

British Park: A JNF UK crime scene – 'Not in our Name'

Many in the UK are unaware of how the JNF UK (Jewish National Fund), a registered charity, got hold of the land of seven Palestinian villages, converted it into British Park and gifted it to Israel.



British Park is on stolen Palestinian land - the naming seeks to draw British citizens into a web of complicity with this JNF crime.

46 of the 68 JNF parks and forests are on ethnically cleansed land

Palestine before the Nakba:

Palestine was often described as 'a land without people for a people without land,' - a desert awaiting Zionist settlement. In fact, Palestine was full of highly educated people, engineers, doctors, scientists, musicians, business people, artisans and skilled agriculturists.

The British state itself evidenced Palestine's industry and fruitfulness between 1917 and 1948, when experts were brought in to collate information about the land, by then under British control. '[A Survey of Palestine](#)' reveals the rich agriculture and export industry of the Palestinians e.g. almost all the country's grains and olives, along with 86% of its grapes, 77% of its vegetables and 60% of its bananas, were cultivated by Palestinians, at a time when the Jewish population was a minority. This dispels the myth that Zionists made the 'desert bloom.'

The cultural, social and economic fabric of Palestine was devastated by the Nakba, in which the British state played a role. (See "[The Lost Cities of Palestine](#)")

The British role in the Zionist project.

The aim of Zionism, from the outset, was to colonise Palestine and create a purely Jewish state. This was to be achieved by removing its indigenous people, which could only be done with the backing of an imperial power. During the First World War, Britain seized control of Palestine and committed itself to the Zionist project – through the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and then through a League of Nation's mandate, until 1948.



'(A) Jewish state under the protection of the British Crown, would be especially in harmony with the truest interest of the British Empire'.

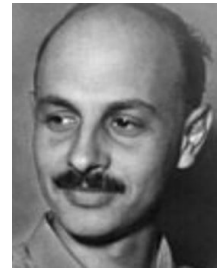
Winston Churchill

During this period, the British Government oversaw the immigration of Jews into Palestine. It facilitated the creation of self-governing Zionist institutions and the funnelling of funds from overseas, via the JNF, for land purchases. Crucially, Britain also provided the military power to crush Palestinian resistance against Zionist colonisation. The British deployed over 100,000 troops, bombed villages and implemented punishment executions, internment and deportation. This left the Palestinian national movement much weakened when it faced the Zionist forces in the Nakba of 1947-1949. By contrast, these forces had received British military training.

British rule prepared the ground for the Zionist ethnic cleansing that has since followed

JNF and the Nakba: The JNF is complicit in the crimes of the Nakba.

The JNF leaders promoted the policy of driving out the indigenous Palestinians via the 'Transfer Committee' and, in the years leading up to the mass ethnic cleansing of 1947-49, drew up an intelligence dossier on Palestinian villages. These '**Village Files**' documented information which became invaluable when the villages were attacked - information such as access/egress routes, water resources and relationships with other nearby villages. The Files also identified real and potential leaders of resistance, using a 'hostility index'- many of those identified later became targets for assassination. The Village Files formed a blueprint for ethnic cleansing and atrocities.



***Yigael Yadin**, Israel's 2nd Chief of Staff, admitted that the Village Files helped Zionist forces to sweep through Palestine in the Nakba.*

When Zionist fighters entered a Palestinian village selected for an exemplary massacre, men and boys were lined up and identified by a hooded informant; later they were taken away and executed. Such precise targeted killing of civilians known to be hostile to the Zionist project was made possible by the JNF's painstaking prior fieldwork in Palestine. These mass killings of political opponents facilitated by the JNF should be distinguished from the frequent massacres of men women and children in numerous Palestinian villages that were calculated to produce terror and flight in neighbouring communities and more widely.

How did the JNF UK come to possess British Park?

In December 1948, the United Nations passed Resolution 194, establishing the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees expelled during the Nakba; Palestinians were to be allowed to go home.

The new state of Israel acted rapidly to prevent this happening, [devising laws](#) to "offload" ethnically cleansed land to several groups, including the JNF. Israel also hoped that these laws would shield the new state from international condemnation. Agriculture Minister Tsizling said it was '*important in the international arena, and before the world community, that what is happening here **appears** legal.*' (Emphasis added)

Israel knew from the start that its acts violated international law.

The JNF stepped up, greenwashing the ethnic cleansing, creating parks and forests '*on land where Palestinian villages once stood; the forests are there to conceal this.*' ([Zochrot](#): quoting Michael Kortoza, KKL JNF)

46 of the 68 JNF developments cover Palestinian land. British Park is one of these developments. Despite this, JNF UK, has been a registered British charity since 1939.

Memoricide: JNF and the erasure of truth in British Park.

Today, in an attempt to legitimise the creation of the park, the JNF UK suggests that there has been a long standing and continuous connection between the parkland and the Jewish people. Their website references Biblical narratives, such as the battle between David and Goliath. Much play is made of the park's 'ancient, ruined buildings, cisterns (and) caves'. There are wistful descriptions of 'abandoned' groves and orchards 'covered with almond, fig, olive and pomegranate' trees (but 'abandoned' by whom and why?).

The JNF does not explain that Palestinians, for centuries, lived in the now 'ancient, ruined buildings', cultivating the land, making and trading goods and produce. There is no mention that the prickly-pear cacti found in the park delineate the boundaries of their villages. And, of course, there is no acknowledgement that these villagers were ethnically cleansed from their homes and land by Zionist forces in 1948.

Is British Park an injustice of the past, irrelevant today?

'No!' The lives of Palestinians today are still being impacted by all the Zionist crimes of the past: their inalienable Right of Return is still being prevented; huge numbers still live in **refugee camps**. Meanwhile, **plundered property** has never been returned; those who owned and worked their lands before 1948 are often not even able to visit their ancestral homes, let alone reclaim their rightful lands.

Right: Ajjur in British Park is a good example of ongoing loss: once, it was a thriving village, dating back centuries, with profitable, sustainable agriculture, two masjids, and schools. It was a market, for the region and offered residents a good living, in harmony with the land and climate. Now its residents are refugees, living in exile.



And it continues: the JNF has **recently announced** that it will acquire lands in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, in flagrant breach of international law, a harbinger of yet more ethnic cleansing.

Britain and the JNF today:

As in the past, the British establishment seems to shield the JNF. It still has charitable status, despite detailed and evidenced submissions proving its work is far from charitable, but instead is '100% Israel' (to quote JNF UK's own publicity). Yet, JNF UK picks up 25% Gift Aid and remains an official office of the worldwide KKL JNF, as **[their website](#)** shows.

'In simple terms, the test of charitable status is a test of what an organisation was set up to do, not what it does in practice.' (Charity Commission. Letter June 2019)



Fatima and Kholoud, refugees whose land is under British Park. [See this 4 minute clip](#)

Kholoud Al Ajarma is Palestinian refugee who submitted her family's title deeds to land under British Park was denied 'standing' the right to take her case further, as **documented by Jonathan Cook**. Complaints to OSCR (Scottish Charity Regulator) and the Fundraising Regulator have fallen on deaf ears.



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www.stopthejnf.org

Stop the JNF - Forests & Parks
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