

# Enduring Roots

Over a Century of Resistance to  
the Jewish National Fund (JNF)



Produced by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network  
Directed by Alex Safron

In the name of environmentalism, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) plants trees and builds parks on Palestinian land. Over the past 113 years, the strategies of the JNF to acquire land in historic Palestine have changed, but its goals remain the same. **Enduring Roots: Over a Century of Resistance to the Jewish National Fund** is a 40-minute documentary chronicling stories of al-Nakba survivors, interviews with their descendants about the case of refugee return, and current and growing resistance to the ongoing colonization of Palestine by the Jewish National Fund.



# Enduring Roots: Over a Century of Resistance to the the Jewish National Fund (JNF)



**From** the opening scenes showing a Jewish National Fund bulldozer destroying a Bedouin's tent in the Naqab to interviews with the victims of on-going ethnic cleansing, the 39-minute film *Enduring Roots: Over a Century of Resistance to the Jewish National Fund* shows the devastating impact that the Jewish National Fund (JNF or JNF-KKL) has on the lives of Palestinians. For over a century, the JNF has been instrumental in expelling Palestinians from their homes and land and creating towns, villages and parks exclusively for Israeli Jews out of the ruins. This film shows the expulsion, how Palestinian civilians are affected and the ways that Palestinians are resisting that expulsion.

Alex Safron, filmmaker and member of a delegation sent to document the JNF's ethnic cleansing program, shot the film in various locations in Palestine in 2013. Interspersed between moving interviews of victims of al Nakba in 1948, al Nakba in 1967, and continuing today, are historical photographs and quotes from early Zionists showing that there has been a single overriding goal of the JNF during its entire history – that of acquiring the land, dispossessing those who lived there, and settling Jews on it. Over the past 113 years, the strategies of the JNF to acquire land in historic Palestine have changed, but its goals remain the same. Today the JNF plants trees and builds parks in the name of environmentalism. In years past the buzzword was re-forestation or "making the desert bloom." Whatever the framework, the result is the loss of Palestinian homes and land and the colonization of the land by Israel.

Safron exposes this result through his interviews with Palestinians of different generations. Four of those interviewed in the film are:

## **Fatima Abdullah Ibrahim**

al-Quds (Jerusalem) district



Fatima Abdullah Ibrahim, a Nakba survivor, was violently displaced from her land when she was 18 years old. Zionist militias, with the aid of intelligence provided by the JNF, stormed her village and massacred many residents. She fled to the mountains with her mother and on her way saw her husband murdered while running to hide. She fondly remembers a peaceful life and living off the land before being forced to leave it. She has lived in Dheisheh Refugee Camp since 1948 and has not been able to return to her village of origin (15 miles from Dheisheh) since she fled. She hopes her son will be able to return to live in his birthplace in his lifetime. Along with the ruins of several other villages, DayrAban today is the site of the JNF U.S.A. Independence Park.

*"We had no weapons. The snipers killed at night. Snipers started to kill the youth, kill the people. For three months: kill, kill, kill, kill. They started to take people and bury them at night. So where did we go? To the mountains. We fled to the mountains. So my mother, brother and I fled to the mountains. But they followed us there."*

## **Mohammed Qassim**

al-Qabu, al-Quds (Jerusalem) district



Mohammed Qassim is a 4th generation resident of Aida Refugee Camp in Bethlehem. His family was violently displaced from al-Qabu in the district of Jerusalem, less than 10 miles from Aida. On May 1, 1949, Israeli soldiers blew up houses in al-Qabu in a raid on the village and were ordered to kill every male. Today, the Jewish-only settlement of MevoBetar exists on the ruins of al-Qabu. Mohammed is a youth organizer who curates exhibits of photos taken by young people living in local refugee camps. Photos depict a life of resistance to the Israeli occupation and a longing to return to their villages of origin that they have never seen but feel a strong connection to.

