910) and the JNF Educational Trust (reg no 290267). In particular I request all the information about current and previous objections or challenges to the registration of these organisations with the Charity Commission. Objections may have been made in the form of letters from individuals/organisations who consider

that the JNF's activities fall outside the guidelines of the Charity Commission. Challenges may have been made in the form of legal challenges where again the JNF's activities may have fallen outside the guidelines of the Charity Commission. Furthermore I request all the information on your organisation's deliberations and responses to such objections and challenges.

I understand that under the act, I should be entitled to a response within 20 working days. I would be grateful if you could confirm in writing or by email that you have received this request. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

From: Senior Liaison Officer, Charity Commission
To: Mortaza Sahibzada
Date: 18 Nov 2009
Re: FOI Request CC:03070149 – JNF Charitable Trust and JNF Educational Trust
Our Ref: AB-225910/C-281002-K5D8-LCD

Thank you for your letter of 27 October where you requested information about the JNF Charitable Trust and the JNF Educational Trust. The information that you requested is enclosed in an attachment to this email.

All the information relates to the JNF Charitable Trust as we have no information relating to the JNF Education Trust on the matters you raised.

I have supplied the information that you requested in the form of a summary of the information that we hold. For some of our older cases, in line with our record-keeping policies, we do not have detailed case information. I have provided information based on the summaries that were available in these cases. Some cases provided summaries of previous cases and I have provided you with these.

Your request asked for information concerning our deliberations and responses. I have not been able to locate any written records of deliberations, only our outgoing letters which will show the results of any deliberations.

I hope that you will find the information useful in this format. Where there is a lack of detail this is because we have only had summaries of cases available.

If you are unhappy with our response to your FOI request, have a complaint or wish to request a review of our FOI decision, you should write to: Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG. Please state what it is you are dissatisfied with, which will assist us when we review our response. If you request a Decision Review, you will be notified of our final decision.

If after this you remain unhappy with the decision, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

From: Mortaza Sahibzada
To: Senior Liaison Officer
Date: 6 Dec 2009

Thank you for providing the summary of previous challenges to the registration of the JNF Charitable Trust. I would now like to ask if I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act to receive copies of all the documents that you referred to in the summary, ie the letters of complaint, your responses, and any correspondence with the JNF Charitable Trust.

From: Senior Liaison Officer
To: Mortaza Sahibzada
Date: 17 Dec 2009

Thank you for your email.

Although a requestor can indicate a preference for the manner in which the information is provided, in your initial request you did not express a preference. We provided you with a summary of the information held.

Persons making Freedom of Information requests have a right to the information held rather than the documents which contain the information. However that is caveated by section 11 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This section in essence states that (so far as it is reasonably practicable) the organisation from which the information is requested should try and comply with any preference that a requestor expresses as to the means by which the information in question is communicated.

Please note that:

- If a requestor asks for copies of the documents in which the information is contained, section 11 of the Freedom of Information Act does not require us to provide actual copy documents; for example we could copy information within the scope of the request into a separate document rather than supply a copy.
- Only information within the scope of an FOI request would be sent - any information in a document outside the scope of the request may well be redacted.
- Exemptions may apply to information within a document and if so that information may well be redacted.

There is some useful guidance available on the Ministry of Justice website which explains this issue in a little more detail. Please see:
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/foi-procedural-how.htm>

I hope that this is helpful. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

From: Mortaza Sahibzada
To: Senior Liaison Officer
Date: 4 Jan 2010

Thank you for your email of 17 December 2009. I would like to request again that you make available the source documents relating to the summary you have provided previously.

The source documents that I am requesting to see are entirely within the scope of the FOI request that I have made:

I am requesting all the documents that you referred to in the summary relating to previous challenges to the registration of the JNF Charitable Trust, ie the letters of complaint, your responses, and any correspondence with the JNF Charitable Trust.

Of course you would be within your rights to redact any information in the documents that fall outside the scope of this freedom of information request.

Please allow me to elaborate the reasons for requesting these documents. Firstly, it is clear from the summary you provided that the Charity Commission is limited by its procedures and resources in investigating whether individual charities are in breach of the law. This responsibility then falls on the public – on civil society. We have reason to believe the JNF Charitable Trust is in breach of certain articles of international law that are incorporated within the laws of this country. It would be helpful if you would provide us with the source documents in order that we may assess fully whether there is any information in your files that could assist our investigation into possible breaches of law. Secondly, the Charity Commission, while enabling charities to work for the benefit of a particular community, does not appear to caution charities whose work leads to the detriment of another community. A charity should be allowed to work for the benefit of a particular community, except when it leads to the marginalization of another community. The source documents may provide useful information that will allow us to suggest improvements to the Charity Commission guidelines and procedures, so that charities do not end up benefiting one community at the expense of another.

