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مركز مساواة  
Mossawa Center

# LAND DAY

**THE HISTORY, STRUGGLE AND MONUMENT**

## Land Day: The History, Struggle and Monument

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# LAND DAY – INTRODUCTION

For the Palestinian Arab masses, Land Day marks the day they deepened their roots further in what was left of their land; a day of national identity; a day that embodies the land itself. In order to keep Land Day alive in our memory, we need to remember that the Zionist movement, since its inception, aimed at controlling the land in order to fulfill the Zionist dream of building a national homeland for Jews in Palestine.

It was 30 March 1976; a day of resistance and public struggle against the plans for Judaizing the Galilee area, and the expropriation of lands by the Israeli state which kept on expropriating the lands and homeland of the original Palestinian Arab citizens whose lands were in their ownership. This led to the martyrdom of 6 people: Kheir Yassin (Arrabah Al-Battouf), Khadijeh Shawahneh (Sakhnin), Raja Abu Raya (Sakhnin), Khader Khalaileh (Sakhnin), Muhsin Taha (Kfar Kana), Ra'fat Zheiri (Nour Shams), and hundreds of people were wounded and arrested, in order to deter the Palestinians who remained on their lands from doing anything that would destabilize the existence of the state. Land Day was the first national and popular struggle by Palestinians in Israel, following the military rule period.

The direct reason for Land Day was the Israeli authorities' expropriation of around 21 thousand dunams of the lands of Arrabah, Sakhnin, Deir Hanna and Arab Al-Sawa'ed, in addition to other places in the Galilee area, in order to add more Jewish settlements as part of a scheme for Judaizing the Galilee. Between 1948 and 1972, successive Israeli governments expropriated more than 1 million dunams of the land of Arab villages in the Galilee and the Triangle, in addition to millions of other dunams of Arab lands, whose owners had been expelled in 1948.

On 15/8/1975, the Committee for the Defense of the Lands held a general meeting in Nazareth (Grand New Hotel), followed by a popular conference in Nazareth on 18/10/1975. The meeting called for a general strike and protests in front of the Knesset if the State does not cancel its plans to expropriate and Judaize the land.

On 6/3/1976, the committee held an open meeting in Nazareth, calling for a general strike on Tuesday 30/3/1976, in protest against the land expropriation policy. This was followed by a meeting of Arab mayors in Shefa-A'mr that was held on Thursday 25/3/1976, at the behest of the authority which had tried everything in its power to cancel this strike.

Tuesday 30/3/1976 was a day of general strike in the Arab villages, cities and the mixed cities, despite attempts by the Israeli authorities to break the strike through force. This led to a clash between Arab citizens and the police. The most violent clashes were witnessed in Sakhnin, Arrabah and Deir Hanna.

#### **Decisions preceding the strike announcement:**

- **A decision to close Al-Mal area** (area 9), preventing Arabs from entering this area, on 13/2/1976.
- Despite the fact that these lands were located within areas belonging to the villages of Sakhnin, Arrabah and Deir Hanna (totaling 60 thousand dunams), they were used between 1942 and 1944 as British army training areas during

WWII. However, Arabs were allowed to access and work them under special permits. In 1956, the authorities closed the area with the purpose of creating plans for building Jewish settlements within the framework of Judaizing the Galilee project. The project was approved on 19/3/1976. Its purpose was to build tens of Jewish settlements in the area, so that the “Galilee will be free of strangers and will belong only to the Jews”. The project was executed by expropriating hundreds of thousands of dunams of Arab lands, in favor of building and establishing Jewish settlements.

- **The northern district’s governor in the Ministry of Interior, Yisrael Koenig,** issued a document called by the government The Koenig Document –a draft memorandum on the handling of Israeli Arabs. The document was issued on 1/3/1976 as a proposal for Judaizing the Galilee, and provided political procedures regarding the treatment of the Arab minority in Israel. In this document, Koenig called for decreasing the number of Palestinians in the Galilee and Negev areas, in order to capture what was left of their farming lands and restrict them financially and socially. This was to take place by directing Jewish immigrants to settle in the Galilee and Negev areas. This document contained many racist proposals, including:
  - Intensifying Jewish settlement in the north (Galilee).
  - Raising, deepening and coordinating the handling of Arab issues by governmental bodies.
  - Creating a Jewish national consensus within the Zionist parties regarding the issue of the Arabs in Israel.
  - Restricting Arab families financially by means of taxes, and giving priority to Jews in job opportunities; decreasing the number of Arabs in educational achievements (rather than providing education orientation) for students.
  - Facilitating the emigration of Arab youth and students from the country,

and denying their return.

- Increasing the presence of police and security forces from all branches in the Arab sector.

Land Day marks a turning point in Arab citizens' defense of their land and homes. It was noted for the popular unity against the policy of suffocation and land expropriation, using the conscious popular struggle for rights as a means for preventing any violation that the Israeli authorities may commit. We saw how the Israeli authorities used all strategic and ideological means, even physical violence, to achieve their goals. However, such means will not deter those who have the right to the land, nor will it prevent them from defending their rights.

# **A HISTORY OF LAND DAY**

## **THE LAND'S CASE IN PALESTINE/ ISRAEL**

BY REVEREND SHEHADEH SHEHADEH

The first chair of the Committee of Defense of the Lands

Expropriation of Palestinian lands by the Zionist Movement commenced following the first Zionist Conference in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. The conference brandished the slogan: "A land without a people for a people without a land," where after Jewish groups from around the world were called upon to immigrate to the "Promised Land." At that time, the Turkish Sultan refused to support the Jews' intention to establish a national home in Palestine. Nevertheless, Jewish immigration to Ottoman-ruled Palestine had begun.

Despite Palestinian opposition to Jewish immigration, the 1917 Balfour Declaration from the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom (which subsequently governed Palestine after the fall of the Ottoman Empire) declared support for the Jews to

establish a national home in Palestine. Thus, Jewish immigration to Palestine continued throughout the period of the British Mandate (1918 -1948). Conflict over the land between Palestinians and Jews began early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reaching its first climax in 1936, when the Palestinians called for a general strike. The Palestinian Revolt followed, but was brutally suppressed by the British Mandate army, who favored Jewish settlement in Palestine.

In 1947, the United Nations suggested to divide Palestine into two states, one for Jews and one for Palestinians. The Palestinians rejected the U.N. partition plan for the following reasons:

1. The division of the land into two countries would not engender favorable economic prospects for either side;
2. The land assigned to Palestinians was the smaller portion, containing mountains and limited access to the sea, comprising only 47% of the land of Palestine;
3. Jews owned only 6% of Palestinian land in 1947; therefore it is only natural that Palestinian's portion of the land should be 94%, which makes the partition plan unfair and illegitimate. Whereas Arabs owned 94%;
4. Maintaining the country undivided, wherein both Jews and Palestinians could live together, was more practical than division;
5. The population of Palestine in 1947 totaled 1,900,000; Jews totaled 600,000 and the remainders were Palestinians; which made the proposed division unfair and inconsistent with the population ratio.
6. On land designated for a Jewish state resided 550,000 Jews and 460,000 Palestinians, which made the establishment of a Jewish state in that area impossible.

All these reasons led Palestinians to reject the proposed division of land, thus entering a losing war against establishing a Jewish state supported by the entire

West, which felt guilty for the persecution of Jews throughout the centuries, especially the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. The result of the war was devastating to the Palestinian residents, expatriating and displacing more than 722,000 Palestinians from their villages and cities. The Palestinians became refugees in the Jordan-ruled West Bank, Egypt-controlled Gaza Strip, and in the nearby Arab countries of Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. When the war ended, Israel prevented Palestinian refugees from returning to their villages and cities in Palestine, violating international principles and laws granting refugees the right of return to their homes following a war. According to Israeli law, any Palestinian refugee returning to his home is an intruder who must be expelled from the state.

Israel's aim behind these actions was to take control over the land, thus enacting laws that helped the country, directly and indirectly steal land owned by Palestinians, knowing that this land was the only source of income for Palestinian families, most of whom were peasants.

Israel enacted new laws to expropriate the land. These included: the Absentees' Property Law; Land's Lifelessness; Present Absentee; Barren Lands; Lands of the High Commissioner; Development Land; Public Interests; Land Possession; the Rocky Lands; and Developing the Galilee (Galilee Judiazation), among others. The last law listed (Developing the Galilee) was the spark which ignited the fire.

Before 1948, Palestinians were cultivating 17 dunams per person (average calculation of the land divided by the number of Palestinians). After the Nakba and with all the expropriation of land up to 2008, the average person is left with half a dunam.

### **Land Day**

Initiated by the Communist Party in the mid-1970s, a popular uprising brought together organized national forces and individuals to defend what remained

of the land. The Committee of the Defense of the Land was formed to lead the struggle. This committee was supported by socially conscious groups of people, who protected the land despite consequences in the form of physical violence, dismissal from work, imprisonment, and other measures of intimidation. The struggle reached its climax on Land Day, during which six martyrs were killed, dozens others wounded, and hundreds imprisoned.

The origins of the uprising lay in the 1975 declaration by the Israeli Minister of Agriculture to expropriate approximately 21,500 dunams of Arab land, most of which were in the Galilee, specifically in Sakhnin, Arabeh, and Deir Hanna; the Triangle; and the Naqab. In response, Palestinian national figures were called to a meeting arranged by the Communist Party to discuss the situation of the land and the Palestinian minority in Israel. The meeting was concluded with the decision to oppose land expropriation at any cost, and protect what was left of the land which was the essence of the nation and the source of income for many Palestinians.

Previously, hundreds of thousands of dunams were expropriated through laws enacted especially for the purpose of dispossessing Palestinians of their land. This process erases the connection between Palestinians and the land, making it easier to expel them. Thus, Palestinians came to a decision not to surrender an inch of their remaining lands.

Participants of the first meeting agreed to expand the struggle against land expropriation. Owners of lands targeted for expropriation were called upon to participate in a meeting in the New Grand Hotel in Nazareth. Over 120 people attended, including some of the landowners. Participants agreed to incorporate the heads of Arab local authorities and to raise awareness among the Arab masses about the dangers of land expropriation and its negative effects on the Palestinian people. A public meeting was called for 18 October 1975 in Nazareth to bring the community together; Dr. Anis Krosh headed the meeting with

thousands in attendance. This meeting was the starting point to when the people began to organize themselves and choose their own committees. The board for the Committee for the Defense of the Lands was elected in that meeting, with Reverend Shehadeh Shehadeh as Chairman and Saliba Khamis, as Secretary of the Committee.

The Committee worked extensively to take the following actions:

1. Organize local defense committees in all Arab villages and cities;
2. Document all plots of land listed for expropriation, and distribute this document to the relevant Arab villages;
3. Hold public meetings in all Arab villages and cities to educate the community about the state's means of land expropriation, its dangers, and ways to oppose it;
4. File law suits against the state to stop land expropriation;
5. Contact public officials and Knesset members and call on them to meet with a delegation from the Committee (All Knesset parties and its speaker were contacted. Only three replies were received. The Communist Party and Shulamit Aloni both agreed to a meeting. The Knesset speaker merely stated that the request had been sent to the wrong address.).

Following the lack of response from officials, and with the land under continued danger of expropriation, the Committee for the Defense of the Lands called for a general strike and a demonstration in front of the Knesset to take place on 30 March 1976.

The Israeli authorities tried to transfer the leadership of the popular struggle from the Palestinian public to a co-opted group including a few mayors and heads of Arab villages and cities, whom the state can direct as it pleases. This group called for a meeting among the heads of Arab local authorities in Shefa'amr on 25 March 1976 to discuss the strike declared by the Arab community.

I went to this meeting and was greeted warmly. My participation was conditioned

on my compliance with the decisions made in the meeting. I stated to the organizers that this meeting was an illegal one, and since they did not initiate the strike or join in preparing for it, they had no legal authority to publicly condone or condemn the strike. I explained that the right to strike is our right as an Arab community. I told them if they had any doubt of this fact, they only needed to look outside and see the enraged people who were condemning the meeting at hand.

Naturally I chose not to remain in the meeting and watch the humiliating show led by Shmuel Toledano, the Israeli Prime Minister's Advisor on Arab Affairs, and his assistant Yoram Katz. The Israeli plan to sabotage the strike succeeded with the Arab officials in attendance, but failed with the Palestinian people, who insisted on proceeding with the general strike on 30 March 1976. I would like to note that most of the heads of the local Arab authorities, who did not support the strike, failed to be reelected in the year following Land Day.

The Committee for the Defense of the Lands continued to lead the struggle against expropriation of land and it succeeded in preventing significant land expropriation in the area known as area number 9, near Sakhnin, Arabeh, Deir Hanna, as well as the lands of al-Rouha near Umm al-Fahm. This success and the human toll it exacted made Land Day a National Day of Remembrance for all Muslim, Christian, and Druze communities in Palestine and the Diaspora, symbolizing the removal of fear from our hearts and the strengthening of our courage.

The Committee for the Defense of the Lands continued to lead the struggle and succeeded in preventing many of the planned expropriation of land in the north and triangle area. Land Day became a national day for every Muslim, Christian, and Druze Palestinian. Sadly, instead of continuing to unite ourselves in the fight against land expropriation, the struggle digressed into internal dissention, necessitating a transfer of responsibility for defending the land to the local Arab authorities and the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel.

# THE ABSENCE OF A NATIONAL ARCHIVE AND OUR COLLECTIVE RIGHTS

BY JAFAR FARAH

Director of Mossawa Center

During the preparation of this book, our authors suffered from the absence of a Palestinian national archive. Having such an archive is a national and collective right for every population, and a necessity for people who want to study in depth its history, politics, culture, and civilization. The best archive for documenting the experience of Land Day, an important event in the life of Palestinian Arabs in this land, was found at the *al-Ittihad* newspaper, which has suffered a severe financial crisis for years. Their lack of funding hindered our people and researchers from effectively making use of this archive, a chronicle of the life of our society before and after the Nakba, up until the present day.

While we searched for artifacts documenting the struggle for land, we found hundreds of photographs and documents in the homes of heads of Committees and leaders of other national institutions. These leaders have preserved reminders

of the price our society has paid in the struggle, long before researchers began writing histories of the “stand tall generation.” This book aims to concentrate the historical documents and photos of the march of a nation that refused to bend down, but rather stayed “standing tall, walking with its head held high, raising an olive branch in its hand.”

Here we are, publishing this modest contribution in honor of those of our people who remained in our homeland, those who still maintain a rooted existence. Remaining in the land has not been easy under the shadows of assaults against our nation, beginning with the Nakba in 1948, through the years of military rule, and culminating with the Six Day War, all of which have displaced our people, turning the majority into refugees. Those who have stayed have contributed to rebuilding our society and establishing cultural, political, and social institutions. If we were to review the archives of the Communist Party, the Committee for the Defense of the Lands, the Islamic Movement, and the *Al-Ard* Movement, we would obtain ample evidence of the personal and collective price paid by those who have fought to further embed our existence and develop our home, by those who have rejected the alternative option of displacement and humiliation.

The absence of a cumulative national archive and university research centers has contributed to the falsification of history. This dearth has permitted a silencing of the past in order to fabricate a struggle without ties to a historical context. Some new intellectuals try to create a single acceptable narrative of events, which cannot truly be understood without probing the history, culture, politics, economics, and social framework of our society.

For the historical truth we should note in this book that national institutions such as *al-Jadid* magazine, *al-Ittihad* newspaper, and *al-Sawt* have documented in Arabic discussions and issues surrounding the struggle of the masses. The documenting of discussions of Arab intellectuals and our political parties regarding the

establishment of an Arab university is a principal documentation which confirms our struggle for the right to education and higher education, a struggle that has accompanied our society in the 1970s up until today. We are grateful to the Committee for the Defense of the Lands, which recorded the history of Land Day. This book aims to serve as a primary reference documenting this ongoing struggle. And to acknowledge those who contributed to the struggle, we are republishing parts of the Black Book, written by the Committee for the Defense of Lands and published shortly after the events recorded therein. We are also proud to publish a list of the members of the Committee for the Defense of the Lands, who led our masses to fight for the land, who stood by the people's right to build homes, a right for which most of our villages and cities still struggle.

When we began this documentation project, Tal Ben Zvi approached us, sharing with us her personal archival and volunteer work. We were struck that a Jewish person had documented the history of Land Day. Her work reaffirmed the supportive role that some Jews have played since the Nakba, such as with the uncovering of the Kufr Qassem massacre. Gershon Knispel worked with Abed Abdi to create the Land Day martyrs monument, around which we have gathered in remembrance for 30 years. There continue to be Jews who reject the repressive actions of the state and stand for human rights, who struggle alongside us as we take responsibility to break the siege on our nation and to expand support for our legitimate rights, both at home and worldwide.

Rebuilding our institutions and studying the history of challenges facing us play important roles in continuing the struggle for our rights. At the Mossawa Center, we join the efforts to rebuild institutions and support all those who want to continue the struggle for equality. We call on Arab researchers to document the work of our institutions such as the Committee of the Forty, the Regional Council for Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab, the Arab Center for Alternative Planning, and

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the Committee for the Defense of the Lands, all of whom played important roles in turning away from a defensive stance and work towards building and developing our society. We publish this book as a testament of our society's struggle and to provide a reference for its continuity.

When people ask, "How have we benefitted from the struggle?" we usually respond that we paid a high price on and around Land Day, but those who fought succeeded in having rescinded military orders to expropriate 21,000 dunams of land. They further forced the state to forfeit similar plans. Today you can see al-Mahel lands that are planted, green, and in Palestinian hands. We call for anyone who is uncertain about the struggle's usefulness to visit these thousands of dunams of land and see with their own eyes this crucial achievement.

# **THE LAND DAY MEMORIAL HISTORY AND MEMORY**

ABED ABDI

On this occasion we commemorate the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Land Day, and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the installation of the Land Day martyrs memorial in Sakhnin. During the time of its construction, circumstances did not permit an effortless erection of the first ever memorial in the Palestinian community before or after the Nakba, in remembrance of tragic events in the establishment of the state of Israel, in remembrance of our martyrs, and in witness the living tragic memory of the Palestinian nation that remained on the land.

It was not easy to challenge the authority with its many different agents (the Shin Bet internal security services and the authorities for construction regulation and licensing). It was also not easy to construct the memorial on any land, except in the ancient Islamic cemetery in Sakhnin, that existed before this village became a city. The men and the chairs of the local committees (the committees for the defense

of the land in the three villages) with the sympathy and solidarity of democratic Jewish forces, artist Gershon Knispel, writer Yehoshea Sobol, journalist Uri Avneri, communist leader Meir Vilner and his comrades in the Communist Party, joined in establishing this memorial, the first visual markings to supplement mosque minarets and church steeples in the Galilee, the Triangle, and the mixed cities.

It was my first practical experience in planning and implementing such an artwork after returning from my academic studies in Dresden in East Germany, where I specialized in mural and graphic design. My friend, the artist Knispel, who is of German origin, has greatly contributed to this huge achievement during a difficult period.

I aspired for the memorial to represent our memory, our present, and our future. I want it to remove the hand of injustice and oppression against our people, so that this national minority could live in dignity in its only home, since we have no other. In addition to the memorial in Sakhnin, other memorials were erected in the year 2000 in Kfar Kanna, Kfar Manda, Shefa'amer, Kfar Qassem, and Nazareth. In Arabeh and Umm al-Fahm, monuments and statues from other young designers bear testimony to the suffering that accompanies willpower and determination to stay in one's homeland.

