

## **Judaization Policies and Oppression of the Cultural Identity in the 1948 Occupied Lands of Palestine**

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After the Nakba of 1948, a great number of Palestinians were displaced. They either settled down in refugee camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, or in neighboring countries such as Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Still, a great number of people in some Arab countries and Bedouin communities resisted the concept of immigration and the occupation's measures. Although the occupation massacred, slaughtered and suffocated the Palestinians, they managed to survive and protect the Arab identity of their cities and villages. These Palestinians are known today as the Arabs of 1948.

The occupation tried all available means to weaken the Arab identity and any national affection towards it. It targeted the culture, tried to influence the Arab mind and tried to suppress it under a group of projects called 'Israelization' (derived from Israel). These projects target the Palestinians and their existence, and aim to reconstruct the new Palestinian who will surrender to and accept the occupation and its presence on Palestinian land.

This study addresses the Arabs of 1948, details about their presence since the Nakba until this day, the most important historical events, and the Israeli attempts to suppress the Arab identity and Palestinian culture inside the occupied lands of 1948. The study ends with a conclusion and recommendations.



The Arab community inside occupied Palestine suffers from different economic and social policies imposed by the occupation to weaken the Palestinians' cultural identity. The occupation aims to weave the Palestinians into the pure cultural atmosphere of 'Israel'. The occupation has tried to maintain the Palestinian communities in the 48 lands without cultural, social or political awareness<sup>(6)</sup>. The policies have negatively affected the Arab cities and towns. About 85% of the Arab towns lag behind in the social and economic race, and 61.3% of the Arab families live below the poverty line<sup>(7)</sup>.

The 48 Arabs are discriminated against in media work, educational programs, budget distribution, and Municipalities' development plans. They lack services and are prevented from forming local municipality councils. In fact, Arab councils and Jewish councils are not treated equally.

Arab towns in 1948 lands suffer from several health and environmental problems which could result in serious health issues for the Arab inhabitants. The most significant problems are:

1. Incorrect treatment of wastewater.
2. Lack of drinkable water.
3. Spread of crushers and industries around the Arab areas.
4. Structural planning disregard of environmental considerations<sup>(8)</sup>.

## Judaization Measures and Oppression of Identity

The Israeli occupation, from the very beginning, insisted on proving its physical and spiritual presence. It focused its power on controlling each detail related to the Palestinian presence and right of ownership. However, the occupation's efforts were met with disappointment when a number of Palestinians refused the idea of immigration. Instead, they preserved their identity and Arab culture. As a result, the

<sup>(6)</sup> Bishara, Azmi, **Arabs in Israel: A Look Inside**, (Centre for Arabic Unity Studies, Beirut, 2000), p. 16.

<sup>(7)</sup> Dagher, Violet, **Palestinians of 48 Suffer from New and Dangerous Challenges**, 2009, <https://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/opinions/2009/10/14/%d9%81%d9%84%d8%b3%d8%b7%d9%8a%d9%86%d9%8a%d9%88-48-%d8%a8%d9%85%d9%88%d8%a7%d8%ac%d9%87%d8%a9-%d8%aa%d8%ad%d8%af%d9%8a%d8%a7%d8%aa-%d8%ac%d8%af%d9%8a%d8%af%d8%a9-%d9%88%d8%ae%d8%b7%d9%8a%d8%b1%d8%a9>

<sup>(8)</sup> Ibid.

Israeli governments have been fighting the Palestinian identity inside the occupied lands under what is called ‘Israelization’.

The occupation’s efforts to Judaize the Palestinian lands and oppress their cultural identity varied. Nevertheless, they all aimed to integrate the Palestinians into the Israeli social system, the local community, and civil and military institutions. The occupation’s attempts occurred at different levels:

## **First: Palestine’s Geography and Architecture**

The occupation followed two methods:

### 1. Grabbing lands and legally controlling them:

The occupation has always sought grabbing Palestinian lands, and based the attempts on the religious claim that Palestine is the promised land they deserve to entirely own<sup>(9)</sup>. Their arguments were derived from manipulated biblical texts<sup>(10)</sup>. The occupation then worked on legalizing its Judaization of the cities, villages and surrounding areas. From 1948 to 1967 (that is the time period from the Nakba to the Naksa), the occupation set 34 laws to confiscate the Arab lands whose owners were expelled to other villages or camps in neighboring countries<sup>(11)</sup>.