I look forward to hearing whether you will be making these source documents available.

From: Senior Liaison Officer
To: Mortaza Sahibzada
Date: 5 Jan 2010

Thank you for your email of 4 January.

Thank you for your request to view the source documents relating to the summary I provided previously. We are treating this request to view the source documents as a new FOI request. As we received your request on 4 January we will provide you with a response within 20 working days of your request which means that we will respond by Monday 1 February at the latest.

We will need to review the source documents to decide whether these can be made available and/or identify and make any redactions required so I am unable to give you an immediate response on this point.

From: Senior Liaison Officer
To: Mortaza Sahibzada
Date: 26 Jan 2010
Re: FOI Request CC:03070181 – JNF Charitable Trust
Our Ref: AB-225910/C-281002-K5D8-LCD

Thank you for your email requesting that we make available the source documents relating to the summary that we provided previously.

Persons making Freedom of Information requests have a right to the information held rather than the documents which contain the information. We provided the information requested in your previous FOI request in a summary form as we believed that this would be the most helpful format for you. I am satisfied that the information contained in the summary previously provided is an accurate reflection of all the information requested contained in the documents we hold.

We are not intending to release the documents to you. This is under the provisions of section 14 of the FOI Act as it relates to repeated requests. Section 14(2) of the Act states *“Where a public authority has previously complied with a request for information which was made by any person, it is not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request from that person unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the previous request and the making of the current request.”* We consider that your FOI request to see the documents upon which our summary was based is a substantially similar request to your earlier FOI request.

Your first request was for information about current and previous objections or challenges to the registration of the JNF Charitable Trust and the JNF Educational Trust with the Charity Commission together with information on the Commission's deliberations and responses to such objections and challenges. Your second request was for *“all the documents ... referred to in the summary relating to previous challenges to the registration of the JNF Charitable Trust.”*

We also consider that it would not be a proportionate use of our resources to go through the original documents and redact both the personal data we can not disclose and other non relevant data, as we have already provided you with a summary document containing all the relevant information that you requested.

If you are unhappy with our response to your FOI request, have a complaint or wish to request a review of our FOI decision, you should write to: Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, LIVERPOOL, L69 3UG. Please state what it is you are dissatisfied with, which will assist us when we review our response.

If you request a Decision Review you will be notified of our final decision. Please note that we will accept requests for a Decision Review up to a maximum of 3 months after the original decision. The 3 months will be calculated from the date on which you receive written notification of the original decision. You will be deemed to have received written notification on the day after the letter enclosing the decision was sent or the same day if the decision was sent by email.

If after this you remain unhappy with the decision, you may apply direct to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Appendix 6

The Rawabi Project – Cut Ties to the JNF

Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC)

December 2009

BNC, Occupied Palestine – It is with great concern that we receive the news that the Palestinian Bayti Real Estate Investment Company has partnered with the Jewish National Fund-Keren Kayemet le-Israel (JNF-KKL) in their project to create the new Palestinian town “Rawabi”. This partnership entails that Palestinians accept donations of thousands of tree seedlings which are planted by Palestinian volunteers, as well as technical advice on city planning and forestry management from the JNF-KKL. This is completely unacceptable.

The JNF-KKL has been a institutional pillar of Zionist colonization of Palestine since its creation in 1901 by the World Zionist Organization to acquire, develop and hold in perpetuity Palestinian lands “for the purpose of settling Jews on such lands and properties” (according to the JNF's Memorandum of Association). Before the establishment of the state of Israel, the JNF-KKL purchased land in Palestine from Arab feudalists residing abroad causing the eviction of thousands of Palestinian tenant farmers. The JNF-KKL was also directly involved in the compilation of intelligence “village files” that served Zionist militias in their conquest, massacres and ethnic cleansing operations that characterized the Palestinian Nakbah of 1948.

In the 1967 war, the Palestinian villages of the Latrun area (Imwas, Yalu, and Beit Nuba) were completely destroyed and their inhabitants expelled. After the war, the JNF-KKL built the infamous Canada Park on the ruins of these villages. Through fraud and pressure, the JNF-KKL has, moreover, acquired lands and houses in the occupied West Bank, in particular in East Jerusalem, mainly through the *Himanuta* association, a subsidiary which it controls. The JNF-KKL contributes to their development into Jewish-only colonies and finances the theft of Palestinian water resources. The JNF-KKL is hence directly implicated in forced evictions and displacement of Palestinians both past and present.