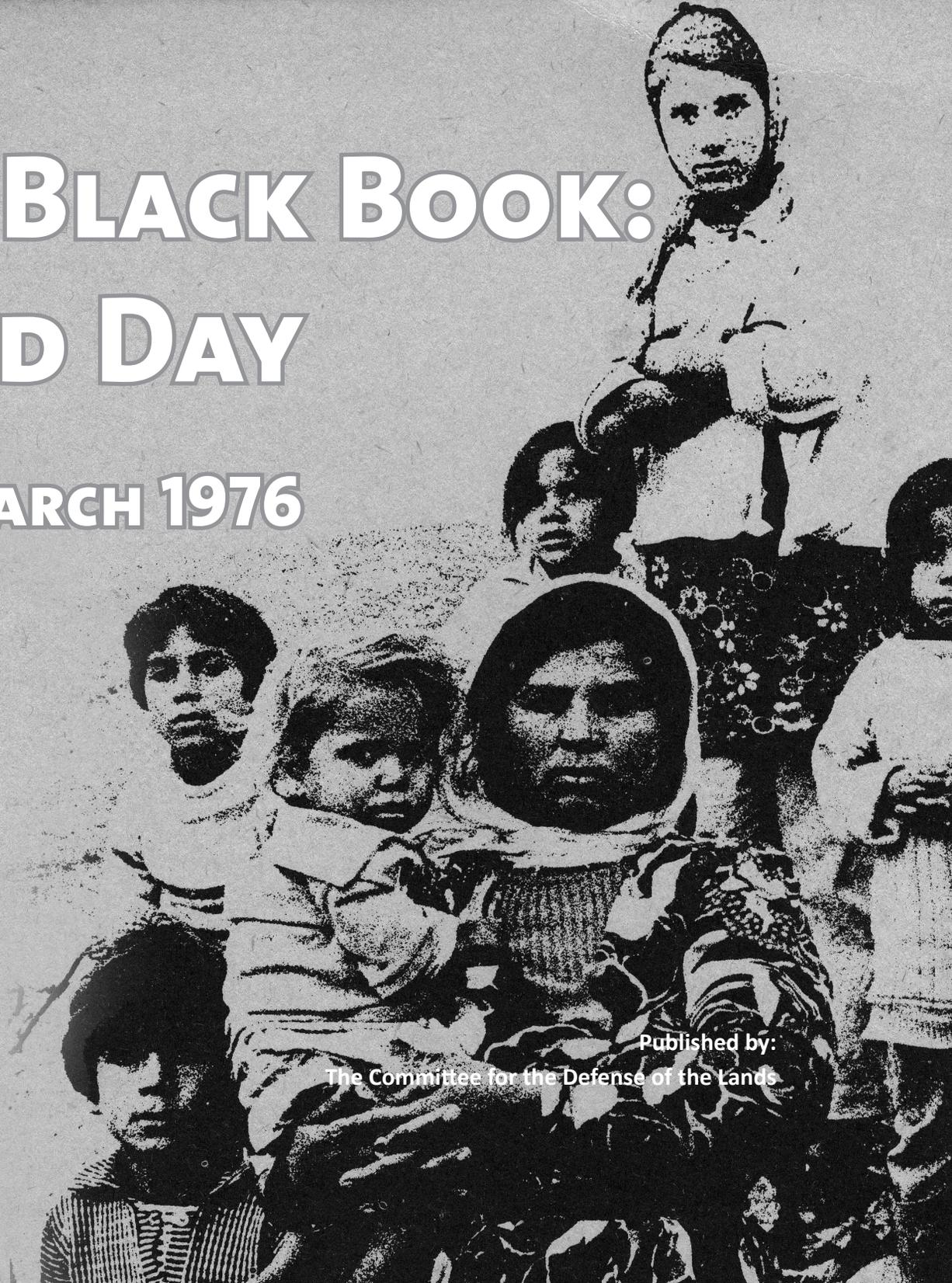
I wrote in the introduction of "The Story of the Memorial" album, of which 400 copies were published in 1978: "The memorial standing in Sakhnin might serve as a witness and confirmation of our belonging to this motherland, which cried to its sons to defend her."

I hope that we will preserve what we have done, and what other creative souls have constructed, defending them that they may become cultural symbols witnessing our eternal belonging to this land.

6 February 2008, Haifa

# THE BLACK BOOK: LAND DAY

30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1976



Published by:  
The Committee for the Defense of the Lands

# INTRODUCTION:

The Israeli authorities did not only flood Land Day, 30 March 1976, with the blood of our martyrs, from the wounds from our sons, who lived in the land of our forefathers. They also began to fabricate lies, from the time we declared that day as a day of resistance and struggle for defending what is left of our land, until today. We have an obligation to stop the racist propaganda-filled lies. Therefore, the National Committee for the Defense of the Lands in Israel has decided to publish this Black Book to present the facts of the crimes committed by the state authorities on that day, and to refute the lies and brainwashing being propagated throughout Israel.

Large numbers of Arab lawyers have volunteered for this effort, and with the cooperation of the National Committee for the Defense of the Lands, the heads of the local councils in Sakhnin, Arabeh, and Deir Hanna, and the Local Committee for the Defense of the Lands in Kufr Kanna and in Taybeh, a large number of written, sworn testimonies were collected as the primary material for this Black Book.

Several complications resulted from the Land Day. In addition to the martyrs' lives, employees were fired from their jobs and denied livelihoods, simply because they acted upon their legal right to strike and defend what was left of their homeland. Others were burdened by material and psychological losses, via damage to their

homes, arrest, and insults directed at them. We place these testimonies in the trusteeship of historians and history, because perhaps one day they will serve as a lesson for contemplation, and material for rethinking.

If we had collected all of the testimonies available to us, they would have filled an immense volume of only one chapter in the dark history of our community's suffering and continued plight under the Israeli regime. However, we preferred to concentrate on testimonies from villages where the provocation started, and in which martyrs fell. We also chose to select and condense the material so as to clarify the facts without overloading those who seek them with overly troubling details and facts, bearing in mind that the original texts will be kept in our nation's files, and be made available to conscientious researchers with good intentions.

Due to the long and difficult experience of facing racist officials, the Arab masses feared that Land Day would see a repetition of the Kufr Qassem massacre. Therefore, all the Arab organizations and leaders from the Committee for the Defense of the Lands assured that the general strike would take place peacefully and in the framework of democracy, a position praised by the leaders of the state and their followers. Moreover, the National Committee for the Defense of the Lands and the Arab local authorities' delegates sent telegrams and letters, made personal interviews, and published announcements in the newspapers directed at police commanders, police stations, ministers, and relevant offices in the region, making it clear that the authorities would be held responsible for their reactions. However, the authorities continued with their bloody terrorist plans, believing that traditional violence can break and humiliate our community.

The Land Day, 30 March 1976, was a day of honor, sacrifice, and victory for our Arab Palestinian People in Israel, just as it was a day of aggression, shame, and cowardice for the Israeli authorities. The Arab community fought fierce battles for our land, suffered deadly attacks, and made precious sacrifices, all for a noble



## **THE BLACK BOOK**

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existence on the lands of our forefathers.

We hope that the contents of this book help to extend the awareness among Arabs, Israelis, and the international community, to expand the struggle to return the land to its rightful owners, and to promote peace in our land, our region, and the world.

# PAGES OF OUR LAND'S TRAGIC HISTORY

In announcing a general strike on 30 March 1976, against the Judaization and expropriation of the land, the Arab population confirmed its determination to undertake an unabated struggle and defense of our national and individual rights, one of which is the right to keep the land of our forefathers. The bloodshed on Land Day still cries out: "Stop the criminal!" "Stop the killer and the thief!"

The Israeli authority used all its means to prevent and break the strike. It employed threats and intimidation, and flexed its military muscle by attacking the Arab villages with armed forces, especially around Nazareth. It placed the toughest pressure upon the heads of the Arab local councils, who gathered in Shefa'amr on 25 March 1976, before the strike, and falsified a decision under the name of the majority of heads of councils to cancel the strike. This was not a decision taken by the heads themselves, but by The National Committee for the Defense of the Lands and supported by the National Committee of the Heads of Arab Local Authorities, a committee elected at a general meeting of the Arab heads of local authorities.



The authority's threats and its terrorist methods did not work. Although six martyrs were killed by Israeli bullets and barbaric repressive means, the results of the strike were amazing. The strike rocked Israeli and international public opinion and destroyed the paradisiacal facade regarding the life of the Arabs in Israel.

The strike reflects the unity of our Arab masses and our determination to resist the expropriation and discrimination policies that have been implemented by the authorities since the establishment of the state. It also called for respect of the Arab national entity in Israel and recognition of national and individual rights, but most importantly, it demanded a cessation of the land expropriation policy.

The Committee for the Defense of the Lands realized that the bloody aggression aimed against the Arab masses during Land Day was not separate from the discrimination and persecution policies practiced by the Israeli government since the establishment of the state; rather, it was a direct result of those policies. Therefore, the 30 March 1976 incidents were only one bloody chapter in the tragedy which continued throughout 29 years of bloody massacres against the Arabs, without an end in sight.

Although the pretext of "development" was used to mask the policy of Arab land confiscation, the real Judaization policy was exposed and the general opposition from the Arab community and democratic Jewish forces in Israel was made clear. The government declared that it was determined to continue its land expropriation and Judaization policy. It continues to reject the democratic demand to assemble a committee to investigate those responsible for shedding innocent blood on Land Day. The Committee for the Defense of the Lands issued a statement alerting the public that Arab land expropriation is the most blatant sign of an unjust national discrimination policy. After all the government land expropriation, the Arab community in Israel has retained ownership of no more than half a million dunams

of land.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Land Occupation Policy and Expansion at the Expense of the Arabs**

From millions of dunams expropriated by the authorities since the establishment of the state as absentee properties, about 40% of the land was owned by Arabs who remained as legal residents in Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The absentees' properties were the most important factor that made Israel a state with constituents. The areas of these properties, which are mostly border areas, have remarkable strategic value. From a total of 370 Jewish settlements built between 1948 and the beginning of 1953, 350 were built on absentees' lands.<sup>3</sup>

In 1954, more than a third of the Jews in Israel and also a third of Jewish immigrants to Israel (250,000) lived on Arab absentee property.<sup>4</sup>

Occupying the land did not only take place by occupying absentee properties, or the properties belonging to the British Mandate government, which were inherited from Ottoman rule, estimated at nearly 2 to 3 million dunams of land (called "al-Jifitlik" land), but also extended to the lands and villages of Arabs who remained in Israel.

The goal of the land control by the government was not merely "development," but also to undermine the existence pillars of the Arab community. Similarly, to "save" the land, meant "saving it" from its Arab owners. Zionist institutions were buying the land to place it "in trust for the Jewish people." Zionists permitted the

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- 1 Ministry of Agriculture Report on the Arab Villages, 1962.
  - 2 Eliezer Kaplan, the Brochure of Sociological Studies, the Faculty of Economics and Social Studies, The Hebrew University Sociology College Jerusalem, 1973, in Hebrew, p. 105.
  - 3 Don Peretz, Israel and Arabs of Palestine, Middle East Institute, Washington, 1958.
  - 4 Bulletin of the Custodian of Absentee Property, 16 January 1952, quotation from Don Peretz, Haaretz and The Jerusalem Post, 18 January 1952.



sale of this land to Jews only, and did not allow it to be sold to non-Jews. Zionists institutions pursued a land policy that reflects their ideology. The Jewish National Fund (JNF) allocated funds to this cause.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that any step – even a minor one, taken in contrast to the central Zionist effort, one that could forfeit any Zionist gain (i.e., return land to non-Jews, or remove a settlement) – was considered a failure and an abandonment of goals for it delayed the complete Jewish occupation of the land. Fulfilling pre-expropriation policies (for example, returning the villages of Iqrit and Bir'im to their Arab owners) was considered by Israeli journalist (Ze'ev Shef, *Haaretz* - 11/8/1972) as “undermining Zionist settlement,” because it will “open the first gap to destroying the whole building.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Military Rule and Hunting the Land**

The Arabs who remained in Israel found themselves under severe military rule. This military regime had two aims: first, to put barriers between the Arabs and their lands and villages, and second, to facilitate Jewish companies and the Israeli Land Authority in occupying Arab lands and establishing the settlements on the land of evacuated Arab villages. The military rule directed a large part of its efforts to excluding the Arabs from their lands and preventing their accessing the cease-fire lines as much as possible, thereby purifying the border areas of Arabs.

The Galilee Judaization project, which the Israeli rulers were busy setting up, was not new, but had been an aim of the settlements since before the establishment of the Israeli state. Menachem Ussishkin summarized this aim in a speech which he delivered in front of the Zionist Executive Committee in 1920 as follows:

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5 Ze'ev Shef, *Haaretz*, 11 August 1972, quoting from *Haaretz*, 15 June 1951: according to an Israeli source that Arab villages in the areas governed by Israel today numbered 863 in 1945.

6 Kimmerling Baruch, *The Land Struggle*, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1973, p 700.

We must extend an effort to put our hands on places that are far away from the settlement centers, to guarantee the widest borders to our country. When we established projects to buy lands, this aim was in our sight: to occupy distant areas. Moreover, the quality of the land, the desire to extend the borders has driven us, regardless of the difficulties.... This is the real occupation of the borders from political infiltration. Based on this approach, the JNF decided in the last year to extend its activity to speedily reach the borders in the north and the east. The motivating issue is not what we look forward to, but what we desire, to guarantee the expanding borders of our nation.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to the passage of the UN partition resolution in 1947, it was well known that the Galilee was to be designated as outside the Jewish state borders, and yet the Zionist Movement was preparing to occupy the Galilee before the establishment of the state. This aim was debated within the Zionist Movement, but the supporters of this idea won the debate, especially those who represented the Zionist Left and the Zionist Labor Movement.

The crisis which we were facing in Galilee is not due to development, but to the achievement of the Zionist goal, here articulated by David Ben-Gurion:

The settlement project can itself decide whether or not we should defend the Galilee. This decision depends on the people who felt it their duty to defend it. They (Jabotinsky) said that this is a diplomatic issue, the issue of relations with the Arabs (in the same meeting was discussed the fear that defending the settlement of the Galilee might turn into a full-scale war with the Arabs). The question was



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7 Bill Commission Report, 1937.

not diplomatic (meaning relations with Britain) and not in regard to the Arabs. This is purely a Zionist issue, which concerns the people who felt it their duty to defend it....

Hundreds of people can defend our position in the Galilee, surely if we supply them with food and so on, and if they get the political support. It is clear without this support, the situation will be difficult. But we (laborers) take this duty on our heads. If we can defend, it is our duty to fight and not leave our positions.<sup>8</sup>

It is clear that the government decisions, taken in 1975, to expropriate Galilee lands, had no relation to development, especially since the state suffered economic and immigration crises at the same time. The mask of “development” was stated to hide the primary aim of expropriation after the world became highly aware of the situation in the region in general, and of the Israeli-Arab conflict specifically. Israel occupied parts of the Galilee not allocated for a Jewish state according to the UN Partition Resolution of 1947, and annexed them using its military power. This region that came under Israeli rule was inhabited by an Arab majority and it remains so until today. In order to change this reality the Israeli rulers initiated the Zionist Judaization project, thinly disguised by labels such as “development” and “distribution of the population”.

Regardless of the intentions of the Israeli regime, we cannot ignore the Arabs who remained under Israeli rule, or their national collective rights, first and foremost their right to retain their properties and lands. From the first moments of the state’s establishment, the conflict between the Israeli regime and the Arabs who remained within the new state’s borders was based upon the Arabs’ right to keep

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8 Bill Commission Report, 1937. Ben Gurion’s speech was made during the meeting of the Interim Committee, 20 February 1920, which was held to discuss the steps that must be followed in the matter of Tal Hai and “the French Galilee.”

their lands, a right denied by the state.

The Israeli regime used threats as weapons against the Arabs who defended their lands. They accused them of being an enemy to the state and of having separatist tendencies. They followed this threat with repression, abuse, surveillance, and displacement to undermine Arab resistance to the policies of occupation of their land, or what remained of it after extensive expropriation campaigns.

With the objective view of a nation crushed by conspiracy and imperialist aggression, by both the Zionist movement and Arab reactionaries, our people have reached the conclusion that the only solution to our problems is not separation from Israel, but to seek a just solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

This solution must be based on a complete withdrawal from the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, and the recognition of the right of the Palestinian nation to establish an independent state on these lands. In addition, adjustment includes the recognition of the right of Arab refugees to return or to accept compensation for their loss and displacement.

When the Israelis talk about requiring loyalty of the Arabs in Israel to the state, the Arabs cannot understand such talk. They can only understand loyalty in terms of defending their lands as a priority, not as a commitment toward the authority which rules them, in order to achieve full equality for the Arabs in Israel.

If we look closely at the Israeli policies of implementing the expropriation of land, and turning the Arab population into a minority without land, it is a disillusion process aimed at eliminating the Arab's national entity. The official policy concentrates on dispossessing the Arabs of their land and defining Arabs, not as a national minority, but rather as comprised of various religious minorities. Regardless of Zionist policy, there exist national rights for every national minority, in addition to individual human rights. The Israeli regime has tried aggressively and in many ways to deprive the Arabs in Israel of their national rights, and to turn



us into a religious-cultural minority. The Prime Minister's advisor for Arab Affairs, Shamoel Toledano, admitted that government policy relating to Arabs in Israel blurs the differences between them and the people in the occupied territories in terms of the state's attitude toward them.

The direct consequences of this policy are made by the Israeli rulers themselves, and only they are responsible for them in the end.

### **The Development/Judaization Land Project**

After a wave of land expropriation in the 1950s from Arab owners who remained in Israel, in 1957, the government reported that Arab villagers had invested in repurchasing about 1,250,000 dunams of land that they had previously owned, and about half a million dunams of state propriety.<sup>9</sup>

To legalize the act of acquisition of the land that the state claimed from absentee properties, the government enacted the Land Acquisition Law (a ratification of procedures and compensation) in 1953. According to this law, the government set levels of compensation to be dispersed to the Arab owners of expropriated lands. Despite the difficulties of confirming the amount of land that was expropriated from the Arabs in Israel during that period, some official resources estimated that it ranged from 300,000 to 1,000,000 dunams.<sup>10</sup>

Upon its drafting, the law raised opposition from the communist party in the Knesset, and some of the Arab Knesset members associated with the ruling party, Mapai, such as Massad Qassis. The opponents of this law, primarily the communists, criticized its clear discriminatory purpose. The government claimed that the proposed law aimed to partition large properties in order to avoid the

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9 Don Peretz, Facts about Israel, the Israeli Information Desk, New York, 1957, p. 46.

10 Don Peretz, Facts about Israel, the Israeli Information Desk, New York, 1957, p. 46.

danger of feudalism!

According to this law, the government proposed giving land to the owners of expropriated land (from the absentee lands) on the basis of “loaning and renting,” with financial compensation of less than one tenth of the real price of the land at that time. In 1950, the government had offered 115 Israeli Lira for a dunam in some areas while such land was valued at 1250 Israeli Lira or more.<sup>11</sup> According to the Knesset Law Committee, the aim of this law was to give legitimacy to the expropriation of Arab land, while at the same time to compensate the Arab owners for the land.

*Ha’aretz* newspaper wrote, at that time, that the aim of the law was to legitimize the acquisition of Arab land by Jewish settlements that want to increase their size: “Nothing justifies giving legitimacy to particular settlements to exploit the state victory in defending itself against the invaders, to capture neighboring lands to serve their purposes...”*Ha’aretz* opposed the proposed law for three reasons: it was unjust; it lacked the political understanding of important factors necessary for rebuilding Arab society “whose farming life was damaged due to wrongful actions;” and it did not recognize that “taking over the minorities’ properties violates individual property rights.”<sup>12</sup>

The policy of expropriating the land from its Arab owners led to a decrease in Arab agriculture. The amount of cultivated land in Arab villages decreased from 49 dunams during the British Mandate to 3 dunams today. The Arab villages became sleeping barracks for workers, who left their villages daily to work in Jewish agriculture or industry, on farms and in factories built on their expropriated lands. Expropriation also prevented Arab villages from pursuing agricultural and

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11 Knesset Speeches, Volume13, pp. 889-898.Haaretz, 10 March 1953.

12 The Galilee Development Project, the Ministry of Agriculture Monthly Brochure, October 1975.



industrial development.

Fear about the land's fate, about unfulfilled possibilities of living and developing, and of vagrancy, as well as other consequences of the scandalous national discrimination policies in every arena, all fueled the popular protests that erupted during the general strike on 30 March 1976. The strike expressed the Arabs' rejection of the discrimination and expropriation policies that threatened their persistence in their villages and cities.

