

and second-class citizens, deprived of the simplest legal rights to a life of dignity and equality, about which the Zionist leaders always boasted. Below we examine Israeli policy in six different fields which most clearly manifest Zionism's nature and goals, as well as how the Palestinian Arabs have faced this policy.

## 1. JUDAIZATION AND LAND CONFISCATION

It is known that the Palestinian Arab citizens are concentrated in three areas: the Galilee, Triangle and Naqab (Negev). The population of the Galilee is almost 376,000, according to the September 1985 census. In the Naqab, there are 110-120,000 Palestinian Arabs. In addition, Palestinians live in five cities: Haifa, Jaffa, Acca, Lydda and Ramleh. Each area has its problems with the Judaization process and land confiscation enacted in accordance with the laws declared by successive Zionist governments. Notorious among these is the Absentee's Property Law which authorized the Zionist state to confiscate the property of all those who were not present at any time after November 29, 1947. Besides being used to confiscate the property of those Palestinians driven out by Zionist aggression in 1948, this law was in practice accompanied by much cheating and fraud, like claiming land to be the property of an imaginary name. Accordingly the owner or owners of the land were absent, and the land was confiscated by the Zionist state. There was also confiscation of land whose owners lived in another city of occupied Palestine and couldn't reach their property at the time of land being classified, due to various reasons, among them Zionist aggression.

There is also the Environment Protection Law under which all forests were considered state property (i.e., reserved for Jewish use), as was all land where the rock content exceeds 40%, or where trees are scarce. Extensive areas of land were closed off or confiscated on the pretext of «security» and Israeli military training. Large areas of cultivated land have been confiscated on the pretext that aerial photos showed that they were forests.

Between 1948 and 1953, the Zionist government confiscated 520 Palestinian Arab villages and established on that land 308 agricultural settlements. Of 1.5 million dunums of land owned by Palestinians in the Galilee and Triangle, 1 million were confiscated by 1972. In 1952, Palestinians were forbidden to enter an area of 62,500 dunums designated as Area No. 9. After a long struggle by the Palestinians, this area was divided into three sections. Section A (5,000 dunums) could be cultivated with no problems. In section B (50,000 dunums), Palestinians were allowed to farm only with special licenses in certain seasons. Section C (6,750 dunums) was closed totally, because it was considered a military firing zone for the Israeli army. Earlier, the residents of two villages, Ikrit and Kafr Berem, had been expelled from their villages for the same reason. (Ikrit was confiscated on November 5, 1948, and destroyed on December 20, 1951, while Kafr Berem was confiscated on February 4, 1949, and blown up on June 16, 1953.)

Land owned by Palestinians of the Druze faith did not escape confiscation despite the Zionists' claims that the Druze are not Arabs, and the resulting imposition of obligatory military service on them. Nonetheless the Druze have struggled fiercely against land confiscation, declaring adherence to their Arab identity and land. In 1975, the Zionist government declared its intention to confiscate extensive areas of land from Druze villages, especially Kasra. The people of these villages held a meeting and took decisions to be executed at all costs. The most important of their decisions were:

- Infringement on any piece of land of any resident of the village is considered an aggression against the whole village;
- resisting such aggression and preventing it by force, no matter the consequences;
- anybody who fails to participate in defending the land is considered an outcast; dealings with him and his family are forbidden; and everything in his house is considered cursed;
- anyone killed while defending the land is considered a martyr and will be buried on that land.

Two days after the meeting, the whole village went out armed with sticks and iron bars, to resist the Israeli bulldozers which were forced to withdraw.

The seventies witnessed a rise in the nationalist awareness of the Palestinians in the area occupied in 1948, at the same time as

talk of a «peaceful» settlement increased, especially after the October 1973 war and the mass movement it generated. The seventies also witnessed a sharpening of the tone of the Zionists' talk about a «pure Jewish state», the necessity of Judaization of the Galilee and expelling its Palestinian Arab residents. This was particularly clear with the issuing of the ill-reputed Koenig report drawn up by Israel Koenig, governor of the northern region. This report reflected the Zionists' fear of the rise in the Galilee residents' nationalist aspirations, and the possibility of their asking for independence, considering that they constitute the majority in the Galilee. The report called for changing the demography of the Galilee, i.e., Judaization. Zionist leaders cried out about the «danger» and the «time bomb», and declared the necessity of settlement in the Galilee, but under the slogan of «improving the Galilee and its inhabitants». Large sums of money were channeled to this project. *Al Hamishmar* newspaper, June 11, 1975, reported that the government and the Jewish Agency had allocated 1.5 billion Israeli pounds to execute a settlement plan in the Galilee to accommodate 100,000 Jews. The plan also included the creation of agricultural and industrial development projects on the edges of the Middle Galilee. Haim Bar Lev, Trade and Industry Minister, declared the existence of a program in his ministry for establishing six large industrial centers in the Galilee, on which work had already started. Shmuel Toledano, the prime minister's advisor on Arab affairs, declared on November 13, 1975, that the government would soon study the confiscation of 20,000



Judaization: Zeeb in northern Palestine became Ahsiv; the village mosque became a resort.

dunums to «develop» the Galilee in the areas of Carmel and Nazareth, and that 32% of government construction would be centered in the Galilee.

The Palestinians moved to defend their land and resist the confiscation procedures. They held popular conferences and formed the Regional Committee to Defend the Land, with branches in many cities and villages. Then came the Day of the Land on March 30, 1976, which climaxed the struggle against land confiscation and expulsion. Demonstrators clashed with the repressive enemy forces in many places. Six Palestinians were martyred and scores were wounded. Since that date, Palestinians everywhere celebrate this day yearly as an expression of their adherence to their rights and land, and their solidarity with their brothers living under occupation since 1948.

Though this struggle slowed down the confiscation process in some areas, it could not stop the Zionists' dream of Judaization, of expelling the Palestinians from the Galilee and confiscating their land. In mid-October 1986, Majd Al Kurum residents were ordered to evacuate 17,000 dunums of their land. The occupation authorities claimed that there had been a decision to confiscate this land since 1967, to add it to Carmel settlement in order to «develop» the Galilee. On November 4, 1986, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres called for continuation of settlement in the Galilee and allocating large sums of money for the purpose. Speaking at the opening of a new factory in Safad, he said, «There is no reason to make us give priority to settling in the north of the West Bank; it is better to develop the Galilee.»