Since the early 1950s, the JNF-KKL has served as an agency of the State of Israel under two laws: the “Covenant between the Government of Israel and the Zionist Executive” (1952) and the “Keren Kayemet le-Israel Law” (1953). It undertakes governmental functions as part of the Israel Land Administration that controls 93% of all land in Israel. The JNF-KKL directly owns and controls over 13% of this land, the vast majority of this being the stolen property of 1948 Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons. On part of these lands, the JNF-KKL has planted parks and forests on the ruins of the Palestinian villages destroyed in the 1948 Nakbah. The JNF-KKL also openly discriminates against Palestinian citizens of Israel by preventing Palestinian leasing of land controlled and developed by the JNF-KKL.

Despite its legal status and role as official agent of the state of Israel, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) holds charitable NGO status in over 50 countries. Like other multinational corporations, the JNF has woven a “corporate veil” over its worldwide operations, so that JNF branches abroad can avoid restrictive laws that apply to foreign agencies and escape liability for JNF-KKL human rights abuses in Israel and the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. JNF branches abroad promote themselves as charities that preserve and advance Jewish culture and communities, civic and political participation, human rights, and the protection of the environment, while in reality they serve as one of the main fundraising bodies for Israel's regime of colonization and apartheid that oppresses the Palestinian people. JNF branches worldwide also provide the political support necessary for legitimizing

and promoting public policies and aid packages for Israel, bring public officials and community leaders to Israel to lobby for their support, censor criticism of Israel and intimidate individuals and organizations that act for the rights of the Palestinian people.

Based on the above, all forms of cooperation with the JNF constitute aid and assistance or complicity with Israel's human rights abuses and crimes against the Palestinian people and violate the Palestinian call for boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel and its agents. The fact that a Palestinian business firm is working in partnership with the JNF-KKL will likely be used by the JNF to further legitimize itself internationally; it may be used to support the JNF's quest for NGO status with the United Nations (UN ECOSOC) which it had rightfully failed to achieve in the past.

In light of the above, we call on:

Bayti Real Estate Investment Company, and its majority shareholders (the Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company and Massar International), to immediately and publicly end any and all partnership relations with the JNF-KKL.

The Palestinian Authority to investigate the partnership between the Bayti Real Estate Investment Company and the JNF-KKL, and to terminate any existing planning and/or construction permits until the Company has cancelled its partnership with the JNF-KKL.

The Palestinian people to refrain from cooperating with the "Rawabi" project, either as volunteers or contractors, or buyers until the Company has cancelled its partnership with the JNF-KKL; and to put pressure on the responsible business firms and political decision makers to end this shameful cooperation.

We call on states and civil society worldwide to:

- Investigate and raise awareness of the JNF's role in Israel's abuses of the human rights of the Palestinian people;
- Abstain from all forms of cooperation with the JNF; undertake boycotts, divestment and sanctions against all JNF operations, including JNF supported delegations to Israel and JNF sponsored or organized events and promotion campaigns.
- Pierce the JNF's corporate veil; investigate and revoke the charitable status of JNF organizations abroad;
- Provide platforms for the Palestinian victims of JNF operations to tell their stories and seek remedies, including popular tribunals and lawsuits.

*The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) is a wide coalition of Palestinian national and popular organizations, trade unions, associations and networks, including: Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine, General Union of Palestinian Workers, Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), Palestinian National Institute for NGOs, Federation of Independent Trade Union, Palestine Right of Return Coalition, Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Initiative, General Union of Palestinian Women, Union of Palestinian Farmers, Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW), The National Committee for Popular Resistance, Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), National Committee to Commemorate the Nakbah, Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCDPRJ), Coalition for Jerusalem, Union of Palestinian Charitable Organizations, Palestinian Economic Monitor, Union of Youth Activity Centers-Palestine Refugee Camps. Web: www.bdsmovement.net E-mail: info@bdsmovement.net

Appendix 7

Cairo Declaration – End Israeli Apartheid

Gaza Freedom Marchers

1 January 2010

We, international delegates meeting in Cairo during the Gaza Freedom March 2009, in collective response to an initiative from the South African delegation, state:

In view of:

- Israel's ongoing collective punishment of Palestinians through the illegal occupation and siege of Gaza;
- the illegal occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the continued construction of the illegal Apartheid Wall and settlements;
- the new Wall under construction by Egypt and the US which will tighten even further the siege of Gaza;
- the contempt for Palestinian democracy shown by Israel, the US, Canada, the EU and others after the Palestinian elections of 2006;
- the war crimes committed by Israel during the invasion of Gaza one year ago;
- the continuing discrimination and repression faced by Palestinians within Israel;
- and the continuing exile of millions of Palestinian refugees;
- all of which oppressive acts are based ultimately on the Zionist ideology which underpins Israel;
- in the knowledge that our own governments have given Israel direct economic, financial, military and diplomatic support and allowed it to behave with impunity;
- and mindful of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (2007)

We reaffirm our commitment to:

- Palestinian Self-Determination
- Ending the Occupation
- Equal Rights for All within historic Palestine
- The full Right of Return for Palestinian refugees

We therefore reaffirm our commitment to the United Palestinian call of July 2005 for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) to compel Israel to comply with international law.