*"The JNF buys my village from the Israeli government and they make Begin Park on it.... But we still have the papers, the old Turkish document.... And who sells them this land? [The Israeli government doesn't] have the right. It's colonization. If you want to talk about peace or a one-state solution in the future: there is no peace solution in the future without the refugees' case. The main conflict in Palestine is built on refugees.... Also, we don't ask for the return. We ask for the Right of Return, the right to choose where we want to live in our country. Like, for example, for me, I wouldn't want to go to al-Qabu. It's my homeland, my village. [But] I want to go and live in Haifa. I have the right to go back to the exact area. But okay, I can also have the right to choose where I want to live. I may live here or I may live there."*

## **Sheikh Siyah al-Turi**

**al-Araqib Village, al-Naqab desert (Negev)**



Sheikh Siyah al-Turi was born in al-Araqib village inside the border of 1948 Israel in the Naqab or Negev. He and his fellow villagers, though granted citizenship in Israel, have been resisting displacement from their land as a result of the Israeli Land Authority's (ILA) Prawer Plan (see below). Partnering with and members of the ILA, the Jewish National Fund, is investing \$600 million for settlement project "developed" on Bedouin land in the Naqab. This project will displace over 40,000 Bedouin from their land and is largely funded by donations from the United States and Canada. The villagers have been protecting their land, rebuilding their homes and replanting their land after each demolition (over 50 times since 2010). The ILA-JNF demolition efforts are pushing the residents of al-Araqib to live in and around their own cemetery.

*"When the Israeli government failed to displace us from this land, they tried to displace us under the pretext of planting trees. The JNF took almost 20,000 dunams<sup>1</sup> of land that provided our food and livelihood. Now the JNF planted trees on our land and deprived us of our livelihood."*

---

<sup>1</sup>1 dunam = 1,000 square meters

**Umar al-Ghubari**  
Mshierfeh (near Umm al Fahm)



And dozens of villages were here in this area.

Umar was born in Mshierfeh and works with the organization Zochrot based out of Tel Aviv. Zochrot acts to challenge the Israeli Jewish public's preconceptions and to promote political and cultural awareness to create the conditions for the Return of Palestinian Refugees and a shared life in Israel. The organization carries out different projects to advance understanding of Nakba and Return. Zochrot acts to promote Israeli Jewish society's acknowledgement of and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the Nakba and the reconceptualization of Return as the imperative redress of the Nakba and a chance for a better life for all the country's inhabitants. It renounces the colonial conception of Israel's existence in the region and the colonial practices it entails. Umar coordinates the program of Return of Palestinian Refugees at Zochrot as well as taking visitors on tours of destroyed Palestinian villages.



# The Jewish National Fund

## ...Colonizing Palestine since 1901

The Jewish National Fund (JNF) was founded at the World Zionist Congress in 1901 for the purpose of acquiring land and property for exclusive use by Jewish people. This was part of creating a Jewish state in Palestine. The JNF covers up this history of colonization by planting trees and parks on stolen land and destroyed Palestinian villages.

Between its founding in 1901 and the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, the JNF compiled information about Palestinian land and people. This information was first used by the JNF to purchase land at exploitative prices that allowed them to control resources like water and fertile land. Starting in the 1930s this information was also used by Zionist militia to target Palestinian resistance and ultimately for the ethnic cleansing of over 700,000 Palestinians in 1948.

Today, the JNF owns 13% of the land in the state of Israel. The vast majority of this land was stolen from Palestinians who were forcibly removed in 1948 or in 1967. Since 1953 the JNF has operated as a part of the State, appointing nearly half of the board of the Israel Land Authority (ILA). The ILA then manages both the JNF's 13% and an additional 80% of all land in the State of Israel. The JNF and the State of Israel therefore control 93% of total land in historic Palestine. Presently there is an effort to officially divorce the Jewish National Fund and the ILA, formally separating the para-statal KKL/JNF from the Israeli state body. The JNF has consistently re-organized and positioned itself to achieve its goals of colonizing Palestine. Though the strategies of the JNF have changed, their goals remain the same. Wherever and whenever Israel seeks to expand its occupation and colonization in Palestine, that is where the JNF can be found – participating in the forced removal of Palestinians, in the destruction of their land, homes, villages and agriculture, planting parks to hide this historic and on-going process of colonization, and stealing and securing natural resources for control by the State of Israel.

Today the JNF is active in East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley, Susya (in the Hebron Hills) and al-Naqab, or the Negev, in the Southern part of what is now called the state of Israel: all places that Israel wants to displace Palestinians and secure additional land and resources for the Israeli State. In al-Naqab, 40,000 Palestinian Bedouin are being threatened with forced displacement and the destruction of the villages that some have lived on for over 1,000 years. Currently, the JNF is raising funds in the United States for their "Blueprint Negev" project - a \$600 million project aimed at "developing" al-Naqab to attract 300,000 Jewish settlers (mainly from North America) to the Negev Desert in the wake of the Praver Plan. The Praver Plan is a

current plan of the Israeli government to forcibly remove up to 30,000 Bedouin citizens of Israel from their land in al-Naqab. The JNF is raising funds worldwide as a charity organization for Blueprint Negev and other similar projects in the Jordan Valley, South Hebron Hills and East Jerusalem. Resistance continues to grow against the Praver Plan and the JNF.