The Galilee Development Project, which officials fondly talked about, is a Judaization process threatening the Arab population's future. The Galilee extends from the Lebanese border to the Ezreel (Iben Amer) Valley and is 1.5 million dunams wide. It is inhabited by a majority Arab population, a troubling fact that has disturbed development policy-makers.

The crisis concerning the Galilee is the minority Jewish population who live there in comparison to the non-Jewish population, who comprise about 70% of the total population there. In 1973, the non-Jewish population in the Galilee was 147,000, while the Jewish population was 62,000. Some 40,000 non-Jewish residents live in the suburbs of Haifa and Acre, and in Tamra and Shefa'amr.<sup>13</sup>

The aims of Galilee Development Project were to:

1. Alter the demographic balance between the Jewish and non-Jewish populations through a long-lasting development project;
2. Transform the mountainous Galilee region to an area with a Jewish majority;
3. Guarantee an even distribution of the Jewish population in Galilee;
4. Strengthen the economy of the existing Jewish population and for those who would join them.

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13 Proposal for the Galilee Project, Ministry of Agriculture Monthly Brochure, October 1975.

Planners further explained:

The main crisis in the Galilee is the demographic relation (the nature of the population) between the Jewish and non-Jewish population, which does not exist equally in all the parts of Galilee. The main task of the proposal is to change the Galilee to an area with a Jewish majority. However, this goal is not executable in the immediate present. Therefore, it has been decided to undertake the project in two phases: the first phase will be completed in 1980, the second phase in 1990.

The project included the establishment of 8 industrial villages: three in the Western Galilee; two in the Segev settlements; and two in the Hazon area, in order to increase the Jewish population in these areas. To implement the plan, the project required a good deal of land owned by Arabs, since the territory of the new settlement project did not only include land already in the hands of the Israel Land Administration, but also presumed occupied Arab lands.

This “development” project is a clear indication of the government’s intentions and the type of development it has in mind. The Zionist notion about Arabs is, what is in our hands stays ours, what is in Arab hands we want, and it’s subject for negotiation.

After building the new Jewish city of Upper Nazareth, on the lands of the Arab city of Nazareth, and the villages, Ein Mahel, Reineh, Kufr Kanna, and al-Mashhad, the government is now trying to expropriate more than 4500 additional dunams, to extend Upper Nazareth, and tighten its grip on Nazareth, the largest Arab city in Israel. The land of the Arab city of Nazareth, for a population of about 40,000 inhabitants, has decreased to an area of 7,000 dunams, with a third of the land comprising monastic and governmental properties. Upper Nazareth, with 20,000 inhabitants, spans an area of 9,500 dunams. The size of Nazareth during the Mandate period



was 15,000 dunams for 15,000 inhabitants, but the state expropriated over half the territory for Jewish settlement in Upper Nazareth.

The government policy to solve the crisis of the lack of building/construction areas in the Arab villages is one of exchange. Arabs can be granted a dunam of land for housing construction in exchange for relinquishing to the state 10 dunams or more of farming or uncultivated lands. This forced swap is one more way of obtaining land from the Arabs.

The “development” project aimed at expropriating about 20,000 dunams of land. The state claimed that 8,000 dunams for the project is government land and 5,000 dunams is Jewish-owned land. The Arabs were to have continued rights on the expropriated land through sharecropping or the Passage of the Time Law. The government was not allowed to expropriate it without respecting the villages’ and farmers’ interests.

The lands that had been owned by the British High Commissioner were State property in name only. In reality, they belonged to villagers, recorded in this alternative way only due to the absence of local authorities under the British Mandate. No one has the right to own this land except the owners who lived on it, especially since these lands have been vital to Arab villages. There remains a dispute in the courts over some 60,000-70,000 dunams of land, as estimated by lawyer Hanna Naqara, and there remain unresolved issues in the courts concerning large portions of these lands.

In addition to the Galilee Development Project, there remain other unannounced expropriation projects which have been implemented without popular protest, even though they concern thousands of dunams of Arab land. A decision to close off a large portion of the al-Mal lands, in the center of the Galilee, belonging to Sakhnin, Arabeh, and Deir Hanna, and known to the military as area number 9, takes the state a step closer to expropriating large segments of village land, vaster

than the portion of land originally designated for the Galilee Development Project.

### **Settlement of the Lands in the North<sup>14</sup>**

The situation in the North on 1 April 1963 was as follows:

1. There were 42 Arab villages remaining, which had possessed 706,049 dunams of land on the day the state was established;
2. The Development Administration and the Absentee Properties Department had claimed ownership of 423,310 dunams from these villages;
3. Of these lands, 214,992 dunams were under dispute;
4. The remaining land was transferred to state ownership without dispute.

The following chart is an example of the changes that took place in land ownership between 1948 and 1963.<sup>15</sup>

Name of village	Land area of village (in dunams)	Land claimed by the state	Disputed lands	Land expropriated by the development administration	Land expropriated by the state without dispute
Sakhnin	69,003	35,796	4,669	254	31,127
Rami	25,240	10,965	10,965	-	-
Deir Hanna	34,500	11,006	2,817	110	8,159
Bi'inah	16,980	7,634	1,840	635	5,794
Arabeh	35,650	21,312	13,288	73	7,424
Majd al-Kroum	19,890	12,071	4,312	447	7,764
Me'elia	35,400	15,577	15,461	13,371	1,916

The expropriation policy-makers did not take into consideration the Arab community's need for land. The adopted land distribution policy was not equally

14 Acts of the Israeli Lands Administration Report, July 1963, pp. 76-77.

15 Acts of the Israeli Lands Administration Report, July 1963, pp. 76-77.



considerate of Israel's entire population – Arabs and Jews – and failed to regard the interests of those whose livelihoods depended on cultivating the land. The village of Kufr Qassem, a victim of fatal aggression in 1956, is a notable example of this disregard.

When the Triangle Area was added to the Israeli State under the Rhodes Agreement of 1949, Kufr Qassem owned 12,000 dunams of land, 8,000 of which were rugged terrain. The authorities expropriated 4,000 dunams from the village, leaving around 1,500 dunams of this land available for the village's use until 1952. Less than 4,000 dunams of cultivatable land were left for the village during a time when its population increased from 1,700 in 1949 to 6,500 in 1975. Additional expropriation orders threatened around 2,500 dunams of land from Kufr Qassem. Court rulings obtained by the government allowed for ownership over parts of this remaining land to be revoked, beginning in 1976.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Naqab Tragedy**

As has been discussed here, since the establishment of the state, and especially in its first years, the land expropriation process has taken place in the aftermath of the displacement of a majority of the Arab population and the eradication and occupation of entire villages. The Naqab tragedy remains ongoing, out of the world's sight, and the voices of protest go unheard.

In 1948, the Naqab population numbered 84,000 Bedouins, yet those who remained in the land following Israel's establishment totaled only 13,000. They lived in the north of the Naqab, near Gaza, Be'er al-Sab'a, and Be'er-Asluj. The military authorities controlled the Bedouin population with an iron fist by relocating them

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16 A memorandum sent from the Kafr Qassem Local Council to the Prime Minister's Advisor for Arab Affairs.

to limited areas. This uprooting caused the Bedouin community to suffer anarchy and disorder. Half of them were removed from their land, and transferred to areas that had been expropriated from other Bedouin tribes expelled in 1948.<sup>17</sup>

Today the Bedouin population of the Naqab numbers 30,000. Some members of this community have demanded the right to return to the lands they had inhabited in the past, which are being rented to Jewish citizens by the Israeli Lands Administration. In a speech to the Knesset, then Minister of Agriculture, Moshe Dayan reported on the process of land redistribution:

The Israeli Lands Administration began its work to administer land owned by the state and JNF [Jewish National Fund]. In the past year (1962) the administration finished accumulating state-owned land in the Naqab, which constituted around 4 million dunams, spanned from Remal Halots to the south. It finished drawing maps to allocate an additional 800,000 dunams near Eilat and further north...<sup>18</sup>

The ongoing Bedouin struggle against state institutions for recognition of their ownership of the land has provoked strong reactions by the authorities, who are seeking to expropriate more than 1.5 million additional dunams in the Naqab, and to evacuate the Bedouin from their land under the pretext of resettling them to new houses elsewhere. This expropriation project aims to establish a new international airport on the land where the Bedouin currently live. This airport project will not only consume currently-utilized Bedouin land in the Naqab, but will also sit upon other previously expropriated now government-owned land.



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17 Supplement Al Hamishmar Chutam, no. 252, 6 November 1974.

18 Speech given by Moshe Dayan, Minister of Agriculture, before the Knesset, on the Arabs' agriculture, February 1962.

### Population Explosion and the Expropriation Project

The government’s actions towards the Arabs in Israel has demonstrated a policy of confiscating land until reaching a dangerous shortage that threatens the future and the stability of the Arab population. Specifically, the expropriation policies and the aims behind them constitute a threat to the rights and needs of the Arab community.

There exists a dangerous shortage of land for the Arab population of Israel. Regardless, the Israeli government claims that 55% of the land owned by Arabs in Israel, currently under consideration for expropriation, is already state-owned property.

### Land Distribution in 1963

(Not including the Naqab Land, South Lod and Ramlah)

Total land used by the Arab villages	Farm land		Total uncultivated land	The percentage of the land owned by the state	
	State lands	Private ownership		Farm land	All lands
445,545			413,146		
	59,652	385,993		13.1%	55%

The above statistics show that the land owned by the Arabs in Israel is less than half a million dunams. The state’s land size, within the borders of June 4<sup>th</sup> 1967, was more than 21 million dunams, with more than 8 million dunams being cultivated land.

The 1973 statistics show that the Arab population in Israel was 412,000. Most of them lived in the Arab villages, and 46,000 of them in the Bedouin areas. Some

25% of the total Arab male labor force worked in agriculture.<sup>19</sup>

The decrease in Arab agriculture is no longer the biggest danger. Instead, the shortage of construction space and lands for public projects in Arab villages poses the greatest challenge. This is especially relevant for the near future (next decade) due to the high levels of natural population growth on the one hand, and the decrease of land availability on the other.

The Arab population has seen a steady growth of 4.1% every year from 1950-1973, in contrast to the natural growth among the Jewish population, which ranged from 1.7% to 2.6% during the same period. Based on this data, some statisticians project that the Arab population will double every 17 years, while the Jewish population will double only in 44 years. This data shows the necessity of expanding the building space in Arab villages to accommodate the growing population, especially since some Arab villages completely lack land for construction.

According to official data, the Arab minority in Israel is a young population. Around 70% of Arabs are less than 30 years old; 49.6% of the population is under 14 years old; 10.5% are between 15-19 years old; and only 3.7 % are over 65 years old. Statistics show that overpopulation in Arab localities has become a public health threat. The following chart gives a clear image of the over-crowding situation.



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19 Data reported for planning in minorities' villages in the Nazareth area, collaboration between the Center for Agricultural and Settlement Planning and the Ministry of Agriculture, 1963.

**Distribution of the population in residences per room<sup>20</sup>**

Sector	The proportion of the population by sector of numbers of persons residing per room				
	One person per room	1.01-1.5	1.5- 2	2.01- 4	4 and more persons per room
Jewish	43.6	13.2	13.2	27.7	3.3
Non-Jewish	15.4	3.3	22.7	33.5	25.1

The above chart shows that nearly 59% of the Arab population lives in overcrowded conditions, defined as more than two persons per room. It is not difficult to imagine how the situation will worsen in the coming decades, with the continuing expropriation of Arab land for geo-political aims, via policies not related to development, certainly not to development in the Arab sector.

The media has not concealed that the expropriation of Arab land in the Galilee is not for immediate development, due to lack of budgets and a Jewish population designated to live in the settlements planned for construction on the expropriated lands. Expropriation is a reserve plan for the future and a tool to change the demographics of the Galilee region.

**30 March 1976: Mobilization of the Masses**

Declared by the Arab masses in Israel for 30 March 1976, the general strike shook the whole state as if an earthquake, disrupting the plans of the Israeli government. Concerned that Arab unity would undermine Zionist efforts to suppress and divide the Arab population in Israel, the government responded to this strike with the armed forces, border guard, and police. The state's aggression against unarmed

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20 Central Bureau of Statistics, Israeli Annual Statistics Report, 1974.

protesters demonstrated its perception that there is no difference between the Arabs citizens of Israel and the Arab population in the occupied territories. The Prime Minister's Advisor for Arabs Affairs admitted as much. The solidarity of Arab citizens with the population in the occupied territories--a collective feeling of being a nation torn apart by Zionist, imperialist pursuits--increased with the declaration of the general strike, the demonstrations that took place, and the tragedy of martyrs and wounded from these events.

The general strike raised awareness around the world of the deep tragedy of the Palestinian Arab people, both inside of Israel and in the occupied territories, and of the dangers of Israel's policies towards them. Israel's policies threatened to push the region into a bloody conflict that could undermine international peace and security.

The reactionary rulers in Israel claimed that 30 March burned the bridges of coexistence between the Arab and Jewish nations. But we ask the questions, when was this coexistence founded, and under what conditions? By establishing 30 March as a historic Land Day, the Arabs rejected the so-called notion of "coexistence" between a horse and rider, a victim and executioner, a slave and master. Real coexistence must be based on complete equality of rights, on recognition of the rights of the Palestinian Arab nation, on the complete withdrawal from the occupied territories, and on the refugees' right to return to their homes or accept just compensation.

Our Arab masses' struggle is a substantial contribution to the quest for peace, and the building of bridges of understanding between the two nations. This struggle is an important and significant contributor to the Jewish democratic forces in Israel, which seek to stem the deterioration of Arab-Jewish relations.





# THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE LANDS AND ITS AGENCIES

The Committee for the Defense of the Lands was created to confront the dangers which threatened the remaining lands of the Arab minority in Israel. In the beginning of 1975 the details of a new State plan for land expropriation were unveiled. . The new plan would expropriate vast lands from the Arab community, even lands that were meant for construction in Arab villages, in order to add them for the "Galilee Judaization Project". On 29 July, 1975 a meeting attended by a number of campaign initiators for protesting the expropriation of Arab lands, took place in Haifa. The meeting also included heads of local authorities, council members, lawyers, physicians, intellectuals, land owners, and journalists. The outcome of this meeting was the decision to form the Committee for the Defense of the Lands. A call was made for an additional, comprehensive meeting to be held in the Grand New Hotel in Nazareth on 15 August, 1975. The meeting's most important decision was to hold a national conference to demand an end to land expropriation and to



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urge the public to oppose the expropriation and to support the conference.

The call was supported by thousands of citizens, all the public institutions, and the Arab local councils in Israel. The committee held numerous meetings in the Galilee and the Triangle area, and approached the Committee for Arab Population in the Naqab for Defense of the Lands in order to join efforts in this important, fateful battle for Arabs in Israel.

### **The Committee for the Defense of the Lands:**

The Committee for the Defense of the Lands consisted of the following members (both from the members of the Initiative Committee and others who joined them in the national conference):

1.	Al-Shaek Farhood Farhood		Rama
2.	Priest Elias Shakoor		Ebleen
3.	Reverend Shehadeh Shehadeh		Shefa Amr
4.	Jamal Trabeh		( the Head of Local Council Sakhnin)
5.	Mohammad Mare'e		Al- Mashhad
6.	Azmee Al- Nashashebe	Engineer	Ibilin
7.	Salem Jubraan	Poet	Nazareth
8.	Abd-Allah Jubraan	Teacher	Nazareth
9.	Azmi Bshara	University student	Nazareth
10.	Omar Saadee	Member of local council	Arabeh
11.	Mohammad Ali Taha	Writer	Kabul
12.	Omar Ebdah	Farmer	Kabul
13.	Deeb Abd-Allah	Merchant	Yarka
14.	Jamal Muade	Teacher	Yarka
15.	Dr. Saleem Makhoole	Physician	Kufr Yasif
16.	Mosa Basal	Council member	Kufr Yasif
17.	Hana Dala		Kufr Yasif

18.	Nemer Murqus	Council member	Kufr Yasif
19.	Faesar Abu- Younis	Council member	Sakhnin
20.	Azez Shhadeh	Lawyer	Nazareth
21.	Read Reziq	Pharmacist	Nazareth
22.	Khalid Deab	Physician	Nazareth
23.	Dr. Rasheed Sleem	Physician	Nazareth
24.	Samih Al-Qasim	Poet	Rama
25.	Fathe Shbetah	Physician	Qalansawe
26.	Dr. Hassan Matane	Physician	Qalansawe
27.	Abd- Alhafeez Jabalee	Architect	Taybeh
28.	Mohammad Ahmad Majadleh	Council member	Turaan
29.	Younis Mohammad Nassar	Head of council	Turaan
30.	Asad Yousef	Head of council	Yafa Nazareth
31.	Ibraheem Beadseh	Council member	Baqa Al-Gharbiyye
32.	Marwan Abu- Alheja		Tamra
33.	Asem Al-Kateeb	Merchant	Rama
34.	Saeed Assakleh	Merchant	Al-Maghar
35.	Dr. Basim Tuma	Dentist	Nazareth
36.	Mustafa Saleh Zedan	Council member	Arabeh
37.	Mohammad Saeed Naamneh	Head of council	Arabeh
38.	Bolos Hana Bolos	Landowner	Beine
39.	Waleed Al-Farhoom	Lawyer	Nazareth
40.	Baheej Qawar	Head of the retailers union	Nazareth
41.	Najeeb Al-Farhoom	Alderman	Nazareth
42.	Fuaad Hamdan	Guild member of the Secretariat of traders, crafts and private companies	Nazareth
43.	Matanes Matanes	Council member	Nazareth
44.	Moneeb Elias		Shefa Amr
45.	Subhe Hamada	Member of city council	Shefa Amr
46.	Mohammad Yousef Hassan	Landowner	Turaan
47.	Ali Rafea	Lawyer	Haifa
48.	Mohammad Abreh	Council member	Arabeh



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49.	Yaseen Yaseen	Farmer	Arabeh
50.	Fadel Naanemeh	Council member	Arabeh
51.	Khalid Mosa Mohammad	Council member	Arabeh
52.	Hassan Mahmoud	Vice Head Council	Reine
53.	Amin Tawfeeq	Council member	Reine
54.	Hussin Qasim Basol	Council member	Reine
55.	Awad Ahmad Athamneh	A member of the Democratic Front	Reine
56.	Amin Abd-Allah	Vice Head Council	Yafa Nazareth
57.	Anis Shaqoor	Lawyer	Haifa
58.	Mohammad Kewan	Lawyer and Council member	Umm al-Fahm
59.	Mohammad Mustafa Mhameed	Head of council	Umm al-Fahm
60.	Mosa Taboune	Merchant	Nazareth
61.	Rashid Saleem	Head of council	Ibilin
62.	Nasre Almor	Council member	Ibilin
63.	Ahmad Mustafa Kewan		Umm al-Fahm
64.	Mahmoud Mohammad Qasem	Council member	Umm al-Fahm
65.	Mohammad Meiaree	Lawyer	Haifa
66.	Hana Ibraheem	Writer	Haifa
67.	Mahmoud Huseen Nasre	Council member	Umm al-Fahm
68.	Ramze Khuri	Alderman	Acre
69.	Tawfeeq Tube	Member of Knesset	Haifa
70.	Abed-Alhameed Abu- Ateah	Vice Head Council	Taybeh
71.	Gassan Habeb	member of city council	Nazareth
72.	Ali Hamoud	Lawyer	Kabul
73.	Nure Al-Oqbee	Negev Bedouin Association	Ramle
74.	Abd-Al-Hafeez Drawsheh	Lawyer	Nazareth
75.	Abd – Al-Raheem Haj Yahya	Head of council	Taybeh
76.	Ahmad Masalha	Member of the national committee of local councils heads	Dabourieh

77.	Mohammad Zedan	National committee member	Kufr Manda
78.	Hana Mwis	Head of council	Rama
79.	Musad Qases	Head of council	Mi'ilya
80.	Al-Shakh Najeeb Mbda		Yarka
81.	Naeem Makhoul		Buqei'a
82.	Fayez Abass		Jat
83.	Kamil Khoure	Arab Students Committee	Acre
84.	Huseen Bisan		Jat
85.	Saeed Bader	Council member	Turan
86.	Yousef Naseeb Khaer	Head of council	Buqei'a
87.	Habeb Abu-Hlu	Lawyer	Rame
88.	Saleba Khamis	Journalist	Haifa
89.	Hana Naqara	Lawyer	Haifa
90.	Ghaze Hejaze		Tamra
91.	Ali Omar Zidan		Tamra
92.	Abd- Allah Nemer	Defending Committee secretary	Kufr Qasem
93.	Husne Iraqi	Lawyer	Tira
94.	Yahya Al- Jayowse	Lawyer	Qalansawe
95.	Mohammad Saeed Masarweh	Head of council Lawyer	Kufr Qarea
96.	Ali Sunea –Allah	Head of council	Deir Al-Asad
97.	Saeed Abu -Deeb		Majd al-Krum
98.	Saad H amada		Nahef
99.	Naef Badarneh	Poet	Buqei'a
100.	Hamada Badarneh		Arabeh
101.	Anes Abu- Rume		Tamra
102.	Mahmoud Saleh Khalile	Head council	Maker
103.	Naje Farah	Headmaster	Shefa Amr
104.	Waleed Khalaeh	Lawyer	Yafa Nazareth
105.	Adnan Athamneh	Lawyer	Reine
106.	Akram Brnase	Vice Head Council	Reine
107.	Saleem Ghareeb	Lawyer	Kufr Cana



108.	Yousef Azeze		Kufr Cana
109.	Kamer Al-Zahere	Vice Mayor	Nazareth
110.	Mohammad Asakleh	Lawyer	Maghar
111.	Subhe Al-Haj	Lawyer	Judaideh
112.	Ali Abu- Rayah		Sakhnin
113.	Mohammad Azume	Council member	Jaljuleh
114.	Ahmad Saber Masarweh		Taybe
115.	Reverend Reiah Abu –AL- Asal		Nazareth
116.	Nakhleh Elias Nakhleh		Rame
117.	Saeed Naief Abaas		Deir Hanna
118.	Saeed Barakeh		Shefa Amr
119.	Kalid Ahmed Habeb Allah	Council member	Ein Mahel
120.	Hassan Ali		Sakhnin
121.	Adeeb Mohammad Esmael		Mashhad

There were many local defense committees in Arab villages and cities. The Committee for the Defense of the Lands declared in the meeting which followed “Land Day”, its decision to expand the committee through the delegates who were nominated by their local council. We cannot provide a list of new nominees, as we do not have all the names.