The occupation exploited these laws to justify stealing the Palestinian lands. The worst Judaization campaign happened in March 1976 when large areas (about 21,000 donums) of Sakhnin, Arraba, Galilee, and the Triangle were confiscated. The Palestinians were enraged, and went out in protests in March 30, 1976. On that day, 6 Palestinians were martyred; it was, later, nationally referred to as the ‘Land Day’<sup>(12)</sup>. The Judaization attempts were successful as the Palestinians living there represent more than 20% but only own 2% of the lands<sup>(13)</sup>.

<sup>(9)</sup> Abdulhamid, Mohammed, **Inventing a People and Dissolving Another**, (Masarat, Gaza, 2015), p. 61.

<sup>(10)</sup> Taha, Ali, **Jewish Zionist Discrimination and the Religious Ideological Aspect**, (Dar Al-Hadi for Publications, 2002), pp 63, 71, 84.

<sup>(11)</sup> Al-Sahli, Nabil, **Palestinians of 48 and Judaization Plans**, (Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies, 2012).

<sup>(12)</sup> Rawhana and Sabbagh, Nadim and Areej, **Palestinians in Israel: Insights on History, Politics and Society**, (Arab Centre for Applied Social Research, 2011), p. 85.

<sup>(13)</sup> Ibid: Al-Sahli, Nabil.

The Israeli occupation continues to tirelessly exert different efforts to Judaize more Arab lands under the pretext of implementing developmental projects. The main two claimed projects are:

- Development of Galilee Project and Star of David Project of 2020 which aim to Judaize the Galilee area and lessen the Arab concentration there.
  - Development of Negev project as part of Praver Plan which aims to confiscate 800,000 donums and group the people of the Negev in an area that represents only 1% of the Negev<sup>(14)</sup>.
2. Changing the identity of the villages and cities and falsifying their history

The occupation's attempts to grab the Palestinian lands and impose its sovereignty never stopped. In fact, the occupation tried to manipulate and falsify the identity of Arab villages and regions, adding false Zionist historical indicators to their landmarks. In addition, the occupation would oppress any historical indication that the areas are Arab or Palestinian. The occupation's attempts included:

- Oppressing the Palestinian architectural patterns and replacing them with modern Jewish-based designs.
- Replacing Palestinian names of streets with Hebrew ones.
- Giving new Hebrew names to the Palestinian villages and towns<sup>(15)</sup>.

## Second: The Media

From the start, the occupation has owned a powerful and influential media structure locally and internationally. It has always been able to mobilize the international public opinion towards the interests of the occupation. In fact, it has always presented the settlers as intellectual, effective and productive people; and the Arabs as barbaric, retarded and violent – and even Nazis<sup>(16)</sup>. In the absence of an equally powerful Palestinian media structure that could represent the Palestinians in the 1948 lands, the Israeli propaganda continues to win.

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<sup>(14)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>(15)</sup> Palestinians and Attempts to Limit Awareness, Badil Resource Center, 2019.

<sup>(16)</sup> Ibid: Abdulhamid, Mohannad, 2015.

The occupation's media works on planting a number of new terms and phrases, and oppressing the Palestinian culture and identity from the minds and hearts of the Palestinians living in the occupied territory. The most prominent term circulated by the occupation's media is 'Arabs of Israel', which is usually used by the occupation in defining the Arabs living in the occupied lands. Another phrase is 'Palestine is the home of the Jews since ancient times<sup>(17)</sup>'.

The occupation has always fought against the content of the Arabs' media. Ever since the establishment of the 'Voice of Right and Freedom' Newspaper in 1989, the Israeli judicial authorities incited against it until a verdict was finally issued to close it down for two years as recommended by the Shabak in 2002<sup>(18)</sup>.

### **Third: The Educational Programs**

The Israeli occupation exploits education as a means to Judaize and oppress the Palestinian identity. The curricula is filled with falsified facts about the history and geography of the occupied Palestine. The occupation focuses its efforts on the curricula taught to primary levels in which they reinforce the concept of Israeli citizenship, social involvement, and internal creation of awareness<sup>(19)</sup>.

In addition, the occupation fights the work of private schools, and imposes its censorship and limitations on permitting their establishment. At the same time, the number of schools which include Arab and Jewish students is increasing, and the schools are particularly sponsored by the occupation's government in order to reinforce the concept of co-existence and to merge the Arab citizens in the Israeli society. Finally,

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<sup>(17)</sup> Ibid: Palestinians and Attempts to Limit Awareness, 2019.