Despite the role of JNF in colonization and environmental destruction, it raises hundreds of millions of dollars through the charity status it enjoys in over 50 countries across the world, including the United States.

Stop the JNF. Stop environmental racism. Stop ethnic cleansing. Stop greenwashing apartheid.

## HOW CAN WE STOP THE JNF?

Join the campaign in your region to Stop the JNF.

Stop the JNF is an international campaign aimed at ending the role of the Jewish National Fund (KerenKayemetLeIsrael) (JNF-KKL) in:

- the on-going displacement of indigenous Palestinians from their land
- the theft of their property
- the funding of historic and present day colonies, and
- the destruction of the natural environment.

The JNF continues to serve as a global fundraiser for Israeli ethnic cleansing, occupation and apartheid. Despite its historic role in a State institution of Israel (the Israel Land Authority) and in institutionalized racism and apartheid, the JNF and its affiliate organizations enjoy charitable status in over 50 countries and many also enjoy consultative status with the United Nations.

In addition to the ongoing struggles against the JNF-KKL in Palestine, the campaign is underway in Canada, France, Britain and the United States.

### **Help stop the human rights and environmental violations of the JNF-KKL:**

- Revoke the charity status of the JNF in your state or country
- Break all ties with the JNF
- Educate others on the JNF
- Purchase certificates to plant olive trees in Palestine (Plant a Tree in Palestine)
- Sign the Stop the JNF call-to-action ([www.stopthejnf.org/call-to-action](http://www.stopthejnf.org/call-to-action))
- Organize the Stop the JNF campaign in your city or region





**For more information about the campaign, visit us at [www.stopthejnf.org](http://www.stopthejnf.org) or email us at [info@stopthejnf.org](mailto:info@stopthejnf.org).**

**To join regional campaigns email the following:**

**Canada:** [canada@stopthejnf.org](mailto:canada@stopthejnf.org)    **Palestine:** [palestine@stopthejnf.org](mailto:palestine@stopthejnf.org)

**Great Britain:** [gb@stopthejnf.org](mailto:gb@stopthejnf.org) **United States:** [us@stopthejnf.org](mailto:us@stopthejnf.org)

## **BIOS**

**Alex Safron** is a filmmaker and photographer based in Oakland, CA. He spent 15 years looking through the lens of a still camera before switching focus to the video and film arts. As a U.S. co-coordinator of the International Campaign to Stop the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and an organizer with the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN), Alex does a variety of work to support Palestinian led movements for justice including BDS and the struggle for right of return. Alex films and edits short films documenting the anti-racist and anti-colonial activities of resistance to the ongoing colonization of Palestine. He also can be found filming and editing other people's projects ranging from non-profit to academic to documentary.

**The International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN)** is an international network of Jews who are uncompromisingly committed to struggles for human emancipation, of which the liberation of the Palestinian people and land is an indispensable part. We are committed to the dismantling of Israeli apartheid, the return of Palestinian refugees, and to ending the Israeli colonization of historic Palestine. We coordinate and support Jewish participation in local and international efforts to challenge Zionism, Islamophobia and other racism, separatism and militarism, and work towards a society premised on the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental rights of all people, beginning with the most vulnerable communities. IJAN currently has chapters across the United States and chapters or affiliates in Argentina, Toronto, India, Israel, France, London, Geneva, Austria, New Zealand, Spain, and the Netherlands.