### **The General Secretary for The Committee for the Defense of the Lands:**

1. Reverend Shehadeh Shehadeh
2. Saleba Khamees
3. Lawyer Hana Naqara
4. Lawyer Mohammad Meaeare
5. Musaad Qeses

Head of Mi’ilya Local Council

6. Mohammad Mahameed
7. Abd Al-Raheem Yahya
8. Yousef Naseeb Khaer
9. Lawyer Habeb Abu- Helu

Head of Umm Al –Fahem Local Council  
Head of Taybeh Local Council  
Head of Buqei’a Local Council



# **THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE 18/10/1975**

The National Conference, which was held in Nazareth with the participation of thousands, constituted the largest national conference held by the Arab population in Israel. This large conference declared that if the Israeli government does not retreat from its expropriation plans and Judaization of the land, a general strike and an organized demonstration in front of the Knesset would take place. When the government disregarded the Arab masses and local councils' demands, the Committee for the Defense of the Lands called for an extensive meeting in Nazareth on 6 March, 1976, and inviting to this meeting the National Committee of the Local Council Heads. Approximately twenty heads of Arab local councils attended the meeting.

This meeting brought forth the historical declaration of the general strike on 30 March, 1976 condemning the Arab lands expropriation policy.

This decision reflected the will of the Arab masses in Israel. The Committee for

the Defense of the Lands, which salutes the struggle and resistance of the Arab population, called on them to continue the battle for the defense of the land.. This book (The Black Book about Land Day 30/3/1976) is a documentation that illustrates a glorious part of our nation's struggle, and a black mark in the history of the national discrimination and persecution policy implemented by the Israeli authorities.

The Committee for the Defense of the Lands calls upon our people to tighten their bond and connection to the land, and defend it through our national unity.

### **The Land Defense Conference Decisions**

The public national conference, held in Nazareth on 18 October 1975, condemns the Israeli government's actions to expropriate additional Arab land in the Galilee, Triangle, and the Naqab, and called for an elimination of these procedures and governmental plans which are implemented under misleading pretexts such as development, population distribution, and others.

The ways in which the authorities treat Arab citizens reflects part of the government's policy since the establishment of the state. This policy compromises of social, political, and economic fields, and affects work opportunities, access to civil services, and national rights.

This policy undermines the Arab citizens' rights in their homeland, and contradicts the Charter of Human Rights, as well as the principles of democracy and equality. The coexistence between the citizens of one state requires equality and justice in the rights of both Arabs and Jews in order to create real peace between Israel and the Arab countries.

The conference declares that the Arab citizens in Israel insist on attaining all of their rights on the basis of equality and the pursuit of a just and stable peace between Israel and the Arab countries. Arab citizens call upon all Jewish forces who share



these beliefs, to advocate that peace will not exist if we do not implement all the resolutions of the Security Council, including the complete withdrawal from the Arab territories which were occupied in June of 1967, and the respect of the legal rights of the Arab Palestinian nation by the state of Israel.

The public National Conference, the representative body of all Arab issues, which is supported by liberal Jewish forces focuses on cooperation between the two nations, rejects the plans which deny Arab farmers their land and threaten to transform the Arab population in Israel to a nation without land under the pretext of “development”, “manufacturing” and “housing”.

The conference declares that the Arab masses do not oppose development. This conference was held to resist the expropriation of the lands of farmers and Arab citizens, and to reject the confiscation of villages to expand existing Jewish settlements or establish new ones on Arab property, violating the rights of the Arab population.

The conference confirms in particular its rejection of the expropriation of Arab lands to establish settlement areas in the Galilee, The Triangle, and The Naqab on the lands of Tufaneh, Yarka, Maker, Jdaidah, Mi'ilya, and Kufr Yasif in the West Galilee. The conference also rejected the acquisition of Reine, Kufr Cana, Ein Mahel, Al-Mashhad, Yafa Nazareth and Nazareth in the south and middle Galilee. It condemned the assault on the lands of Baqa al-Gharbiyye, Umm al-Fahm and its villages, Taybeh and others in the Triangle area.

The conference deeply condemns the government's procedures to take away land and herds from Arabs in the Naqab, and calls upon the government to recognize Arab ownership of these lands which they have held for centuries.

The conference protests against the policy of incorporating land of Arab villages with state land, by transferring them from the authority of local Arab councils to the Jewish local, regional, and municipality council authorities, paving the way to their

complete control. The conference also firmly rejects the State's land development project for the Galilee, and demands from the responsible authorities to approve the structural maps provided by the Arab local authorities over ten years ago.

The conference announces its ardent condemnation of the amendment to the property tax law and the compensation fund added in 1972, which considers the lands as land intended for building, and imposed on Arab farm owners thousands of Liras in taxes for each farming dunam. The conference also demands the State to return the law to its previous 1971 formulation, or to exempt the Arab villages from the new law's provisions as long as the land is still undeveloped or being used for farming and not building.

Because our villages are densely populated and people cannot continue living within the old village belt, the conference called upon the authorities to expand the building spaces in each village to build new houses. The conference demands from the State to prepare and implement affordable housing projects in Arab villages to resolve housing problems and to let the villagers live in their villages.

The conference condemns the policies implemented by the Israeli Land Administration of exploiting the housing crisis and the lack of licensed land for building in the Arab villages in order to occupy large spaces of lands which were originally expropriated from their owners. In return for ceding hundreds of meters which are meant for building purposes in the village, the Israeli Land Administration wanted tens of dunams from land located outside of the designated building spaces.

The authorities are responsible for allocating affordable housing spaces equally for Arab and Jewish citizens, and not confiscating these spaces to strip villagers of their land. The conference condemned the administrative and judicial proceedings that were resorted to by the government to expropriate land from communal villages such as Yaffa el Nasira (Nazareth), Ein Mahel, Turan, Iksal, Maghar and Dabourieh,



documented under the mandate time.

The conference calls for the recognition of the local council's ownership of this land so the council could use them for public benefits and housing projects. The Israeli authorities took over the lands which were registered in the name of the Mandate government; now they are also trying to take over the lands which were registered through the General Secretariat as being the High Commissioner's land for the benefit of these villages.

The conference adamantly refuses every part of the expropriation and declares that the Arab masses would not keep quiet about the expropriation and would not give in to the policy that was throttling and impoverishing their villages by stripping owners of their land. The Arab masses will keep their struggle with all their power to foil this brutal policy against the danger that threatens its national and individual existence.

The conference sees that the government was required by the Israeli judicial system to limit the expropriation of additional Arab lands.

Our popular conference decided to establish a follow-up committee to work on implementing the conference decisions and keeping in touch with all the competent institutions that would help stop Arab land expropriation projects in Israel. The conference decided that the follow-up committee should consist of members of the preparatory committee from the conference, as well as representatives from the national committee of the Arab local authorities in Israel. However, it would also open the door to representatives of agencies and regions in the country that are not represented in this committee to join the follow-up committee.

The conference appreciated the solidarity of people and representatives of different Jewish institutions that participated in this conference and called on the Israeli public to understand our painful crises concerning the loss of land. They also called for help and support for our just defense of the lands, which means a



lot to us, working with the spirit of equality and democracy in Israel to respond to our calling. We declare that we keep the door opened to the land representatives and in coordination with the National Committee to the Arab Local Council's Heads Conference. The conference cast the responsibility on the follow-up committee to prepare an adequate memorandum to be presented to the prime minister in order to prevent the expropriations and joining projects, the unfair property distribution, and all other forms of discrimination and prejudice against the Arab population in Israel.

The conference called upon the follow-up committee to prepare different national, judicial, and legal activities to achieve the goals of the conference and stop the expropriation of Arab land.

The conference called on the Arab masses in Israel to maintain their unity in defending their land and rights. It also appealed to the Arab local authorities to use every legal method to defend the land in their villages and cities. The conference decided to send a delegation to the Knesset to contact all the parliamentary groups. The follow-up committee would send a request to the Knesset in order to set a date for this meeting. The delegation would contain members of the follow-up committee and representatives of the defending committees.

# TESTIMONIES

## Deir Hanna

**Excerpts from the account told by Mr. Muhmmad Nemir Hussain,**

Mayor of Deir Hanna

The total area of the village's lands is approximately 15,900 dunams (1). Through the Land Settlement Operations that were carried out from 1956 onwards, the authorities expropriated about half of the village's lands, on the pretext that these lands were rocky or rugged, despite the fact that they include farming and afforested lands.

The village's population is 3500, who depend on farming and working as the source of their livelihood. The village has 2 elementary schools. A cooperative association has been established with the purpose of linking the village with an electricity network. This project cost 4 million Lirat, which were paid by the locals without any help by the government or its various bodies.

The total area of Deir Hanna's lands in area 9 (2) is approximately 7000 dunams. Part of this area is basically woods, while the rest is farming land that includes olive, figs, grapes and some almonds trees. The locals used these lands with no need for any permit by anybody.

On 13/2/1976, the local council received a letter from the commissioner, stating



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that the mentioned area 9 is a closed area, whereby anyone who enters this area shall be subject to legal penalties.

The local councils of Deir Hanna, Arrabah and Sakhnin met Mr. Asher Ben Natan, Defense Minister Advisor, on this regard. A delegation from the mentioned councils told Mr. Natan that they reject the decision of closing down the area and prohibiting anybody from entering it without a permit. The delegation demanded that the locals should keep using their lands as they had been doing previously.

The local council in Deir Hanna decided to participate in the operation for lands defense, answering the call by the National Committee for Lands Defense for a strike on 30/3/1976.

On 29/3/1976, a joint meeting was held between the local council and the Local Committee for Lands Defense. A unanimous decision was made. The strike must be peaceful. Violence must not be allowed in any shape or form. The strike will be a form of protest against expropriations and against the closing of area 9.

On the same day, a number of council members held a meeting. The members were: Mr. Khalil Khatib, Mr. Gharib Abu Al-Hof and others from the local councils of Arrabah and Sakhnin. Their meeting was with police officers from the police stations of Shefa-A'mr and Sakhnin. The delegation from the 3 villages informed the police about the peaceful strike; they asked the police not to send any forces to those villages since this would result in friction, arrest and provocation. The police officers agreed to these demands.

The members of the delegation went back to their villages. The Deir Hanna delegates went back to their village as well. However, it turned out that the police did not keep their promise. Mr. Ali Hussain, a villager from Deir Hanna, and the secretary of the Local Committee for Land Defense, was arrested.

**An excerpt from the account of Mrs. Fatima Daghsh**

... Around 7:30 p.m. on 29/3/1976, I was sitting with my children in the house watching television. We heard some screaming and noise. 30 soldiers entered the house. They asked for my son, Jamal. He was not home, so they beat up my son, Abed (who was 15). They hit him on the head and the back. I wanted to protect my son, so they beat me with sticks on my neck and back. Then they broke the door and the glass of the windows.

On their way out, they noticed women and children. They beat them up, and took some children as hostages. They were shooting as they were entering and exiting.

### **An excerpt from the account of Mrs. Naifeh Diab Khatib**

On 30/3/1976, around 6 a.m., I was sitting on the balcony of our house. 2 cars with policemen raided the house. My children were sleeping in their underwear.

The policemen got to my children before I did. They woke them up and hit them with sticks. My children were little, and they began to scream.

They hit me with sticks as well, right on my hands and abdomen. My left hand is still swollen as a result of the beating. They pulled 2 of my children out, while beating them, and threw them in the car, where they continued to beat them.

My children had done nothing unusual on the previous day. On the contrary, they went back from their work in the village of Eilaboun.



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## The first attack on Arrabah, and the first martyr:

### **The statement of Mr. Mahmoud Said Na'amneh – Mayor of Arrabah**

In this article, I would like to shed light on the issues and events of Land Day from the onset in a chronological manner. I summarize the events in the following points:

#### **First: The issue of Area 9 and its general circumstances.**

Before discussing the circumstances of the events, I would like to talk about this area:

- a. **Geographical location:** Area 9 is located in the Galilee. Topographically, it is a plain area used for farming. Most of the area is planted with fruit trees such as olives and other fruits. In the other part, many kinds of grains and vegetables are planted.

The farming land located within Area 9, which was closed down and subject to the danger of expropriation, is approximately 17 thousand dunams.

The population surrounding the land – especially the 3 villages: Arrabah, Sakhnin and Deir Hanna, in addition to A'rab Al-Sawa'ed – is around 25-27 thousand. Hundreds of families are utterly dependent on this land.

- b. **Ownership:** this land belongs directly to the Arabs living in the area. The lands were obtained by inheritance, legitimately and legally, and in accordance with registration certificates (title deeds) that were issued by the Ministry of Justice/Land Registration Department in Israel.
- c. **Damages resulted from the area as a military zone:** the area has become dangerous to farmers and their livestock. Around 100 people lost their lives as a result of the military zone. On Sunday, 1/6/1975, a 22-year-old lost his life as a result of a mine explosion. His name was Ma'moun. He went out for

a picnic with his cousins on the weekend, and came back a dead body.

- d. **Restraining order:** on 13/2/1976, the police issued an order preventing the population from entering the area, stating: “Whoever enters the mentioned area for any reason, will be subject to penalty under the law. He shall be treated as someone entering a military zone without a permit”. In addition, this order is preliminary to land expropriation, as it is usual for this area.

This issue angered the population, especially the farmers, who felt the imminent danger threatening the livelihood of their families. The people of the villages decided to stand up and justly start a protest; a protest that was expressed in the Sakhnin conference that was held on 14/2/1976.

Following the mentioned conference, our protest continued to be covered by all media and press conferences, through which we explained to the local and global public opinion about how much we are suffering as a result of this grave step made by the authorities to strip us of our lands. These lands bear our identity, existence and the source of our farmers’ livelihood. This forced the Ministry of Defense to invite the representatives of the people of those villages. Those representatives included mayors and members of local councils. After we explained to the officials the essence of our cause and the logic of our just protest, they reached the conclusion that it would be wise to waive the closure order.

We considered that to be a positive step, but not a complete and just solution for our cause. The area was divided into two sections: A and B. In section A, farmers may practice their work where no military maneuvers would be performed. The mentioned area would be cleared of military leftovers, such as explosives and others. Entering this area would need a collective permit for an entire year given to the local authority. Section B, however, would include military maneuvers and entry would be denied without a military permit.

But the essential issue is that the land would still belong to its owners, whereby no



expropriation would be performed on their lands, except for Section A or Section B.

Recently, however, we heard in the media that the government is determined to install settlements in area 9, which raised the concerns of the population again.

### **Second – the Nazareth meeting on 6/3/1976: regarding the issue of expropriating Arab lands.**

We were invited to the mentioned meeting along with the Committee for Defending Arab Lands. In the presence of representatives of the local defending committees and the national committee for defending lands, as well as mayors and members of various local authorities, the meeting issued a decision on 30 March 1976 according to which a public strike for the Arabs in Israel would take place in their cities and villages, in protest against the government's policy of expropriating Arab lands in the Galilee. We considered the declaration of the strike a legal protest against a step made by the government to strip Arab farmers of their land, where their very existence would be in question.

However, the officials did not stand idly regarding this step. Thus, recurrent meetings were held by officials in the Ministry of Interior with the local authorities, and by other officials of other ministries, in order to prevent the Arabs in Israel from achieving this step. Periodical meetings were held between the mayors of the Arab towns and the CO Northern District. A meeting for the mayors of the towns was held in Shefa-A'mr on 25/3/1975. This meeting was nothing more than a farce. Following the meeting, the media announced that the local authorities represented by its leaders did not want any strike. It was the communist party, however, who wanted to impose on the local authorities and on the Arab public something that they did not want. However, the issue in my opinion was more

than a narrow party conflict. For us, this issue was a matter of our very existence in this country. The issue was a direct threat to hundreds of families who were dependent on the produce of those lands as a source of income and livelihood.

On 29/3/1976, on the eve of the strike, the representatives of the three villages of Sakhnin, Arrabah and Deir Hanna went to the police station of Sakhnin, "Segev", and the police station of Shefa-A'mr. We met the police commissioner of the Northern District of Acre.

We explained to them that the strike would include our three villages, in line with the general position of the Arabs in Israel. In addition, it would be wise for the police not to send any forces to the mentioned villages on that day. If they did so, it may result in clashes between the local population and the police. We clarified that this was not what we wanted or wished for. Moreover, we explained that our strike would be peaceful. It was to be a protest within the limits of the law. Furthermore, there were no governmental institutions in our villages, so there should be no concerns about the protesters attacking such institutions, and the police did not have to worry about protecting them.

I personally demanded the release of the Deputy Mayor of Arrabah, Mr. Fadel Na'amneh, since he could help us preserve law and order on 30<sup>th</sup> March, the day of the strike.

Truth be told, the officials whom we met expressed their initial approval of that demand.

However, things did not go as we had expected. We never imagined that the army forces would enter the above-mentioned villages.

While we were meeting with the police commissioner of the northern district, Mr. Franco, (on 29/3/1976), we received the news about the clash between the military forces and the protesters in Deir Hanna. When I returned to my village, I was told that the army had entered Arrabah. As a result of their the entering



the village and opening fire, 9 people were injured. One of them was the martyr Kheir Muhammad Yassin, who was wounded by a bullet, and was moved to the governmental hospital in Naharia where he eventually passed away that very night. I gathered a great number of people at the village square, and asked them to calm down and go home at once. Indeed, the village calmed down, people went back to their houses. I, however, stayed with some of the local council members at the local council building all night. We did not sleep. When I was told that Kheir Yassin who had been taken to the hospital, had died of his wounds, I called the Sakhnin police station, so that they should arrest those involved in this act, until everything became clear. However, I was unable to talk to the police commissioner because he was at the Segev police station at that time. At 3:00 a.m. I went to the Segev police station together with some of the local council members, in order to clarify the situation and discuss how we should act in the face of this grave reality. The security forces, however, did not give me the opportunity to meet the commissioner. They prevented me by force and started cursing me. Thus, I went back to the local council.