To that end, we call for and wish to help initiate a global mass, democratic anti-apartheid movement to work in full consultation with Palestinian civil society to implement the Palestinian call for BDS.

Mindful of the many strong similarities between apartheid Israel and the former apartheid regime in South Africa, we propose:

1. An international speaking tour in the first 6 months of 2010 by Palestinian and South African trade unionists and civil society activists, to be joined by trade unionists and activists committed to this programme within the countries toured, to take mass education on BDS directly to the trade union membership and wider public internationally;
2. Participation in the Israeli Apartheid Week in March 2010;

3. A systematic unified approach to the boycott of Israeli products, involving consumers, workers and their unions in the retail, warehousing, and transportation sectors;
4. Developing the Academic, Cultural and Sports boycott;
5. Campaigns to encourage divestment of trade union and other pension funds from companies directly implicated in the Occupation and/or the Israeli military industries;
6. Legal actions targeting the external recruitment of soldiers to serve in the Israeli military, and the prosecution of Israeli government war criminals; coordination of Citizen's Arrest Bureaux to identify, campaign and seek to prosecute Israeli war criminals; support for the Goldstone Report and the implementation of its recommendations;
7. Campaigns against charitable status of the Jewish National Fund (JNF).

We appeal to organisations and individuals committed to this declaration to sign it and work with us to make it a reality.

Please e-mail us at cairodec@gmail.com

Signed by:

Hedy Epstein, Nomthandazo Sikiti, Zico Tamela, Hlokoza Motau, George Mahlangu, Crystal Dicks, Savera Kalideen, Suzanne Hotz, Shehnaaz Wadee, Haroon Wadee, Sayeed Dhansey, Faiza Desai, Ali Abunimah, Hilary Minch, Anthony Loewenstein, Sam Perlo-Freeman, Julie Moentk, Ulf Fogelström, Ann Polivka, Mark Johnson, Elfi Padovan, Elizabeth Barger, Sarah Roche-Mahdi, Svetlana Gesheva-Anar, Cristina Ruiz Cortina, Rachel Wyon, Mary Hughes-Thompson, David Letwin, Jean Athey, Gael Murphy, Thomas McAfee, Jean Louis Faure, Timothy A. King, Gail Chalbi, Ouahib Chalbi, Greg Dropkin, Felice Gelman, Ron Witton, Hayley Wallace, Norma Turner, Paula Abrams-Hourani, Mateo Bernal, Mary Mattieu, Agneta Zuppinger, Ashley Annis, Peige Desgarlois, Hannah Carter, Laura Ashfield, Iman Ghazal, Filsam Farah, Awa Allin, Cleopatra McGovern, Miranda Collet, Alison Phillips, Nicholas Abramson, Tarak Kauff, Jesse Meisler-Abramson, Hope Mariposa, Ivesa Lübben, Sheila Finan, Joanne Lingle, Barbara Lubin, Josie Shields-Stromsness, Anna Keuchen, Judith Mahoney Pasternak, Ellen Davidson, Ina Kelleher, Lee Gargagliano, Brad Taylor, Helga Mankovitz, Mick Napier, Agnes Kueng, Anne Paxton, Leila El Abtah, Richard Van der Wouden, Rafiq A. Firis, Sandra Tamari, Alice Azzouzi, J'Ann Schoonmaker Allen, Ruth F. Hooke, Jean E. Lee, Delphine de Boutray, Sylvia Schwarz, Alexandra Safi, Abdullah Anar, Ted Auerbach, Martha Hennessy, Louis Ultale, Leila Zand, Emma Grigore, Sammer Abdelela, Sharat G. Lin, Katherine E. Sheetz, Steve Greaves, Trevor Baumgartner, Hanan Tabbara, Marina Barakatt, Keren Bariyov, Ursula Sagmeister, Ann Cunningham, Bill Perry, Terry Perry, Athena Viscusi, Marco Viscusi, Paki Wieland, Manijeh Saba, Ellen Graves, Zoë Lawlor, Miguel García Grassot, Ana Mamora Romero, Ehab Lotayef, David Heap, Adie Mormech, Aimee Shalan, Liliane Cordova, Priscilla Lynch, Jenna Bitar, Deborah Mardon, Becky Thompson, Diane Hereford, David Heap, Donah Abdulla, Wendy Goldsmith, Abdu Mihirig, Saldi Bastami, Abdenahmane Bouaffad, Feroze Mithiborwala, John Dear, Ziyaad Lunat, Michael Letwin

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Sofiah MacLeod (secretary, Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign), whose presentation on the JNF at the 1st Wooler Conference on Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions in October 2009 prompted me to put together this book.

