

## Uri Davis

The three tenets of Zionism are: to conquer Palestinian land, to eliminate Palestinians by massacres or expulsions and to erase their geography and history. The first two tenets have been the subject of intense research where the main player was the Haganah, which turned into IDF after June, 1948. The third tenet and the second player have been neglected for several decades after Al-Nakba.

This second player was the Jewish National Fund (JNF), one of the earliest Zionist organizations. Only lately has the role of JNF (KKL) been brought to light. I remember clearly that I found an immense measure of information in the book by Walter Lehn in association with Uri Davis, entitled The Jewish National Fund, published by Kegan Paul International, London and New York, 1988.

Uri Davis has been and is a pioneer of disclosing the role of JNF in Al-Nakba and during the following six decades. JNF participated actively in the expulsion of the Palestinians, the direction of the IDF to the Palestinian lands it covets, the destruction of Palestinian villages and planting trees on their sites to conceal their debris.

Uri has over the years published papers, edited an e-book and gave lectures and testimonies about the role of JNF in what amounts sometimes to war crimes. He, for example, exposed the discrimination in housing by applying on behalf of the Mahamid family of Umm al-Fahm to build their home also in Qatzir, a settlement reserved for “Jews” only. He was accepted as a “Jew”, but when he turned the house over to the Palestinian Arab family, the Mahamid family was rejected in court.

He visited and reported on JNF confiscation of Palestinian villages’ land west of Jerusalem and beyond. He also did a fascinating detective work to find the sword of my father, which was looted from our home by the Israelis when they occupied my land in Al-Ma’in. In the process, he heard fascinating reflections on Al-Nakba by those soldiers who made it.

Today, the role of JNF in ethnic cleansing is considerably better well known. Witness the worlds’ outrage at Praver Plan, which aims at confiscation of Palestinian land for the benefit of JNF. The nature of JNF, as a racist organization clothed in a charity garb, has led many NGOs to aim to sue them, to protest their actions or to expose those opportunist politicians who became members on their board.

When we see these positive developments, yet to increase to a biting level, we must remember the early work of Uri Davis over many years, to bring our knowledge about JNF discriminatory practices to what it is today. On his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, we must express our gratitude and appreciation of the pioneering work, which Uri has done so far, wishing him many more years of indefatigable work.

Dr. Salman Abu Sitta,

25<sup>th</sup> December, 2013