### **Third – 30<sup>th</sup> March**

During the early hours of the morning, when people were still in their beds, I went out to the empty and calm streets of the village. Suddenly, I heard something from afar. It was the sound of the loud speaker breaking the silence of the morning of that day. I thought that the sounds were coming from the village itself, so I went to the source in order to shut it up. As I was approaching the source, I saw police cars followed by armored vehicles breaking the silence and making a very loud noise in the streets of the village. The voice coming out of the speaker was calling: “People of Arrabah Al-Battouf, attention, attention, walking around is prohibited”. Anyone

opening their door to hear this were subject to curses and humiliation. When they saw me, they hit me with cudgels. However, when I explained to them that I was the mayor of the town, they apologized and took me to the police car, then drove along the streets of the village warning people about the curfew.

Afterwards, they went to the local council building. It was around 6:15 when I received the curfew order. Curfew Order: According to the Emergency Laws of 1945.

The curfew order was applicable to 30/3/1976 between 1:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The order forbade any citizen to leave his house during the specified hours. It bore the signature of General Rafael Eitan, Commanding Officer, Northern District.

The army forces spread throughout the village. They insulted everyone they saw. The people of my village suffered greatly from beating and torture.

The army forces and police clashed with many citizens who were doing nothing wrong, except going out and standing in the yards of their houses. Whenever the police or the army saw a woman, a child, an elderly person or a young man, they would insult and beat him unnecessarily.

At 9:00 a.m. on 30/3/1976, the people of the village heard the news about the murder of Kheir Yassin. As a result, they took to the streets where chaos erupted, and the security forces lost control of the curfew.

At 11:00, the police officer came to me with members of the military. They asked me to meet General Rafael Eitan, who had signed the curfew order, who was at the entrance to the village.

When I met him, he asked me to preserve order in the village. He gave me 2 hours to do so, from 11:00 to 01:00 p.m. If I managed to do so, he would take the army and the security forces out of the village. When I came back to the local council, I invited the members of the local council to an emergency meeting. The local council issued a statement to the public via a speaker, asking the people to calm



down, go back to their houses and not leave them, so the army would depart from the village, especially since the situation had become threatening to peoples' lives. Afterwards, we addressed the armed forces with their tanks and armored vehicles in the streets of the village, and inform them that order had been restored. So, they asked us to take them out using the shortest way.

It was a very critical time. But we managed to take them out of the village, without any opposition. Since that hour: i.e. 1:00 o'clock, nothing happened to disturb the situation.

The security forces withdrew from the village.

However, the results of the clashes of that day and night in my village were as follows:

8 people were wounded. One of them was a 12-year-old school-boy, who had 4 bullets in his body. 23-year-old Kheir Yassin was martyred; the furniture of 3 houses was destroyed; 40 detainees were tortured; and many other losses.

What happened on 30<sup>th</sup> March does not honor the Israeli government.

Some people just wanted to express their protest against a certain injustice they had experienced. The protest was legal. It was our democratic right.

We wanted our protest white and peaceful, but they turned it into bloody red.

We demanded the formation of a committee of inquiry. We sent letters of protest to the Prime Minister and to the heads of all the political parties in the Knesset.

However, there was no answer.

They set up a committee of inquiry consisting of the army and the police, who reached the conclusion that there was no need for any inquiry.

What happened on 30<sup>th</sup> March does not honor the Israel government.

### **Excerpts from the account of Mrs. Samya Muhammad Tawfiq**

My son, A'aref, was standing close to the road. A group of army men took him. When I heard the news, I went out of the house to see what had happened to my son. I saw a group of soldiers (around 5) beating my 16-year-old son. When I tried to save him, they started beating and cursing me.

I went back home. After a short while, some armored vehicles full of soldiers entered the village. There were little children of 7 and 8 on the street.

The soldiers began to run after the kids shooting and throwing gas bombs. They invaded my house and found my two little kids (one is 12 and the other is 2).

The soldiers began to break the furniture of the house. They broke the closet, 2 windows, the coffee pot, the dishes and all the equipment in the house.

They hit my 12-year-old son, and threatened my youngest son in order to intimidate him.

### **Excerpts from the account of Mrs. Tamam Muhammad Badarneh**

I'm 45 years old. I'm married and have 10 children. On the night of 30/3/1976, I was with my husband and kids in our house. We heard the sound of shooting, but we did not go out of the house.

On the morning of 30/3/1976, we heard the speakers calling for us to stay home, so we did.

My 16-year-old son, Ahmad, was standing close to the gate. The soldiers threw a firebomb at him. As a result, his chest was burned from his neck to his stomach. Then they took him, and I took him back later on. It was around 8:00 a.m. I followed them to the water pool towards the villages borders. They did not listen to my demands, despite my begging. They tied up my son with ropes and took him, despite the wounds and burns on his body. Afterwards, they came back and



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started to beat me with sticks. They threw me to the ground and kicked me with their feet, and hit me with their rifles. Meanwhile, my other son, who is 24, came in order to save me. But he was beaten and arrested.

I'm still in pain. The scars of the beating can still be seen on my body.

## Sakhnin

### **The statement of Mr. Jamal Tarabeh – Mayor of Sakhnin**

Before 30<sup>th</sup> March, days were moving fast, until that day came heavy under a burden of 28 years of pain. Out of that pain, hope and determination will rise.

I admit here that I wasn't expecting the ramifications of that day. I wasn't expecting its grave events, especially after we had been lectured about democracy, modernity and development of the state. My eyes and ears couldn't believe what they saw and heard from those soldiers who came to us in the name of law and order.

The day that was announced by the Arabs as a day of strike against the policy of expropriation that had inflicted them for 28 years in order to strip them of their lands, has become a day of tragedies and epics carried out by our unarmed people against the lethal weapons that could not defeat our persistence and defense of the land.

On the eve of 29<sup>th</sup> March, I stood before the people of my village, Sakhnin, and asked them to express their anger through silence and a quiet strike, so we may add a sense of dignity and calmness as if we had lost someone. However, things did not work as planned. When I was invited that evening to the police station, the situation in Deir Hanna had started to deteriorate. Thousands of shots penetrated the houses. We could see the flashes of their fire from Sakhnin. Dozens of casualties began to fall one after the other.

The people of Sakhnin are used to helping other people. When they see their neighbors getting killed and injured for their land, what would you expect them to do? The people of the village gathered at the main street. Showers of bullets targeted them, and they started to bleed for our dear homeland. From behind the glass of my house, I saw the mad operations of the security forces against the people; thousands of shots were fired. 50 wounded, 70 detained, and 3 martyrs; groups of youths handcuffed to a wall or a tree under the curfew order that did not make sense to us at all.

The commissioner of the northern district, General Rafael Eitan said to me: Either you stop fighting the security men, or I will further strike the village. I laughed desperately and asked for time. But everything started to be clearer. We now know the names of the martyrs: Raja Hussain Abu Raya, Khader Khalayleh, Khadijah Shawahneh. The people were shocked and extremely sad and angry. The security men started to dance and sing: “the people of Israel live”. I wondered: Is this what makes them happy? I promised myself to count the number of casualties. I looked from afar at the lands of Sakhnin, then started thinking about the ramifications of Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> March.

**From the statement of Mr. Said Muhammad Abu Rayya (cousin of martyr Raja Abu Raya)**

I was born in 1945 in the village of Sakhnin. I’ve been working as a painter ever since I was 12.

Raja Abu Raya, may he rest in peace, is my cousin. He used to work as a bleacher and was my neighbor.

On 30/3/1976, I woke up at 5:00 a.m. as usual. A few minutes later, a Jeep patrol car of the Border Guards passed by through the road east of my house. One of the



soldiers said via the speaker on the car, that as of that moment, a curfew was in place. People were not allowed to leave their houses.

Around 6:00 a.m., another car passed by, and a group of infantry soldiers passed by ordering me to close the windows, so I did.

My little 4-year-old son was with me. The soldiers yelled at me to get into the house or “this” will make me understand. He was pointing at the Uzi machine-gun. So I took my kid and got into the house following his orders.

Later on, I observed the soldiers as they were entering my parents’ house, 5 meters away to the north of my house. One of the soldiers was cursing my father who was almost 100 years old. My mother was only 7 years younger. I protested from my balcony, and they asked me to shut up and close the door.

Around 7 a.m., civilian cars were driving teachers to the north, towards the school. They did not seem to know about the curfew, so the soldiers were forcing them to go back and started to shoot around them.

Around 9 a.m., I heard shots and screams from the northern side. So I went out and saw Raja Hussain Abu Raya, may he rest in peace, lying in the hands of our neighbor, Muhammad Mutlaq Abu Raya. The martyr was shot in the face. Muhammad and I took him in my private Peugeot to the governmental hospital in Naharia.

The military and police forces did not facilitate moving the wounded man to the hospital. They stopped my car for almost an hour using the curfew as a pretext: “we are waiting for orders, and it isn’t important whether he dies!”

The late Raja was bleeding as we were waiting and arguing with the soldiers. One of them said: “We are delaying you on purpose. We want him to die so the others will learn a hard lesson. This is the day for your dead!”

The soldiers broke the glass of my car from the back with their rifles, because I was trying to move against their will in order to save the wounded man on the back seat.

An hour later, we were allowed to move to the hospital in Naharia where we put the wounded man on the bed in the emergency room.

After a while, another wounded man was brought in from Sakhnin. He was Omar Hussain Abu Raya. We entered the room with him, and saw that he was put on the same bed without receiving any treatment.

He had been shot in his left cheek. I noticed that when he was moved to the hospital, and when I went to identify his body on 31/3/1976 at the medical anatomy institute of Abu Kbeir.

**From the statement of Mr. Qassem Shawahneh (father of martyr Kadijeh Shawahneh)**

On the morning of 30/3/1976, I was in my house when I heard the speaker announcing the curfew. So, I told everyone in my family to stay home.

At around 7:30, we heard some screams coming from outside. Khaled, the 9-year-old kid, ran towards the rising voices.

My wife asked our daughter, Kahdijah, to go out and bring her brother, Khaled, back to the house. She then followed her to see what was going on. They ran into some soldiers, who asked them to go back home. Kahdijah turned her back to the soldiers and was going back to the house with her mother. However, the soldiers shot her in the back, and she fell in the street 50 meters away from the house. Khadijah was martyred a single young woman of 23.

**From the statement of Abed Mahmoud Khalaileh (father of martyr Kahder Khalaileh)**

On the morning of 30/3/1976, I was having some coffee with my son, Khader, at the balcony of our house in Sakhnin. We heard the speaker announcing the curfew.



Suddenly, we saw a group of soldiers close to our house. They ordered us to go inside and started to shoot.

At around 7:30, teacher Amneh Muhammad Ammar was on her way to school. She ran into a group of soldiers. The soldiers ordered her to go back home. When she turned her back to go back to her house, they shot her at once. There were screams and noises. We heard people say that teacher Amneh was killed. Others said that she was wounded.

Khader and I went out to help and move her to the hospital.

Khader arrived on the scene before I did. As he was trying to help her, they shot him. He was wounded together with another person called Mr. Majeeh Ahmad Khalaileh as they hurried up to save the wounded.

Khader was shot in the head and the arm. He died instantly.

## Kfar Kanna

### **From the statement of Mr. Yahya Taher Amara**

At around 12 p.m. on 30/3/1976, I was climbing the stairs inside my house from the first to the second floor. I had reached the end of the stairs next to the balcony when I noticed a group of soldiers with helmets, cudgels, Uzi weapons and guns, invading the area from east to west in the street next to my house. I saw them from a distance of 50 meters, using their machine-guns to shoot at the house of Mr. Radwan Said Asa'ad who was in his yard.

The soldiers continued their attack westward, where they met Mr. Yasser Muhammad Khamayseh who was headed eastward to his house. Two soldiers attacked him and started hitting him with sticks all over his body near the entrance to my house. Afterwards, 8 soldiers attacked my house, while the others continued their way westward.

The soldiers entered the ground floor in my house, and started hitting my wife, daughters and sons brutally. I went down from the upper floor to protect my family who were screaming for help. When I was still half way down the stairs, one of the soldiers tried to shoot me.

Fortunately, I was not hit. The bullets hit the iron fender. The marks are still there. One of the soldiers threw a tear gas bomb inside one of the rooms in the ground floor of my house. My kids were inside the room. One of them was a baby only 40 days old.

Despite the shooting, I continued to climbing down the stairs to rescue my family. I saw 3 soldiers hitting my son, Ahmad, mercilessly all over his body. As a result, his nose was broken, which required him to receive treatment at the Holy Family Hospital in Nazareth.

They hit him on his head, his left arm and his back. My son's watch fell off as the soldiers were hitting him. One soldier picked it up and they left my house to the main street, shooting at anyone they saw in the street; shooting at the nearby houses, including the house of Mr. Gazi Abbas Taha.

I began treating my son, Ahmad, at once. Suddenly, I heard a loud scream. I left my son and hurried up to the main street. I saw the deceased Mr. Muhsin Hassan Said Taha lying in the hands of Mr. Rajab Muhyee Al-Din Mustafa Taha. Mr. Rajab carried him to the car of Mr. Salah Nayef Hamza, who moved him to the hospital. I followed the soldiers from afar, so they would not notice me and shoot me. I arrived at the headquarters on the main street.

I asked for the commanding officer, and someone told me that he was the commanding officer. I told him what had happened in the village; about murdering martyr Muhsin, hitting my son and robbing his watch.



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BOOK**

He asked me: can you identify the soldiers who did this? I pointed out 2 of them who were in a Jeep. One of them said to me that the watch had fallen in the grass. When I assured him that it was not there, another soldier kicked me; he was the one who had grabbed the watch from the floor.

The commanding officer ordered me to enter the patrol car that was there. It had 5 people arrested in it from Kfar Kanna. Their hands were bound behind their backs with plastic cuffs.

A few minutes later, as I was still in the car (my hands were not cuffed), my uncle, Amin Taha, and district's governor passed by. They inquired about the incident, and I told them what happened. Meanwhile, the district governor intervened and asked for my release, promising to give back my son's watch. I went back home to take my son to the hospital. His watch was never returned.

### **From the statement of Mr. Rajab Muhyee Al-Din Mustafa**

At around 12:15 on 30/3/1976, I was near my house when I heard the noise of shooting and saw 3 soldiers with combat helmets, shooting at the people and houses of the village. The kids were screaming and running aimlessly everywhere. I arrived close to the house of my sister, Subheyya, and heard her shouting as she saw me "they killed Muhsin!" (My sister is Muhsin's aunt). She pointed to a place that was 5 meters away where she had found Muhsin, the 15-year-old boy, lying on his back. His face was covered in blood, and he was motionless, maybe fainted. He was there alone, and I was the first to approach him. When I found him like that, I looked at the soldiers and raised my voice and hand in their faces: "You killed the boy, you bastards!"

Before I could finish my cry, they threw 2 gas bombs at me, and I almost suffocated. However, I did not leave the place. I yelled at a driver from the village to take the

kid to the hospital.

Mr. Salah Nayef came by with his car, followed by Amin, Muhsin's brother (who was 56 years old).

We took Muhsin's body to the car, and hurried up to the Holy Family Hospital in Nazareth, where he was taken to the emergency room. They asked for blood, so I donated some of mine. Muhsin was later taken to Rambam Hospital in Haifa where he passed away.

Musin was murdered with 2 bullets in his young forehead.

## Taybeh

### **From Noor Shams to Taybeh**

#### **From the testimony of Mr. Abdul Kader Thaher**

I'd known martyr Ra'fat Ali Zuheri who lost his life on the soil of our village, Taybeh, on Land Day.

He was from Nour Shams village in the occupied West Bank. He was 21 when he was martyred.

He used to work at a biscuit factory in Ramat Gan. He had started working there a month and half prior to his martyrdom.

On 30/3/1976, Land Day, he did not go to work, but came to Taybeh instead to visit his relatives. That was the day when the police and army forces launched their attack on the villagers. They beat them with cudgels, fired at them, and threw teargas bombs. Ra'fat went out to the street near the Poalim Bank in Taybeh, where the security forces' assault on the villagers reached its climax. The forces continued their attack and started shooting indiscriminately. Blood was flowing



like a river from Ra'fat's forehead, as he was lying on the pavement near the bank. A number of young men hurried up and took him by car to the hospital.

The car took off to the hospital. However, Ra'fat passed away before the car had left the village. They reached the hospital. There, the physicians verified his death. The authorities carried out a wide arrest operation. At midnight on 31/3/1976 they raided my house, smashed the furniture, intimidated my kids, hit my wife, pointed their weapons at my kids' chests, then cuffed me and took me to the armored vehicle that was waiting outside 100 meters away. On the way to the armored vehicle, they beat me up with their weapons and sticks. Once we arrived there, the Shin Bet men kicked me in my balls! They pulled my hair and banged my face against the iron of the armored vehicle. A wound opened in my forehead, and I started to bleed. Then they threw me into the back of the armored vehicle and sprayed gas in my face from a device that they had. When the armored vehicle took off to the police station in Teireh, they started cursing me, hitting me with a whip and the bottoms of their weapons. I passed out. However, whenever I regained consciousness they would hit me again. At the police station in Tira, they continued to hit us. They poured cold water on us then took us to the police station in Kfar Saba. On the way, they had a flat tire. So they uncuffed two guys and ordered them to replace the tire. Meanwhile, others were pointing their guns at my head and kicking me. At the Kfar Saba police station, they squeezed us into a room that looked like a dungeon. They continued to hit us, shouting hysterically: "We didn't want to get our hands dirty. You should have been taken when you were young, so we wouldn't get our hands dirty now. Terrorists, communists, scum of the earth, sons of bitches".

As a result of the beating, the hands of two guys were broken. Afterwards, a new kind of torture began. They ordered us to face the wall and raise our hands for a long time, whoever lowered his hand due to exhaustion, they would beat him up,

and then order us to stand on one leg for a long time. When we fell on the floor, one after the other, because we couldn't stand for a long time after the severe torture, they beat us up again.

They prevented us from going to the bathroom; they prevented food and water. When we asked them to take the guys whose hands were broken to the hospital, the security men shouted at us: "This is your destiny, and you shall die here". However, after we insisted hard, they took the wounded guys to the hospital.

During the night hours, they started their interrogation. In the interrogation room, 5 soldiers stood there with their sticks and whips; on their fingers they wore tapered iron punchers.

The interrogator accused with charges such as setting fire to the Taybeh police station and the office of the Israel Land Administration, disabling an Egged bus, setting up stone and fire obstacles in the streets of Taybeh, and inciting students and workers. He then screamed in my face that I must confess if I wanted to stay alive.

When I denied the charges, they beat me up, one after the other. My body was left bleeding on the floor of the room. The blood was everywhere, even on the walls and the uniforms of the soldiers. The interrogator then asked them to stop the beating. He asked me again whether I would confess. The same thing went on for 2 and 3 times. I insisted on denying the charges.

On the Thursday morning, they took us to a Kfar Saba police office, to the magistrate, Borovitz, who issued our arrest order for 15 days was. On our way to the "court", I noticed the communist lawyer, Abraham Melamed. I called out to him. He hurried up to us. It turned out that they were trying to hide us. Melamed protested against our treatment and demanded our release. However, they issued an arrest order for 15 days. They took us back to detention. 4 days later, they took us to the Zichron Ya'kov prison, where we stayed for a week. Then they took us



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back to the magistrate court in Kfar Saba, where we were accused with 2 main charges:

1. Illegal demonstration.
2. Disruptive behavior in a public place.

The prosecutor kept us detained until the case was over. The governor, Borovitz, agreed to that and ordered the continuation of our detention.

On 14/4/1976, our lawyers filed a plea to the central court. There, our lawyers explained all the injustices that we had endured before their plea and our release without bail.