<sup>(18)</sup> Abu Amer, Adnan, **the Aspects of Pursuing the Islamic Movement in the 1948 Lands**, (AlJazeera Net, 2010),

<https://www.aljazeera.net/knowledgegate/opinions/2010/2/5/%d8%a2%d9%81%d8%a7%d9%82-%d9%85%d9%84%d8%a7%d8%ad%d9%82%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%ad%d8%b1%d9%83%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a5%d8%b3%d9%84%d8%a7%d9%85%d9%8a%d8%a9-%d8%a8%d8%a3%d8%b1%d8%a7%d8%b6%d9%8a-48>

<sup>(19)</sup> Zuhd, Riham, **Influence of the Israeli Educational Policy on the Awareness of the Palestinian Youth in East Al-Quds Schools**, (Master thesis, Al-Najah University, 2016), pp. 29-31.

the occupation strictly censors the educational system, forces the workers at the schools to teach the falsified curricula to the students, and fires whoever does not comply<sup>(20)</sup>.

## Fourth: Fighting Cultural Symbols

The occupation realized that the efforts it had been exerting were not enough to uproot the Palestinian identity from the Arab villages and cities. These places clung to their heritage and lifestyle. As a result, the occupation started attacking the Arab communities' symbols in the 1948 lands.

### 1. Attacking Arabic Language

Legally, the occupation recognized Arabic as an official language along with Hebrew. However, Hebrew remained less common as the Jewish immigrants continued to speak their mother tongue in their own communities<sup>(21)</sup>. Then, the occupation sought marginalizing all languages, including Arabic, and focusing on Hebrew.

The Arabic language lost its recognition as an official language<sup>(22)</sup> in the occupied lands after the persistent attempts of the occupation and the Israeli Knesset's issuance of the Nationality Bill in 2018. The law now considers Hebrew as the only official language, and Arabic as a language with a "special status" and that "using Arabic in official institutions shall be systemized in accordance with the law<sup>(23)</sup>". All Palestinian workers in the occupied lands were banned from speaking Arabic at their workplaces<sup>(24)</sup>

<sup>(20)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>(21)</sup> Amara, Mohammed, **Language and Identity in Israel**, (Madar, Ramallah, 2002), pp. 217-230.

<sup>(22)</sup> One more racist law': reactions as Israel axes Arabic as official language. The Guardian. 19/07/2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/19/one-more-racist-law-reactions-as-israel-axes-arabic-as-official-language>

<sup>(23)</sup>Hibla, Amin, **the Nationality Bill: Stay Far, you are in the Jews State**, (Al-Jazeera, 2018), <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2018/7/19/%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%88%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A3%D9%86%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87%D9%88%D8%AF>

<sup>(24)</sup> Hijazi, Adan, **Israelization and Palestinians in 1948 Lands**, ( Badil, 2019).

## 2. Falsifying the Heritage of Arab Outfits

The occupation publicly stole the Palestinian heritage of outfits. It would either present Palestinian dressings as pure Jewish or Israeli, or make the Palestinian clothes with different colors or shapes from the original patterns.

One of the most famous incidents of falsification in this regard was when the occupation's Minister of Culture Miri Regev appeared at Cannes Film Festival wearing the Palestinian thobe. Sometime earlier, the wife of the former Minister of War (Moshe Dayan) had visited different countries also wearing the Palestinian thobe. Finally, the occupation's El Al airlines had their flight attendants wear the thobe during the flights<sup>(25)</sup>.

The occupation also manipulated the original Kufiyya and produced it in new forms and colors. The occupation's companies produced huge quantities which flooded the markets. In addition, the occupation presents the Kufiyya to its visitors as Jewish Israeli heritage<sup>(26)</sup>.

## 3. Altering Palestinian Dishes

The occupation promotes the Palestinian food as its own. For instance, Avichay Adraee, the army's spokesperson, congratulates Muslims in Ramadan while standing behind a table filled with Palestinian dishes and cuisines. He claims that Humus and Falafel are originally Israeli<sup>(27)</sup> and promotes Palestinian olive, dates and cookies as popular Jewish foods and national products<sup>(28)</sup>.

## 4. Altering Popular Arts

<sup>(25)</sup> The Palestinian Thobe: Palestine's National Identity and Heritage, Al-Najah, 2019, <https://nn.ps/news/thqyqt-wtqyr/2019/07/26/247744/>

<sup>(26)</sup> Al-Tirawi, Tawfiq, **Attempts to Oppress the Palestinian Heritage**, 2019, <http://www.tirawi.ps/ar/pal-31/2260.html>

<sup>(27)</sup> How Adraee Attracts Muslims and Steals their Culture, Al-Khalij Online, 2017, <https://alkhaleejonline.net/%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B9/%D9%87%D9%83%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A3%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B9%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%81->

<sup>(28)</sup> Ibid: Al-Tirawi, 2019.