The following people provided suggestions for authors and other helpful advice – Francesca Viceconti, Martin Cutler, Layla Auer, Linda Tabar, Akber Mohamedali, Kevin Moore, Sarah Carr, Chris Doyle, Jenny Najjar, Angus Geddes, Ismail Zayid and Yael Oren Kahn.

Thanks to Maureen Murphy (managing editor, *Electronic Intifada*) for providing contacts to published authors, and to Adam Keller (spokesperson, Gush Shalom) for permission to reproduce details of the Negev rally (Appendix 4).

Thanks to the senior liaison officer at the Charity Commission for providing the information relating to previous challenges to the registration of the JNF Charitable Trust (Appendix 5). This information is in the public domain as a result of a Freedom of Information request and, as such, is reproduced without permission.

Finally, a special thanks to Rashida Pramanik for providing the office space in which this book was edited.

Mortaza Sahibzada, London

Publication & Print Details

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>ISSN</i> | 2042-9037 (Print) 2042-9045 (Online) |
| <i>Long Title</i> | JNF – Colonising Palestine since 1901 |
| <i>Short Title</i> | JNF eBook |
| <i>Publisher</i> | Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign c/o Peace & Justice Centre, Princes St, Edinburgh EH2 4BJ, Scotland, UK http://www.scottishpsc.org.uk |
| <i>Number</i> | Volume 1 (Second Edition, revision x) |
| <i>Number Title</i> | Introducing the Jewish National Fund |
| <i>Date</i> | January 2010 |
| <i>Authors</i> | Ilan Pappé, Abe Hayeem, Uri Davis, Susannah Tarbush, Sonja Karkar, Ben White, Rahela Mizrahi, Bob Williamson, John Goss and (with a foreword by) Ghada Karmi |
| <i>Editor</i> | Mortaza Sahibzada |
| <i>Online Publishers</i> | 1. http://australiansforpalestine.com 2. http://apjp.org 3. http://www.ijsn.net 4. http://www.icahtuk.org |
| <i>Filename</i> | JNF eBookVol1ed2x.pdf (10 Feb 2010, MS) |
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Call for Submission of Papers to Volume 2

JNF eBook, Volume 2 (Edited by Uri Davis)

Preparing for Legal Action – Focus Canada Park

In my capacity as editor of volume II of the JNF e-book I would gratefully receive critical contributions on the subject of the JNF with special reference to Canada Park. I would also be interested by broader contributions related to Canadian sponsorship of the JNF and its various projects in apartheid Israel and occupied Palestine.

Canada Park was funded by the JNF of Canada, using tax-exempt donations from citizens and residents of the federation and Commonwealth realm of Canada. The planting and the development of the park took place inside the territories occupied by the apartheid state of Israel in the 1967 war, over the lands and the ruins of the Palestinian-Arab villages of 'Imwas, Yalu and Bayt Nuba. These villages were ethnically cleansed by the Israeli army on the direct criminal orders of the then chief-of-staff General Yitzhak Rabin, thereby implicating every tax-paying citizen and resident of the federation and Commonwealth realm of Canada with a crime against humanity under international law.

As Professor Ismail Zayid, victim of the said ethnic cleansing of Bayt Nuba and one of the contributors to volume II writes: "Canada boasts a reputation for upholding the UN charter, international law and human rights". To this we add that given Canada's support for various international norms with regard to indigenous and native peoples, and to the extent that her boast above is justified – a legal case in Canada's courts against the charitable registration and the tax-exempt status of the JNF of Canada, informed by the norms of the Canadian Constitution, would put these norms to the test with a fair chance of success for a case against the JNF of Canada.

Papers can be submitted directly to me (uridavis@actcom.co.il) in my capacity as editor and copied to Mortaza Sahibzada (mozsahib@yahoo.co.uk). The deadline for the submission of papers is Friday 19 March 2010.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

Uri Davis (Prof Dr)
Coordinator, Israel Studies; Convenor, Workshops & Conferences Programme
Institute of Area Studies, AL-QUDS University
Main Campus, Jerusalem, Abu Dis
Palestinian Authority
Palestine