# TERRORISM CAUSES THE FAILURE OF THE MAYORS' MEETING IN SHEFA A'MR

## Police assault and arrests

Shefa A'mr – the Arab mayors' meeting that was held in Shefa-A'mr ended yesterday afternoon (25 March) with a rude police assault on the crowds. The police used tear gas bombs and carried out a wide arrest operation.

A number of Arab mayors fell victims to violent authoritarian terrorism. This meeting was attended with one goal: to impose the decision on those who attended the meeting through police force and authoritarian terrorism. The decision was to deny the call for a general strike. In addition to the masses of police and border guards, R'anán Kohen and Yoram Katz were seen at the Shefa A'mr city hall with senior police and intelligence officers. The councilor, Tolidano, was at the Shefa A'mr police station.

The mayors of Shefa A'mr, Tamra and Tira were the first to agree with the authority to organize this play. They brought ready envelopes with them and “decided” to



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hold a vote, on condition that the voting must be “confidential”.

However, the Arab mayors who were members of the committee for defending the land, managed to cause this play to fail, and emphasized that it was the committee who was calling for the strike, not the mayors, and that the strike was desired by the entire people. Thus, the meeting was over.

(“Al-Ittihad” 26/3/1976)

## Governor of the Northern District

Last week, Yisrael Koenig, governor of the northern district, called for a meeting in Shefa Amr on 25<sup>th</sup> March. The invitation was for the Arab mayors who were within his jurisdiction, in order to pressure and threaten them to abandon the popular struggle. He expressed his resentment because the committee had supported the strike without his knowledge. He then tried to create trouble among the Arab mayors, so he claimed that the national committee did not represent these mayors. The district governor used a recording machine for intimidation.

(“Al-Ittihad” 26/3/1976)

Yesterday, the Arab city of Jerusalem witnessed a strike despite the high alert that had been announced by the occupation’s security forces . These forces executed a wide inspection operation against shopkeepers; they raided their houses and forced them to sign a fine of 4 thousand Israeli Lira, in case they refused to open their stores. Specialists from the Israeli police opened some of the stores using oxygen pressure. They confiscated the ID cards of people who did not open their stores; a grand demonstration started near the Musrara neighborhood, in protest against the expropriation of Arab lands in Israel.

(“Al-Fajr” 31/3/1976)

Yosef Almogi – Mr. Yosef Almogi, head of the Jewish Agency, said that “our response to Land Day is to increase the settlements in the Galilee and to double the rate of immigration to Israel”

(“Yideot Aharonot” 1/4/1976)



## Memorandum of Arab mayors to the Prime Minister

At the beginning of their memorandum, the Arab mayors mentioned that in a previous meeting with the Prime Minister, they had demanded “the elimination of social, cultural and economic disparities that led to a sense of discrimination”. The memorandum then summarized the point that nothing had improved. “Nothing has been done to reduce the disparities in providing services and construction between Arabs and Jews in the country. On the contrary, a reduction has been noted in governmental work, which increases disparities and complaints”.

In their memorandum, the mayors added: “Things don’t end there. Other grave actions have been made by the government, i.e. the expropriation of Arab lands in the Galilee and the Triangle”.

The mayors further emphasized that the majority of the Arab citizens are “people who cannot give in to land expropriation”.

They also add that “throughout 28 years, ever since the establishment of the State, Arab lands have been expropriated in different ways”. Of these ways they mention “land settlement as it is being carried out today, which is a method of expropriation under cover of the law. This method denies the Arabs ownership of the land that they have held for generations, despite the fact that they have documents proving their ownership. Tens of thousands of Arab dunams have been transferred to the ownership of the state, on the pretext that these lands are not being ploughed or they are rocky”.

Afterwards, they point out that Arabs in Israel “who comprise 14% of the total population in the state, have not received any benefits – not even once – due to land expropriation. In fact, the very opposite of that has happened. Any settler or settlement who leases their land to Arabs for farming, will be punished by the

special authorities”.

Regarding Land Day: “Expressions of resentment reached their peak on 30<sup>th</sup> March, due to expropriation of lands, and news about other expropriation programs in the future, even 10-15 years later, contrary to claims by the media and the press that the events are an extension of 1936 events”. The mayors demand “the cancelation of all land expropriation that has been announced in the Galilee and the Triangle, while turning the lands taken by the State into areas belonging to the local authorities”.

The mayors also mention that “tens of thousands of dunams that have been expropriated from Arabs since 1953, that are not being utilized, must be returned to their previous owners”. As for the Islamic Waqf, “We demand that all the property of the Islamic Waqf be transferred to an Islamic committee elected by the local authorities”. The mayors consider it necessary to cancel all Arabic departments that support the spirit of discrimination.

At the end of the memorandum, the mayors demand:

1. All cases filed against people who were involved in the events of Land Day, must be discredited.
2. All people who were dismissed from work must be returned to their employment.
3. A committee investigating the events of Land Day must be established.

The Black Book on Land Day 30<sup>th</sup> March 1976

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# YISRAEL KOENIG – THE INSTITUTION’S CONSCIENCE

## AL-JADEED OPINION

You may have noticed that from time to time we present a new scandal in ideology or reality from the Zionist outrage. We do not do so to spread hatred among the nation as official and pro-Israeli brainwashing propaganda claims. We do so to fill the gaps that Jewish messages have produced, behind closed doors and in public, in actions and words, while the authorities engage in a dangerous process to eliminate our national existence on the lands of our forefathers. We have seen and heard them make false and groundless statements about their development projects in the Arab sector, gradually enacting these lies in the form of state projects.

In this issue of *al-Jadeed*, we present to you a brand new document known as the “Koenig Memorandum” in the Hebrew original as well as in Arabic translation. This translation is the first, complete, and adequate one of this condemnation of Israeli

policy. Koenig's is not the strongest condemnation of the thoughts and practices of Israeli rulers. There are even stronger documents that we wish to publish in a large forum, when obstacles and hurdles to doing so disappear.

The Koenig Memorandum has raised the angriest of reactions among the Jewish masses, tearing the blindfold off many eyes in Jewish society, who had doubted our lawsuit against the authorities and hesitated to judge it harshly because of the propaganda promoted by the officials. Their anger increased the danger that this threatening document posed. For example, Prime Minister Rabin's silence has played a role in Koenig preparing this document, but by saying, "the Arabs must realize that they live in a Jewish and Zionist state," he articulated justification for it, undermining the absurd claim that it should be regarded as an individual citizen's point of view.

If an Arab citizen presented such "an individual point of view" for Jews to read, he would be given a "democratic" punishment, suitable for his type of citizenship. Yet recall that Yisrael Koenig is not simply your average citizen. He is member of a regime who designed and executed an institutional policy towards us. His is a summary of the "conscience" of this institution.

We know that the state lives in complete harmony with its conscience! We also know for certain that the conscience of the world and of history does not fill their sails with the foul air that blows from Koenig's own conscience. We hope the time for pain will be limited. It is time that torture left the podium. Joy also wants to speak out.



# ON HOW TO TREAT ARABS IN ISRAEL

**Memorandum**

**Yisrael Koenig / Top Classified**

**March 1, 1976**

## **Introduction**

A short time ago it was known to the sectors that care about this part of Israel's population that their acceptance of the establishment of the Israeli state was complete, that large parts of them were in a stage of advanced identification with the state and integration with various aspects. At least the "experts" had clearly made this claim, along with those close to the centers of Arab society.

Recent events have shaken this hypothesis and have placed the loyalty of a large part of the Arab minority to the state and to the idea of its existence in question.

When the state was founded, the Arabs remaining in the country were left without leadership. They were a minority that had to adapt to the existence of the Jewish state entangled in wars with the nearby Arab countries, and thereby proved its

power against them. The military rule, which put the masses under its control, supported the authority of “notables” who emerged among Arab society from Hamulas. The ending of military rule destabilized the power of the “notables,” who had been representing the Arabs. This destabilization enabled the new generation to feel a return of power stemming from the inauguration of democratic society and the transformation of the Arab community from agricultural to industrial with all the accompanying social effects.

Moreover, the new generation rebelled against the old one and forced them to join the rebellious camp and bring about a state of their own, which is the aim of their struggle, since the state had not yet found the tools to effectively guarantee their dependence on Jewish society. Therefore we attempted to prevent rebellion by bringing the rebels to our side in different ways.

In the 1950s Arab society was tied economically with the Jewish economy. The economy opened to Arabs rapidly, after Jewish manual laborers fled from it. This situation created a stable Arab economy, and the state’s economic health was also dependent on them. Violent elements were crowned as leaders and their status was buttressed by their ability to materially benefit themselves and their relatives. Their personal gain was made by neglecting social problems in the Arab sector, as well as failing to undertake long-term plans to ensure the loyalty of Arab citizens. These leaders dealt with the Arab sector at all levels, political, military, police force, and civil services. They had an Arab mentality, therefore no one could notice poor performance regarding the needs and interests of the masses they were dealing with. Instead of trying to objectively solve problems in ways that ensure the Jewish national interests, they pursued their own interests and approached issues only from their own perspectives.

In the northern district, the majority of Israeli Arabs were concentrated in neighborhoods close to Jews and interacted with them on a regular basis. This

proximity clearly raised the aspirations of people growing up beside Jews, who held even greater expectations than before.

One of the main concerns is that the ordinary Jewish citizen has lost the spirit of tolerance towards the Arab citizen. In some cases, we can see hatred has made any interaction lead to clashes that cannot be regulated or controlled by either side. These clashes may produce negative reverberations that create an impact both inside and outside the state.

### **The Demographic Problem and the Manifestation of Arab Nationalism**

The natural annual rate of population growth of the Arab population holds at 5.9%, while that for Jews is 1.5%. The demographic issue is of special concern in the north with its large Arab concentration. The Arab population was 250,000 in 1975 in the northern district, whereas the Jewish population there reached 289,000. However, if we look at statistics more widely, we find that Arabs comprise 67% of the population in the Western Galilee.

In The Jezreel Valley district, Arabs comprise 48% of the total population. While the number of Jews in the north has increased to 759,000, the Arabs have increased to 903,500. According to the rate of population growth the Arabs will comprise more than 51% of the district's population in 1978.

But there is a sense of nationalist extremism in my own evaluation of the Arabs. Their growth in the Galilee threatens our domination in the area, and opens the way for foreign military forces to enter Israel from the north. Forces associated with the escalation of ultra-nationalism thrive among the Arabs in Israel.

The Israeli Arabs have acquired a nationalist spirit since the Six-Day War. The policy of free contact with the West Bank and the opened bridges has led to renewed relations between the Arabs in the Jerusalem mountains and Samaria and the

Palestinians in East Jordan and Israeli Arabs. These renewed relations provided a base from which to raise their heads and proclaim slogans of ultra-nationalist struggle in Israel. While impossible to prevent, this trend began to accelerate following the Yom Kippur War, and was reinforced by international political calls to recognize the PLO as carrying the banner of the Palestinian cause.

We have been recently reminded of the United Nations resolution in 1947 about the Israeli borders, whereby parts of the Galilee were not included in the state of Israel. The Israeli Arabs are no longer patient. They are moved to nationalist expression, even if only in writing at this stage, signified by several incidents, including these prominent ones:

- a. The Prime Minister's visit to Nazareth nearly a year ago;
- b. Using the same slogans as the PLO in student demonstrations and on other occasions;
- c. Arab university students' negative attitude in regard to guard duty;
- d. The ultra-nationalist trend in Nazareth's municipal elections on 9 December 1975;
- e. An unexpected mobilization of the residents of Nazareth to supply funds to pay the municipality's pressing debts, bestowing greater authority on Rakah in running the city.
- f. Holding a protest meeting in Sakhnin on 14 February 1975 in which the head of the Tamra local council declared that Israel should fear the Israeli Arabs more than it fears the Arabs outside it;
- g. Decisions taken in the Nazareth meeting on 6 March 1976, including:
  1. Declaration of a one day general strike in Israel, called "The Land Day;"
  2. Calling Arabs not to be satisfied with passive resistance but, "to resist by active struggle to the end of the road...;"
  3. Declaring a hunger strike before the United Nations reminiscent of the

prisoners of Zion;

4. "The government stands on a house of glass and we will be the first to throw stones and smash it;"
5. The speech of the head of the local council of M'ilya and a former deputy in a list associated with Mapai, Massad Qassis, who is considered a "positive" man, "What is the governmental moral right behind expropriation in this area, which by the United Nations resolution for the partition of Palestine in 1947 was not part of Israel?"

The worldwide victory of the Palestinians and successes of Israeli nationalists indicate a path of open confrontation with the Arab Israeli problem, which will continue to escalate so long as Rakah exclusively leads the resistance. (Note how "Israel" does not appear in the name of the Rakah party and this is no coincidence.)

## **Forecast**

The proliferation of Arabs (numbering from 150,000 in 1948 to more than 430,000 in 1975) gives the Arab national extremists a feeling of power and hope that time will work in their favor. This case is especially true in parts of the country such as the north where there is a majority of Arabs.

The dominance of Rakah in semi-governmental institutions such as the local authorities will create a legal foundation for veiling nationalism and political activity, permitting the adoption of actions similar to the Jewish underground organizations before the establishment of the state, and enabling the use of communist tools well-known in the world. In fact, there are today a number of local authorities under Rakah control, which in our opinion, do not exploit their authority because they lack sufficient means for execution. However, the number of students from the northern villages, who are supported through scholarships by

Rakah and studying in Eastern Bloc countries are increasing, to prepare forces such as those mentioned above.

There is a serious concern that during the coming decade we will see Arab demographic and political dominance in Acre and in the Nazareth area. We should bear in mind that in the context of political hostilities against the state, greater attention to the issue of Israeli Arabs will be given in international forums. Such attention will affect moderate elements among Israeli Arabs, leading them to become more extreme.

There is organized activity in the north for Arabs to purchase properties. This activity emerged in Nazareth Illit and in Acre and raises concerns about the Jezreel Valley.

### **Suggestions**

Expand and deepen the Jewish settlements in areas where Arabs are concentrated and their numbers exceed the Jewish population and also explore ways to decrease the current Arab population. Special concern should be given to the western and northern borders of the state and to the Nazareth area. The trends and policies must be different from those which we have seen thus far. In parallel, laws must be enacted to limit Arabs moving to different parts of the state. At the same time stable and powerful Jewish leadership must be found for Nazareth Illit and for Acre that is able to respond to the demographic concerns.

Introduce a legal policy of payments and penalties vis-à-vis leaders and localities expressing hostility against the state and Zionism in any way. Undercut the leadership of the national struggle by removing the role of Rakah from representing Israeli Arabs, by setting up a sister party to the Labor party that would focus on

issues of equality, humanism, culture, and language, as well as raise the banner of peace. State institutions must be prepared to have a hidden presence and ultimate control of this party.

Coordinate between ministries, government departments, the Histadrut, and local authorities to strictly implement the above plans.

Make every possible effort to bring all Zionist parties to a national consensus on the Israeli Arabs issue, in order to expunge this debate from conflicts internal to the parties.

### **The Arab Leadership and its Implications**

The open, democratic Jewish society in which the Arabs who remained in the country after the establishment of the state found themselves has not been internalized in terms of thinking, habits, or development. The Jews who controlled them had aimed for the Arabs to be loyal to the Jewish society foundational to the state, but they did not succeed in this effort. On the contrary, there is clear evidence that steps were taken with the intension of keeping the Arab population distinct, by isolating some of them, and by attempting to draw attention and gain sympathy for others.

Even though Jewish society was calling for equality and integrating Arabs, their actions in reality were opposite to this ideal. This policy did not bear in mind the Levantine Arab character where imagination exceeds logic and reason.

A rigid expression of this policy doubly occurred with the “coronation” of Arab leaders and representatives. Until this day, there have not been “positive” Arab public figures elected for any office higher than at the local level.

Arab society still suffers from the pain of transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, which has broken down social, religious, and family foundations.

Their national failure adds another painful dimension.

This terrible national failure led everyone to a conclusion that could be fatal. The transformed society needed to find a leader whose character responded to the need for loyalty to the state and took it down the right path to a reasonable, public, and personal resolution. But, such a figure was not given the title of “leader.” Rather, the flatterer and the criminal, not the right person, became the representative to carry the Israeli Arabs’ flag.

The second generation who grew up in Israeli society and tried to get used to Israeli habits, even if only superficially, cannot accept those leaders. The evidence of this has been seen for ten years. The duty of the Jews responsible for Arab affairs was to identify persons who would be accepted by the new generation and be loyal to the state at the same time. In our opinion, this failure to locate the right leadership is due to lack of competence and intentions, and has had disastrous results. One of the reasons for the deterioration of relations in these days is the Arabs’ disgust with their leadership (look at the Nazareth municipal elections).

### **Forecast**

The conflict between the Arab leaders and the rebellious generation will increase, due to the mistakes of the government, Histadrut, and the Zionist parties. The struggle of leadership and control will increase its rejection of the state and the system and the majority will increasingly support the rebel party. Parties hostile to the state will exploit this social crisis, and join it to struggles already existing in different movements inside and outside the state, creating a social and national struggle. According to our evaluations, if this deterioration continues at the current pace, Rakah will win ten seats in the next Knesset elections.

## **Suggestions**

We must replace most employees in the Arab domain of the government, the police, and the political parties. The current Arab leadership, which does not represent the Arab masses and reinforces asymmetry in the system, must be expunged. Those who take on this task must start immediately to find new educated faces with integrity and ingenuity and help establish an Arab party as mentioned previously. Special investigators must be appointed to uncover the Rakah leader's personal behavior and negative aspects of his character and deliver their findings to the electorate's attention.

## **Economy and Employment**

The economic development and prosperity prevailing among the country's residents throughout its years of existence has not excluded Arabs. On the contrary, the prominent shift among this population was that those who remained within the state's borders after the lull of the battles of 1948 and 1949 were the sons of poor families. There was a wide gap between supply and demand for manual labor in different branches of the economy, particularly construction, auto repair, and industry. The need for labor that arose in these branches was supplied by Israeli Arabs, giving them economic power, which was then exploited by extreme forces.

The mutual cooperation which is still familiar today between family members, and the great lack of knowledge on productive investment, left a surplus of cash in the Arabs' hands. These amounts of cash were hidden from the tax authorities in different ways. We know that the Arab population comprises 14% of Israel. While Jews are absent from the work force for military service for three years, the total taxes paid by Arabs was not more than 1.5%. Through this withholding of taxes

they ensure their economic future. In addition, the composition of the society in terms of age (half of the Arabs are young people and workers) has a significant effect in providing substantial income for the entire family. We must add that the state has paid national insurance allowances to families who have more than two children (95% of the Arab families in Israel).

The issue that has particularly arisen in the North, because of the large concentration of Arab residents, is that state projects founded to increase employment for Jews benefit Arab laborers at a rate of 25%-50%. This social and economic reassurance has released the Arab individual and family from economic worries and pressures. It also has provided the Arab family with leisure time to consider social and national extremist ideas, which are exploited by hostile elements to catalyze various rumblings and increase the feeling of power, and the possibility for national protest.

### **Forecast**

The concentration of money, especially untaxed money in unwanted hands, reached a value of hundreds of millions of Israeli Liras. In addition to the economic danger that could result from this amount of money, large sums could be donated to hostile organizations in the future. The increase of Arab laborers in state projects has hastened the march towards hostility between the Arabs and the Jews and led to work accidents that could have been prevented. There is also the possibility of Rakah controlling the labor committees. With its clear dominance in some branches of the economy, Rakah could disrupt work or refuse to cooperate with the employers or the state, which could badly damage the economy and particular political parties, by highlighting the weight of labor in the state economy.

## **Suggestions**

In the context of the Law of Capital Investment, reasonable procedures must be put in place to oversee each economic sector in sensitive areas, wherein Arab employees must not exceed 20%. The tax authorities must take immediate action to increase tax collection and implement taxation procedures without any deviation. An arrangement must be reached with central figures in marketing for different types of products in ways that exclude Arab agents, particularly in the North, so as to prevent Jews from purchasing these products and developing a dependency on them, especially in the event of a national emergency.