# CREDITS:

**Produced by:** International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN)

**Filmed and edited by:** Alex Safron

**Assistant Producer:** Sara Kershner

**Translation:** Lara Bitar

**Narration:** Nadia Barhoum

**Maps, Graphics, Animation:** Phil Ebner and Alex Safron

**Original Music Recording:** Fathi al-Jarrah and Rony Dib

## **"Bistoon"**

Written by MamakKhadem

Performed by MamakKhadem and Hamid Saeidi

## **"Baqun"**

Lyrics by DuraidMusleh Composed by Omar Abbad

Performed by Fathi al-Jarrah

## ***Plant-a-Tree in Palestine Delegation in partnership with:***

Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)

Stop the Wall- Palestinian Grassroots Anti-apartheid Wall Campaign

Palestinian Farmers Union

The International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN)

## **Special Thanks:**

Adalah Legal Center for Arab and Minority Rights in Israel

Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee

Zochrot – Tours of JNF parks

Lajee Youth Center, Aida Refugee Camp

Shorouq Media Center, Dheisheh Refugee Camp – Lodging and Dheisheh history

Ziad Abbas – Production

Lisa Nessian - Photographs

Zawaya – Music production

Aswat: Bay Area Arab Music Ensemble – Original music recording

Jamie LeJeune – Editing support

Activestills.org - Photographs

Break the Silence Media & Art Project – Film premiere

# Screening Facilitation Guide:



## Land Day Film Screening Facilitation Guide for *Enduring Roots: Over a Century of Resistance to the Jewish National Fund*

### WHAT IS PALESTINIAN LAND DAY?

On March 30, 1976, thousands of people belonging to the Palestinian minority in Israel gathered to protest Israeli government plans to expropriate 60,000 dunams of Arab-owned land in the Galilee. In the resulting confrontations with Israeli police, six Palestinians were killed, hundreds wounded, and hundreds jailed. In the intervening years, those events have become consecrated in the Palestinian memory as Land Day.

After years of military rule and political docility, Land Day 1976 was the first act of mass resistance by the Palestinians inside Israel against the Zionist policy of internal colonialization, a systematic process of expropriation that had reduced Palestinian land ownership from around 94 per cent of all territory in pre-1948 Palestine to less than three per cent in what is now considered to be Israel.

Land Day is commemorated annually on March 30 and is supported by solidarity actions across the world that challenge Israel's expropriation of land and continued colonization of Palestine.

## **ENDURING ROOTS FILM DESCRIPTION**

In the name of environmentalism, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) plants trees and builds parks on Palestinian land. Over the past 113 years, the strategies of the JNF to acquire land in historic Palestine have changed, but its goals remain the same. Enduring Roots: Over a Century of Resistance to the Jewish National Fund" is a 40-minute documentary chronicling stories of al-Nakba survivors, interviews with their

descendants about the case of refugee return, and current and growing resistance to the ongoing colonization of Palestine by the Jewish National Fund.

## **WHAT IS THE JEWISH NATIONAL FUND (JNF)?**

The Jewish National Fund (JNF) was founded in 1901 for the purpose of acquiring land in Palestine explicitly for Jewish people. Under the guise of environmentalism, the JNF plants trees and builds parks over Palestinian villages destroyed, looted and demolished during the Zionist colonization and creation of the state of Israel in Palestine. By planting forests and parks over Palestinian land, the JNF works to hide the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and ensures that Palestinians cannot return to their villages. As a charity, the JNF collects international donations to build public support for its continued role in developing Jewish-only colonies/settlements in the West Bank, which involves confiscating Palestinian land and uprooting centuries-old olive trees.

## **WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE STOP THE JNF CAMPAIGN?**

The Land Defense Delegation is a project of the Stop the JNF Campaign, which is an internationally coordinated campaign working to:

- Expose the Jewish National Fund's role in the colonization of Palestine;
- Exclude the JNF from environmental or environmental justice spaces because of the JNF's manipulation of environmentalism to greenwash ethnic cleansing; and
- Revoke its charitable status in over 50 countries.

## **WHO IS PART OF THE STOP THE JNF CAMPAIGN?**

Founding members of the Stop the JNF include: Palestinian Boycott National Committee, Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN), and Friends of the Earth - Scotland.

The Stop the JNF Campaign is made up of several international partners, including Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (Stop the Wall), Palestinian Farmers Union, MECA and IJAN.

The Campaign is currently active in the US, Canada, the UK, France and South Africa.

### **TALKING POINTS FOR Q & A or PANEL SESSION**

- What is Greenwashing? Discuss how the JNF uses tree plantings to displace Palestinians but masks this process through marketing itself as 'environmental.'
- How is the process of greenwashing ethnic cleansing similar to other forms of land confiscation and displacement that take place in the US and other sites of ongoing colonization?
- How can we connect struggles for justice in Palestine with other groups more locally fighting against similar forms of displacement and colonization?
- What other steps can we take to address greenwashing and the larger issues of displacement and colonization that are present in the film?