The government should find ways to limit giving allowances to Arab families with many children, either by relating allowances to the economic situation, or by transferring the responsibility of social insurance allowances from the National Insurance Institute to the Jewish Agency or to the Zionist Assembly so that they will be allocated to Jews only. The government should also work in ways so that central institutions will give preference in purchasing and hiring to the Jewish sector over the Arab.

## **Education**

The most influential and dramatic change in the Arab society was the deepened and widened education system that came to them. The improved economic situation and social security for the individual and the family encouraged large numbers of Arab students to attend secondary schools and institutions of higher education. This led to a huge increase of tuition (66%) in the secondary schools. The financial aid and assistance for university culture created an educated population, no longer simple and provincial. And we know that education provides a breeding ground for national movements, particularly for a population in the situation of Arab Israelis,

which has now become a proven fact.

Specifying preference for Arab students (via low grades) for acceptance in higher education and requested subjects (humanities, social sciences), and a lack of concern to provide full employment for graduates has produced a large number of disappointed academics, who need to find an outlet for their frustration. This sentiment has led to speaking up against the Israeli system and state.

We must bear in mind the extent of the crisis, with the number of university graduates reaching more than 5700, and another 2500 students currently enrolled in institutes of higher education.

### **Forecast**

If we fail to recognize this crisis of professionals, the feeling of frustration and the number of the frustrated will only increase. The Levantine character indicates this feeling will transform, motivated by the social situation, from internal repression to external expression and we must not ignore the possibilities of organizations employing violence. The first buds already exist.

### **Suggestions**

Employ uniform criteria for both Arabs and Jews for admission to institutions of higher education and dispersing financial aid. Maintaining these norms will lead to a natural selection and decrease the number of Arab students. The reduced number of graduates will make it easy to absorb them into the labor market after they have completed their studies.

Encourage students to turn to the skilled trades and to the exact and natural sciences. These fields of study leave little time for thinking about nationalism and they have high drop-out rates.

Facilitate traveling abroad for higher education and place obstacles for the Arab students' return and for finding employment. This policy is likely to encourage emigration.

Take tough measures of different kinds against disruptive individuals at institutions of higher education.

Prepare in advance arrangements for the employment of the graduates according to their abilities. This policy may take a number of years to plan and implement.

### **Law Enforcement**

Implementation of the law and its enforcement reflects the public interest over individual interests. Maintaining internal security holds the utmost importance for the nation and Jews at large. State law enforcement in the community is a problem whose solution must involve flexibility, caution, and wisdom. At the same time, the authority that takes responsibility for the Arab sector must provide examples of laws whose concern is to prevent erosion. We have mentioned ways that people have been treated by the law and the double standard that characterizes it. And there is awareness among the Arabs, based on experience, that the law can be overridden through relations with certain people. In addition to the general harm this situation has caused, the Arabs have regarded it as a sign of weakness; continued pressure on the authorities could bring about additional concessions (for which there are many examples).

It is difficult to get an adequate explanation about the lower rate of taxes collected from the Arabs in comparison with the Jews. Non-enforcement of the law could result in grievous harm to internal security in extensive areas in the North and in the center of the state. We must remember and learn from other countries with national minorities that excessive and unbounded liberalism does not achieve

intended aims, but rather the opposite. This rule is applicable particularly to the Arab minority in Israel (as explained above).

### **Forecast**

In a law-abiding society, overt disobedience of the law produces a detrimental pattern of transgressions, requiring extensive measures of remediation. The possibility must be acknowledged that in the future, a lot of Jews may support a minority population violating the law, and view the law as repressive when enforced. We cannot ignore that for a proportion of Arabs, 14%, breaking the law may take on the tenor of revolution. Hostile elements inside and outside the state may exploit the renewed implementation of laws, which the authorities had declined to apply for a long time, claiming that they constitute national persecution.

### **Suggestions**

Those responsible for the Arab sector must make it clear that it is not acceptable to break the law, and that it will be literally enforced. Adopt judicial actions against state employees and other agencies that do not fulfill their duties in implementing the law. Pursue and implement a number of provisions especially concerning taxation and licensing of construction to deter the population from considering any escape from the law. Increase the presence of police and security forces among the Arabs to deter extremists and those who are “sitting on the fence,” who may be drawn into uprisings and demonstrations.

## Proposal Number 2

1. Following my previous memorandum and in light of the March 30 developments and incidents (Day of the Land Strike), it is desirable to analyze and assess these incidents and to draw up forecasts for possible new developments in the near future, and a number of suggestions to be implemented soon.

The full success of the strike in the Arab sector is a fact that ought to be carefully studied and accepted as a starting point for every discussion of the subject.

There are several factors which contributed to the success of the strike and to its scope which deserve to be studied:

- a) There is no way to examine the percentage or the number of Arabs who did not come to work in places outside their residences, but in villages and in the two cities in which the Arab population is concentrated, the strike was complete and total.
- b) Control by the strike organizers over all kinds of educational institutions in the Arab sector including church schools insured that the strike was complete.
- c) The persuasion campaign about the necessity of the strike was begun by “official” factors, local council chairmen and public figures who are usually described as establishment. It must be assumed that these circles went into action after having lived under the impression that high-ranking elements were backing them and that an “interference” by the Arab populace would persuade the government to withdraw the expropriation, assuming that the achievement would be attributed to the loudest.
- d) At a very late stage, realizing their mistake, the official Arab leadership-that is, the local council chairmen and others- found they could no longer retreat. The erosion they had caused was sweeping them along too. The Jewish

stopgap attempts did not prevent the strike and caused estrangement and a rift between the Arab population and its elected representatives although the strike and the incidents accompanying it did occur.

- e) The strike organizers conducted a tough, threatening campaign, using violence against strikebreakers which proved effective. Pledges by the administration that every strikebreaker would be protected lacked credibility and the population did not take them seriously.
2. Despite the fact that the strike and all the preparations and events that accompanied it was planned and executed by RAKAH, the party decided not to be very conspicuous in this matter in order to assume, in practice, the leadership of all the nationalist activity among Israel's Arabs in the future. It is necessary to pay attention to this process and to study its motives and components:
- a) The PLO movement, that is the national liberation movement for the Palestinian Arabs, does not call for achieving social aims. With the exception of a small and secondary section-George Habasha's group that seriously deals with such matters or propagates them.
  - b) Sending people who do not belong to any party into an open and violent confrontation with the security forces, causing maximum casualties among the people in an attempt to create feelings of hatred and vengeance among them and tension on the part of the government toward the hostile population.
  - c) A classic move that is usually the vogue with the liberation movements in Asia and Africa is the linking of the national and social struggles in a way that helps to mobilize the masses for the sake of the struggle and to obtain sympathetic world public opinion. It is clear that some countries and

powers that have a certain orientation find themselves involved. If only for propaganda purposes, in every struggle that is carried out under these slogans.

In view of what has been said before, it is necessary to treat very seriously the aforementioned moves and the phenomena that are liable to stem from the creation of such an identification in world opinion and among the Arab population. Moreover, it is my belief that RAKAH has used these moves mainly under the guise of nationalism.

3. There have been a number of impressive achievements for Arab nationalism led by RAKAH as the result of the strike day [Day of the Land], both the disturbances that took place prior to the strike day and those that took place on the day of the strike:
  - a. For the first time since the establishment of the State of Israel, a situation has been created where the Arab population has identified itself openly and cogently- contrary to the government's request- with an Arab extremist-nationalist demand and have displayed a psychological readiness for acting to achieve it. Moreover, most parts of the Arab population justified and still justify those who rioted and attacked the defense forces, and they openly talk about their identification with them.
  - b. A large number of local authorities and their leaders were used as the means and tools to develop and lead the struggle. Those local council heads who, as a result of the pressures, did not join the extremists in the last phase did not declare their objection to the strike, but requested its postponement in order to use it as a threat to apply pressure against the government in a bid to make it surrender to their demands.
  - c. The nationalist and RAKAH succeeded in agitating and embroiling the masses in a violent struggle with the defense forces- a confrontation that

has left its deep and serious marks for a long time to come.

The fact that despite the sentiments that gripped the masses the organizers succeeded in extricating their men from the violent struggle and insuring their physical safety, and saved them from being arrested after the riots, proves the precision of the planning of the operations.

- d. The open and violent acts with all the sorry results that they brought upon the population have infused them with pride and straightened their backs. They are proud of their courage to confront the official forces of the state. It should not be forgotten that such a feeling in a population like that of the Israeli Arabs, and in the atmosphere in which they live, holds many possibilities for professional agitators whose aim would be to restore “the straight back of the humiliated Arabs,” to the Israeli Arabs.
- e. The political power of Arab nationalism that is used by RAKAH for its own future political struggle becomes evident.
- f. The strike and the violent actions that accompanied it pushed aside the part of the official Arab establishment (the elected) and the heads of the local councils who did not participate in the strike or had proposed postponing it to a marginal position. The strike took place contrary to the Shefar`am meeting. In this way, the active part of the Arab population, especially the young, were left for RAKAH and its nationalist agitators.

It is perhaps worth asking here whether it was politically wise, in the long run, to apply pressure on the heads of the local councils in the Shefar`am meeting for them to act as they did. The subject should be discussed and suitable conclusions should be reached. The absolute unity of the Arab population that was attained on the “Day of the Land” and the deep rift created between the Arab and Jewish sectors was a historic achievement for the organizers. This rift had and will have in the future grave expressions

in the Arab and Jewish populations alike. Needless to say, it will be well exploited by a hostile factor.

- g. A significant impression was felt in plants and services as a result of the strike by proving the dependence of the smooth operation of the economy on Arab hands. Parallel to that, dependency of the Jewish-run economy on them has been proven to the Arab population. Even this is exploited and will be in the future, for the sake of feeding the “Arab back-straightening” which the Arabs of Israel must exploit.

4. *Forecast:*

- a) The conditions created on “Day of the Land” and afterwards provide RAKAH and the nationalists with many opportunities to incite disturbances in the country and to create communal tension and anxiety. It appears that we may witness here a recurrence of the same tactics and slogans to inflame the masses and turn them loose on the streets whenever the leading elements decided to so do.
- b) The campaign of intimidation will be intensified to the point of threatening Arabs who cooperate with the government or committing violence against them in order to quell any resistance and silence moderate voices.
- c) Following the repercussions on the Arab streets in the wake of the recent clashes, the masses will be called into the streets for a specific purpose: to clash with the security forces and to increase as much as possible the number of Arab citizens injured so as to arouse ambitions of revenge within the Arab population against the security forces and to create reactions in the world about the tension in Israel and the suppressing of the Arab population by the Israeli occupying power.
- d) Such clashes would increase the Israeli Arabs’ identification with the injured and the means would be created to penetrate into those circles which are

still hesitant about joining the struggle.

Such action would, generally speaking, cause the atmosphere to become more extreme and to deteriorate further. The theory adopted by those circles is that the present situation is bad for Israeli Arabs and that only in a situation of general disruption in the state would they have an opportunity for change: in the long run-perhaps in the foreseeable future-this would cause Israel to distinguish from within and would bring about the Palestinization of the state.

- e) It is quite probable that the PLO or some of its components would analyze [as published-possibly lead] these extreme acts, although the operations in the field would be carried out by RAKAH-while its functionaries remain behind the scenes but pull the strings. Most of the burden of absorbing such activity will be placed on the Arab nationalists from the population in Israel, and mainly from among the intelligentsia who yearn for action in order to prove their "Arabness" and their willingness to struggle against Israeli rule.
- f) The rift that the recent events have created between the Jewish and the Arab populations would be completely exploited and all efforts would be made to widen and deepen it. It must be taken into consideration that in order to achieve that end, provocations of all kinds would be carried out, including strikes, demonstrations, violent actions, and even sabotage (in cooperation with Arab terrorists). I think that in the next large-scale clashes there will be greater use of firearms in order to create critical visual effects of this rift.
- g) There is also a probability that a nationalist organization oriented toward the West would be created in order to attract sympathy to their struggle from states and circles abroad which are anti-leftist.

- h) The penetration and takeovers of local councils will increase in order to exploit them for propaganda, cover, financing and to create an impression of broad representation. This measure proved very effective on “Day of the Land” in carrying out those aims.
5. In view of the speedy deterioration and the forecast which I have outlined in my previous memorandum and in the present one, I would like to suggest:
- a) To immediately create a brain trust which would submit three plans of action to the decision-making elements:
    - 1) For the short run.
    - 2) For the medium run.
    - 3) For the long run.
  - b) An interministerial coordinating committee should be set up immediately at the ministry director level, headed by a minister who would be appointed for that purpose by the cabinet and assisted by the prime minister’s Arab affairs advisor.
  - c) In view of the fact that the Interior Ministry is the official practical and central link with the official and elected institutions of the Arab population, it is hereby suggested that the coordinating committee of ministry directors should be headed by the director general of the Interior Ministry.

[Written after March 30, 1976]



# THE STORY OF A MONUMENT: LAND DAY IN SAKHNIN

CURATOR: TAL BEN-ZVI

The exhibition “The Story of a Monument: Land Day in Sakhnin” is centered on the Sakhnin monument commemorating Land Day, as a space of struggle, remembrance and identity of the Palestinian minority in Israel.<sup>1</sup>

The first Land Day took place on March 30th 1976, to protest the government’s decision to expropriate 20,000 acres in the Sakhnin area for “Galilee Judaization” purposes. The leaders of the Rakakh political party, together with the heads of the Arab municipalities in the Galilee region, called for a day of general strike and protest demonstrations to be held on March 30th. The demonstrations took place mainly in the villages of Sakhnin, Arabeh and Deir-Hanna. IDF forces confronted the demonstrators, killing six of them and wounding many others. The six people killed were Kheir Mohamed Yasin from Arabeh, Raja Khasin Abu-Ria, Khader Abed

Khilaila and Khadija Shuhana from Sakhnin, Mohamed Yusef Taha from Kufr Canna and Rafet Zuheiri from Nur-Shams, who was shot in Taybeh.

In the year following the Land Day events, Abed Abdi and Gershon Knispel<sup>2</sup> decided to build a monument commemorating the Sakhnin Land Day, with support from the Sakhnin mayor at the time, Jamal Tarabieh. On March 30th 1977, exactly one year after the demonstrations, the artists presented a model of the monument to the Galilee Arab Municipalities Committee and to a large audience.

The monument was constructed at the end of March 1978, and the process itself took several hours with the joint effort of many construction workers from Sakhnin. Tamir Sorek notes<sup>3</sup> that Sakhnin's mayor, Tarabieh, was arrested by the police in the course of the construction and charged with granting an illegal construction permit, but he was released within several hours.

On Thursday March 30th 1978, a monument-unveiling ceremony was held in the Sakhnin cemetery. The Ha'aretz newspaper Galilee reporter, who covered the event, wrote (31.3.1978):

“Land Day’ took place yesterday with no violent incidents, obviating the need for police intervention. The Arab population in Israel marked this day with one central event – in the Mid-Galilee village of Sakhnin [...] In a large rally in Sakhnin, a monument commemorating those killed in the clashes two years ago was unveiled, the work of artists Gershon Knispel and Abed Abdi from Haifa [...] Thousands of people from far and wide gathered at the rally. Speeches were made by Knesset members of the Hadash Party – Taufik Ziad, Meir Vilner and Khana Mois, as well as by several municipal leaders [...] A police helicopter hovered above the village intermittently, and later it was found out that it was photographing the rally participants”.

This rally became a central event in the collective memory of the Palestinian minority in Israel. Sorek notes that this was the first time in which a symbol of

Palestinian nationality had such sustained presence in the public sphere.

For nearly 30 years, from 1978 to this day, on every 30th of March the monument becomes a focal point of remembrance ceremonies for the Land Day events in the Galilee. These ceremonies reflect the constitutive role of Land Day in the Palestinian national culture, but at the same time they serve as a stage for the various political, social and cultural struggles of the day. These events are manifested in press photos that document the Land Day ceremonies in Sakhnin. A few of these photographs appeared in the Arabic newspapers, in particular in “Al-Ittihad” newspaper, which has covered extensively and continuously the Land Day ceremonies in the Arab towns and villages in the Galilee.

The photographs by Rafik Bachri, Amin Bashir, Gidon Gitai, Salam Munir Diab, Nikola Abdo, Yaron Kaminski and others seem to create an iconography of remembrance and mourning that are unique to the Palestinian minority in Israel. This iconography is based on the colors of the flags (the Palestinian flag in red-white-black-green, the Communist Party’s red flags and the green flags of the Islamic Movement’s) and on the recurring symbols in the remembrance parades, such as the portrait of Che Guevara as the leader of the revolution, the Communist Party’s hammer and sickle image and the “Handala” child character by the illustrator Naji al-Ali. The photographs show the massive crowds of the main parade, the school ceremonies, the public figures climbing the stairs holding flower wreaths inscribed with dedications to the *Shahids* (martyrs), the *Al-Fatiha* prayer ceremony with the gaze at the hands, and the wreath-laying ceremonies and public speeches in the square in front of the monument.

In recent years, in every October, the Sakhnin cemetery monument is also the end point of the “Shahid Remembrance March”, commemorating those killed in October 2000. Thus, as the years pass, the Monument’s status as a central site of remembrance and mourning in the Palestinian national culture continues to grow.

Despite the contemporary nature of the parades, the speeches return repeatedly to the bond between the Palestinian minority and its land. This bond is the central sculptural theme of the monument, which is shaped as a sarcophagus with four walls. The embossments on each wall are an aluminum casting that looks like clay from a distance. On the first wall, a figure lifting a kind of large basket of grains or a large stone is sculpted, along with two figures stooping to gather the harvest. It also carries the following words in English, Arabic and Hebrew: “Designed by A. Abdi and G. Knispel, to enhance the mutual understanding of the two nations”. On the second wall, a figure of a woman with seeds in her hands is sculpted, with this inscription: “Memorial for the Dead of Land Day 30.3.1976”. The third wall depicts two kneeling mourning women, with their hands covering their faces. Between the two women is this Arabic inscription: “They died so that we could live... They live. The Fallen in Land Defending Day March 30th 1976”. In addition, the names of those killed as well as of their towns and villages are inscribed on this side. At the edge of the left wall, a kind of pit is shown, out of which a hand extends, either holding on or seeking help. Finally, the fourth wall has no text. Two figures appear on it, lying like dead bodies, one under the other, creating a tranquil horizontal composition. Alongside the monument, but separated from it, stands a plough. When land laborers are murdered, their plough lies abandoned and broken.

Choosing the image of a woman was a joint decision by Knispel and Abdi, the monument creators.<sup>4</sup> Thus, while the contemporaneous press usually presented the stories and pictures of male land workers, the Sakhnin monument focuses on women, both as land workers and as representing mourning and lamentation.

The image of the village woman as a representation of the Palestinian motherland is a central theme of Palestinian art since the 1950s to this day. In a study of Palestinian art, I argued that this centrality of the female image in canonical Palestinian art is influenced by the manner in which national movements regard

gender roles.<sup>5</sup>

Nira Yuval-Davis defines these roles in relation to the concept of reproduction, which implies the continuity and preservation of society and national culture. Thus, women are often required to carry the “burden of representation”, since they are constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collective identity and dignity, both personally and as a group. An example of this is the concept of “motherland”, which implies the connection between collective territory, collective identity and femininity. Another role of women is “cultural reproduction – intergenerational transmission”. Often, women assume the social role of intergenerational transmission of cultural traditions, customs, songs, food and, of course, mother tongue. In other words, women are responsible for the transmission of national history that is based on memories and national stories.<sup>6</sup>

Women carry the nation’s identity and dignity, as part of their “burden of representation” and “cultural reproduction” roles. In the Sakhnin monument, the images of women are doing this literally: they assume the national identity, while being identified as the traditional victims of national history and as bearers of the suffering related to the fulfillment of this national identity.

These gender roles in Palestinian national culture were initially expressed in Palestinian literature and poetry. Kamal Boullata notes that Palestinian literature places at its center an allegorical mold of the woman image as mother, as beloved and as motherland, which signifies Palestinian national identity.<sup>7</sup> This allegorical construct in Palestinian literature is part of the resistance literature – *adab al-mukawama*, a term coined by Assan Kanafani to describe the Arab poetry and literature written by, among others, Salam Gubran, Tufic Ziad, Mahmoud Darwish, Samih al-Qassim, Zaki Darwish, Riad Bidas, Muhammad Ali Taha, Muhammad Nafaa and Emile Habibi. This Poetry centered on images of guardians of the land; the *tzumud* (holding on to the land) was acknowledged as an expression of national

pride, and it was politically manifested on that Land Day in the Galilee, on March 30th 1976.

The centrality of the village image in Palestinian identity has been widely discussed. The Palestinian national movement distinguished between the image of the concrete *Fellah* (peasant) and his ideal image, which symbolizes a utopian agrarian community, free of the effects of modernity, class struggle and poverty. This idyllic conception allowed blurring the social and cultural rifts within Palestinian society while turning toward an imagined utopian space. As part of this utopian construction, Palestinian poetry and literature produce a multitude of lyrical images of the landscape that surrounds the Palestinian village: the olive tree, the orange tree, the lemon tree, the *zaatar* etc. This cluster of images reproduces historical Palestine as an allegory devoid of the concrete dimensions of space and time.

Complementing this allegorical viewpoint, a historical one exists, which documents the demolition of the Palestinian villages after 1948 and the creation of the “present absentees” in Palestinian society. The historian Walid Khalidi, one of the first to undertake the project of documenting Palestinian history, published a book that lists the 418 destroyed Palestinian villages.<sup>8</sup> Influenced by this book, Palestinian artists began focusing on the destroyed village as an image of the Palestinian memory of the *Nakba*, and some of them directly used in their works the names in the book.

In similar vein, Palestinian art placed the village and its surrounding landscape, as well as local peasantry, folklore and archeology at its center, as national emblems. Manar Hassan claims that as a result of the obliteration of Palestinian cities in 1948, Palestinian society is mainly conceived of as a rural society, which has never undergone modern urbanization. Hassan argues that the city’s existence was forgotten in Palestinian historiography and in the collective national memory, and that the Palestinian past is restructured as rural in the various remembrance

practices, such as poetry, novels, artworks, autobiographies and national ceremonies.<sup>9</sup> As regards the image of woman, Tina Sherwell writes that the representations of the village as a utopian space, and by means of the female image, ignored the drastic changes undergone by Palestinian peasantry and society during the 20th century, while reflecting a nostalgic national view of the past. Sherwell stresses that the feminization of agricultural work in the occupied territories – when women took to the fields, as the shrinking plots of land could no longer sustain their households and the men were forced to seek employment elsewhere – reinforced the metaphorical association of women to the landscape. In a certain sense, women, who were perceived as closer to the land because they maintained the traditions through their attire and their cooking, have become a kind of Palestinian museum – a simultaneous representation of past and present that allows the Palestinian national memory to form in the minds of future generations, which live at a distance from those remote geographical places.<sup>10</sup>

The image of the monument as sarcophagus is an instance of archeological, a-temporal thinking, since it is an object that functions as a Palestinian museum, as a representation of past and present. This a-temporality is embodied in the monument, which is recharged repeatedly with artistic, cultural and political meanings, stemming, on the one hand, from the ongoing reality (continued land confiscations, demolition orders etc.) and, on the other hand, from the concrete historical events (Land Day ceremonies, the 1982 Lebanon War, the first Intifada in 1987, the October 2000 events and so on). A link is thus formed here between the traumas of the past and the present reality of the Palestinian minority in Israel. The death of the land workers and the call for universal justice underlie the joint work of Abed Abdi and Gershon Knispel. This position was manifested in the publication, in 1978, of a printed volume of impressive proportions, which included preparatory sketches and photographs of the monument immediately following its

construction, as well as texts by Samih al-Qassim, Joshua Sobol and the artists, Abdi and Knispel.

These texts, in Arabic, Hebrew and English, attached below, were written almost 30 years ago. It appears, however, that the human solidarity that effuses from these texts is very remote from here. The Sakhnin Monument was the first expression, in the public sphere, of the identity and remembrance of the Palestinian minority in Israel. At the time of its creation, it also constituted a cry for solidarity, justice and understanding between the two nations. Today, this textual and public cry should be repeated.

#### (Endnotes)

- 1 The exhibition was first presented in Yaffa Café, Yaffa, on March 30th 2007, and encompassed 30 years of demonstrations commemorating Land Day, from 1976 to 2006. See: Gish Amit, 2008. "You Will Build and We Shall Destroy: Art as a Rescue Excavation", *Sedek* 2, pp. 117-119, and the Hagar Gallery website: [www.hagar-gallery.com](http://www.hagar-gallery.com).
- 2 Abed Abdi was born in Haifa in 1942. At the end of April 1948, he was deported with his family to Beirut and from there to Damascus. In 1952, he returned to Haifa with his family as part of a family reunion program. At the end of the 1960s, he studied art at the Dresden Art Academy in Germany, and from 1972 to 1982 he had been the graphic designer of "Al-Ittihad" newspaper. Gershon Knispel was born in Köln, Germany in 1932 and he grew up in Haifa. In 1954, he graduated from Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem. At the beginning of the 1960, he lived in Brazil, and returned to Israel following the revolution there in 1964. For many years, he had been the artistic counselor of the mayor of Haifa. In 1994, he left again to Sao Paulo, where he resides to this day. Knispel and Abdi were members of the Communist Party in Haifa, together with a group of artists who were recognized as the socialist realism school of Israeli art, among them Ruth Shalom and Shimon Tzabar.
- 3 Tamir Sorek, 2008. "Cautious Commemoration: Localism, Communalism, and Nationalism in Palestinian Memorial Monuments in Israel", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 50 (2).
- 4 During the 1970s, Knispel created several monuments. In 1970 he created one in Galim Youth

Village, in memory of guides and alumni. This is a stone relief, in which the images of a boy and a girl carry ears of wheat and flowers, an antithesis of sorts – in the spirit of the time – to the boy and girl who raise their eyes to the nation in Alterman’s poem “The Silver Platter”. In 1974, following the Yom Kippur War, Knispel created in Haifa a monument to the fallen sons, whose motif is mourning. It is built of aluminum blocks on which two images are shown: a fallen soldier and a mother kneeling at his side. See Ilana Shamir, 1996. *Immortalization and Memory*, Am Oved Publishing.

- 5 For detailed discussion, see: Tal Ben-Zvi, 2004. *Between Nation and Gender: The Representations of the Female Body in the Art of Palestinian Women*, MA thesis, Tel Aviv University. For further discussion of Palestinian women’s art, see the following catalogs: Tal Ben-Zvi, 2006. *Hagar – Contemporary Palestinian Art*, the Hagar Foundation; Tal Ben-Zvi, 2006. *Biographies: 6 Solo Exhibitions at the Hagar Art Gallery*, the Hagar Foundation; Tal Ben-Zvi, and Yael Lerer (eds.), 2001. *Self Portrait: Palestinian Women’s Art*, Andalus.
- 6 Nira Yuval-Davis, 1998. “Gender and Nation”, in Rick Wilford and Robert L. Miller (eds.), 1998. *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism: The Politics of Transition*, London : Routledge, pp. 27-31.
- 7 For detailed discussion, see: Kamal Boullata, 1990. “Israeli and Palestinian Artists: Facing the Forests”, *Kav 10*, pp. 170-175; Kamal Boullata, 2001. “The World, the Self and the Body: Pioneer Women in Palestinian Art”, in Tal Ben-Zvi, and Yael Lerer (eds.), 2001. *Self Portrait: Palestinian Women’s Art*, Tel Aviv: Andalus, pp. 9-48; Kamal Boullata, 2000. *Istihdar al-Macan: Dirasat fi al-Fan al-Tashkili al-Filastini al-Muasir* (The Recovery of Place: A Study of Palestinian Contemporary Painting), Tunis, ALECSO; Kamal Boullata, 2000, “Art”, in Philip Mattar (ed.), 2000. *The Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, New York: Facts on File.
- 8 Walid Khalidi, 1992. *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*. Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies.
- 9 Manar Hassan, 2005. “The City’s Destruction and the War on Remembrance: Winners and Losers”, *Teoria uBikoret 27*, pp. 197-207.
- 10 Tina Sherwell, 2001. “Imagining Palestine as Mother-land”, in Tal Ben-Zvi and Yael Lerer, 2001. *Self Portrait: Palestinian Women’s Art*, Andalus, pp. 49-66.



# BLOOD AND SOIL

SAMIH AL-QASSIM

From earth to earth!

For hundreds of years, man has been repeating these words, which are full of equanimity and wisdom, and are within a religious, Sufi context.

But for the peasant who is rooted in the soil of his land, this sentence is charged with a different connotation; here matter and soul meet in a glorious human unity. Nevertheless, when land is exposed to any danger, the peasant experiences a shattering feeling that his bond with the universe is about to be severed. The peasant's homeland is that piece of land with which he mixes his sweat and tears, waiting for the fruit with pain and joy. For the sake of attaining this fruit – his legitimate human right – the peasant is completely ready to face any threat with his body, mind and blood. Thus, the close points of resemblance between soil and blood become clear.

The Palestinian Arab has lived the experience of soil and blood to its fullest extent. His bond with his land has been solid since the dawn of history. From the Bible to the most contemporary historical sources, we can find evidence indicating the strong bond which has tied him to the national soil.

The Arab Uzds had established their state in our country hundreds of years prior to

the birth of Jesus Christ. Significantly, the Israelis could not create the first desert park in the Negev in 1978 except in the style of our forefathers – the Canaanites. This fact was revealed by the Israeli press itself.

Thus, our roots in the soil of this homeland go back to before, during and after ancient days, even before the dawn of history.

This fact clarifies and nourishes the tenacious attachment of the Arabs of Israel to what was left of their, national land, to the point of martyrdom just as happened during the memorable Land Day.

The Land Day (March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1976), was not a day of “rioting” as some people claim. It was a day of just struggle, carried out by the Arab masses in Israel as an expression of their noble protest against the policy that aims at cutting their national roots and as a confirmation of their eternal bond with their legitimate right to soil, inherited from their fathers and ancestors.

As became clear later, the consecutive governments of Israel have adopted this expansionist theory and actively implemented it, while attempting to hide behind slogans and concepts that were elegant and scientific only in appearance, but racist in substance. The concepts of “development”, “land concentration” and “distribution of population” are nothing but masks designed to conceal the policy of expropriating lands owned by Arab fellahin and transferring them, in one direction only, to Israeli ownership.

This was not designed for the development of the interests of the whole population of this country but to carry out the policy of “Judaization” which is clearly stated in the following paragraph of the project of “Judaization of the Galilee”:

“The special issue of Galilee is the lack of Jewish citizens compared with non-Jews who constitute 70% of the total population.”

It was with this background, and after 30 years of continued land expropriation, that the events of the Land Day took place. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1976, the Arab masses

wanted to defend their land by exercising one of their legitimate rights, namely the right to strike. But the Israeli authorities faced the exercise of this civil right with military measures, felled six innocent martyrs, and precipitated much bloodshed and pain.

National issues deserve national struggles. To the extent that the national issue becomes clear and the national struggle becomes deeper, the justifications and possibilities of international struggle become manifest.

The international nature of our struggle was expressed by the fact that the Land Day aroused a wave of solidarity expressed by the same forces and elements in Israel, through multi-form means.

The erection of the monument, built on a small hill situated at the entrance to the village of Sakhnin, appears to be addressing both human beings and the heavens together. It preaches to humans the nobleness of struggle and cries out justice to heaven.

Two prominent and progressive talents have met together in the design and execution of the project of this monument, namely the talented Arab artist, Abid Abdi and the talented Israeli artist, Gershon Knispel.

The two artists have transcended, in a noble fashion, the feeling of national chauvinism, and their common work is harmonious and complete, it creates the impression that it is the work of a single artist.

The historical inevitable development will liquidate the causes behind human and national injustice. The passing of time will heal the wounds and nothing will remain except the message, the example, and human artistic creations that will endure as a historical reminder.

The Junker bombers have passed away but Guernica is victorious. Humanity, without any doubt, will remember Pablo Picasso with the deepest feelings of affection and respect. But Generalissimo Franco cannot be remembered except with

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the contempt that he deserves.

We do not live on another planet and our history is not isolated from human history. We constitute a significant part of it.

Racism, hatred and national injustice will vanish away while humanity and love will be victorious.

Humanity, soil and the message will remain.

# CREATING A JOINT CREATION

JOSHUA SOBOL

What can be said today about the events of the “Land Day”, that bitter day of the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1976.

I take the liberty of reiterating what I wrote a month before the “Land Day”, and published in the weekly “Chotam” of 27<sup>th</sup> February, 1976.

“Just when a number of M.K.s of the ‘national league’ were endeavoring to keep our parliament busy by trying to castigate Israeli law by means of the Jundef melodrama, and were awarded a festive review by the mass media, omens of an oncoming storm became more and more apparent in another area where Israeli justice is seriously, even fatally, ill. However, in private as in public life alike, the mass media preferred to say a lot regarding some passing headaches, whereas they kept silent about signs of a malignancy which was making itself evident within the body.

I am referring to the feeling of rebellion among Arab citizens of Israel as their inequality before Israeli law in everything relating to land becomes clear. It has become known that some attempts have recently been made by the authorities to

carry out orders for expropriation of land belonging to Arab citizens of Israel. Such an attempt is connected with the notorious “Area 9”.

There were also rumors that it was intended to carry out further massive expropriations in a number of villages in the Galilee, including Druze villages. The subject was discussed on television very superficially and the viewers could get the impression that the subject matter was a slight difference of opinion in semantics between the Adviser of Arab Affairs, S. Toledano, and some undefined entity, in whose direction the Adviser voiced some annoyed chirping from which it was possible to understand that the man was not quite at peace with something and it was not clear why.

The simple citizen, who during those days was occupied with the jundef affair, could not have imagined that this concerned a real storm which would rock the State. No-one brought to his attention that the agitation in the Arab villages in anticipation of the impending expropriations was spreading and embracing young and old. Secular and religious, supporters of both the Labour Party and the Communist Party. No-one informed the Israeli citizen that the threat of expropriation had this time fallen on different ground than before, and that the fear of expropriation and the rebellion against it had for some months been creating a very significant change among the Arab citizens of Israel.

Our television, which covers every mouthing of a certain M.K., did not find it necessary to give either full or partial cover to what has been going on in Arab villages or to convey to its viewers the real significance of the assembly which took place at Sakhnin which drew over 10,000 participants, young and old, amongst them young Druze and Bedouins who had served – and some who still were serving – in the Israel Defence Forces.

If the Israeli television had done its duty properly the complacent citizen would have been shocked to discover that the danger of loss of land was bringing about

a better understanding between young and old in the Arab villages with the accompanying ingredients of the awakening of a strong self-identity: at assemblies which have recently taken place in some Arab villages folk-poets appeared who performed folklore songs with the audience answering in chorus. My Arab friends, who explained this phenomenon to me, said that they themselves were amazed at the magnitude of these events.

The matter has another facet, more serious and bearing more responsibility: when one hears the Head of the Kfar Kassem Council, Ismail Buder, the head of Arrabeh Council, Mahmoud Na'amna, or Farhoud Farhoud, a Druze notable, when one hears the exact explanations and the facts from the mouth of Sabri Khouri, and it transpires that background of the fierce opposition and the rebellion which may erupt in expectation of attempts to expropriate land is very complex but at the same time quite simple.

When one listens to these people one suddenly grasps the simplicity of the matter. These are Israeli citizens with an awareness of belonging to the land and the State, Israeli citizens who do not have nor have any reason for any inferiority complex as regards other citizens for they contribute to its life, economy and security not less than a banker from Shikun Bavli or a managing-director from Ramat Eshkol, and they simply demand that the same law which protects the lands of a moshavnik of Beer-Tuvia should also protect their lands.

Whoever is of the opinion that this demand is impertinent is obliged to declare that an ex-soldier from Yarka or a farmer from Arrabeh are second-class citizens of the State of Israel, citizen whose rights are similar to the rights and status of Jews in countries where Jews are kept in a status of "tolerated and second-class citizens". Is this the real meaning of the slogan "Judaise the Galilee"? Namely, to turn the Arab villagers in the Galilee into "Jews" in the anti-semitic sense of the word?

There are increasing signs that this time many Arab villages are adamant in their

decision to forcibly resist the enforcement of Turkish laws in the State of Israel. A first sign was when about 500 men and women went out to prevent by force the fencing off of lands, and according to Ismail Buder, were ready to be killed to prevent the expropriation. Actually, matters are beyond the stage of signs and signals, and were voiced in an open and public form in a Jewish-Arab dialogue which took place last Saturday in the presence of about 300 people at Beit Sokolow, Tel-Aviv. Arab and Jewish youth were there together with grey-haired veterans with lined faces. Things were said in public and they sounded like a cry: "Stop the stupidity, save the country from an unnecessary and dangerous confrontation." 300 people heard it but the communications media were not present.

As has been said, these things were written five weeks prior to the events of "Land Day" in 1976. Today, two years after that tragic day, I have nothing to add but this: since the beginning of the Jewish-Arab conflict there have been people in the country, people of both nations, who believed that Jews and Arabs could live together in this country, in peace and not to the detriment of one or the other.

Since the beginning of the encounter between the two nations, there have been people who have believed that Jews and Arabs can create something together in this country and far be it from Jewish creativity to wish to build itself up on the exploitation of the Arab individual and the Arab nation. It is tragic that a common creation of this kind by an Arab creator and a Jewish creator, finds expression in a monument in commemoration of victims. The reason is evident: ever since the beginning of the conflict, preachers of understanding and brotherhood between the two nations have been a minority among their peoples, and their voice has been a voice calling out in the wilderness. On the day when their belief will be shared by the majority, peace and justice will reign between our peoples and the common creation of both nations will find its expression in all aspects of life, spiritual and material, and no longer in monuments to the memory of victims of hared.



# MEMORIAL OF MONUMENTS TO THE PRESENT

ABED ABDI

The peoples of the world have created, on their creative path of civilization, expressions for their conceptions of thought, in the form of symbols and rituals which were clearly expressed by the erection of temples, places of worship, obelisks and stone monuments.

In the wake of the march of humanity, and in the course of generations, these structures may have become symbols and epitomes of a past world relapsed in the passage of time, but were not entirely erased.

Generations follow each other, leaving at every stage memories which cling to the present. These relics reach me in waves of sadness, through the uprightness of the palm-tree: the depth of the cactus root, a towering forsaken mosque or rusty

church bell which no longer resound through the atmosphere.

I feel the wounds of this sequence of not-distant history, and its suffering: the rocky surfaces of brown stones lying in front of the bulldozers of “progress”, and have tasted its salinity like that streaming over a dark forehead; the sweat that, through history, laden with bitterness, was transformed to heavy tears dripping over tombstones that have become monuments in the villages of Sakhnin, Kufr Qassem, Tantoura and Deir-Yassin.

The monument we have erected in Sakhnin can be the witness and the vow of its eternal belonging to this land, which pleaded to its sons to rise in defence of their mother earth.

Our common work, the work of my colleague Gershon Knispel and myself, is an embodiment of the idea of creative cooperation between the two peoples to present repetition of the tragedy, and to make our present efforts hand over to the future monuments of peace and mutual co-existence in this land.



# THE ANSWER

GERSHON KNISPEN

I have been asked again and again, why we made the monument to the “Land Day” at Sakhneen.

In ancient times, people piled up cairns as monuments to preserve a site or to drive away evil spirits...

And surely only evil spirits could force peasantry to leave their land, and only evil spirits could disturb the tranquility of peasants, labouring on their land.

Is it not the evil spirit which led to the shedding of innocent blood, of those whose only crime was their protest against the seizure of their land.

Here is the answer:

Together with my colleague Abed Abdi, I built that “Cairn of Masses” for the same purpose: to drive away evil spirits, and to preserve the site, the site of spoliation. Robbery and usurpation of land. But also to leave a memorial of shared creative work which will one day become a landmark around which future generations will be able to meet, generations which will find it hard to believe what actually happened.

And if you will, let us say, that our joint work will be a pledge that what happened will not occur again.