The occupation promotes the Palestinian Zajal and Dabka as part of the Jewish culture and heritage. It even established a number of cultural centers where these arts are taught<sup>(29)</sup>.

## **Fifth: Fighting Political Symbols**

The occupation seeks to chase the political Palestinian symbols which represent the Arab identity. The Israeli security forces follow such methods to oppress any Arab representation and to disconnect the Arabs from their surroundings<sup>(30)</sup> to hinder any resistance against the Israeli projects.

In addition, the occupation's official institutions, such as universities and academic centers, exert all efforts to fight any Palestinian representation. During the 2014 aggression on Gaza, the occupation's civil and academic institutions worked together with the media and security forces on tracing the students' movements supporting the victims in Gaza. As a result, several Arab students were arrested<sup>(31)</sup>.

Some examples of chasing political symbols in the lands of 1948 are:

### **1. Fighting the Islamic Movement**

The occupation has demonized the Islamic Movement since its establishment, always linking it to religious extremism and accusing it of doing armed activities against the occupied lands.

The occupation fears the Islamic movement for the following reasons:

- The spread of the Movement in the occupied Arab cities and villages, and its influence on the Palestinians there.
- Its presence as an inciting entity that does not necessarily resist but raises the awareness of the generations and encourages them to resist the occupation.
- The charity work the Movement does as it sponsors the orphans, children of martyrs and poor families in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Movement

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<sup>(29)</sup> Ibid: Hijazi, 2019.

<sup>(30)</sup> Ibid: Dagher, 2009.

<sup>(31)</sup> Ibid.

is charged for these activities, its associations are closed down and its supporters are arrested under the pretext of supporting terrorism.

- The Movement's attempts to preserve the Islamic character in the occupied lands, and to topple the Israelization plans. In 2002, the level of faith among the Palestinians in the occupied lands increased to 44%.
- The Islamic movement's incitement of the young Arabs so that they would not serve in the Israeli occupation's military. The number of Palestinian youth serving decreased from 3600 per year in the eighties to 390 only in 2006<sup>(32)</sup>.

## 2. Harassing Sheikh Raed Salah

The occupation started harassing sheikh Raed Salah at an early stage of his life as he was the symbol of defending Almasjid Alaqsa and the Islamic heritage in the occupied lands. The Sheikh was arrested, house-arrested, prevented from night-wandering, banned from travel and others .

Until this day, the occupation continues to arrest the Sheikh to break his will and steadfastness, and to prevent him from doing charity work<sup>(33)</sup>.

The occupation's enmity towards the Sheikh increased after his implementation of several events in support of Alaqsa. Once, he called for the buses to move around the cities, and the passengers to visit Alaqsa and prevent the settlers from entering it.

Sheikh Salah was the first to discover the occupation's tunnel digging under Alaqsa in 1996 after which the occupation held him responsible for all the confrontations that followed. Sheikh Salah also called for setting a strategy that could help Palestinians self-construct the occupied areas<sup>(34)</sup>.

## 3. Harassing Azmi Bishara

Bishara became famous in the late 80s when he worked as a lecturer of Philosophy and Cultural Studies at Birzeit University before his involvement in politics

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<sup>(32)</sup>Ibid: Abu Amer, 2010.

<sup>(33)</sup> Ibid

<sup>(34)</sup> Ibid.

as a Knesset member in 1996. His beliefs, political philosophy, and national identity were reflected in his work at the Knesset. As a result, the occupation attempted to fight him and destroy the symbol he stood for in the Arab community<sup>(35)</sup>.

Bishara resisted Judaization through his intellectual production and research on Arab-related issues and the Arab and Palestinian conflict. He worked on analyzing the community and statehood of the Israeli occupation, which closed down Bishara's research centers and lifted the Parliament immunity. The occupation trialed him for collaborating with Hezbollah and visiting enemy states in 2005. He finally had to leave Palestine permanently in 2007 and reside in Qatar<sup>(36)</sup>.

## **Sixth: Imposing Civil Service**

The occupation imposed the Civil Service on the youth, males and females, to serve the local community in an attempt to direct their loyalty towards the 'State'. The occupation offered temptations such as tax exemption and educational scholarships<sup>(37)</sup>.

## **Sixth: Legal Procedures**

From the beginning, the occupation set laws and regulations that deprive Arab citizens living in the occupied lands from their rights. In 2018, the occupation was able to make the National Law, which it had been trying to pass since 2003, in effect.

The occupation set other laws such as preventing family reunions, not issuing Israeli citizenship to any Palestinian living in the occupied lands, and removing citizenship from Arabs who move to the West Bank or Gaza. The occupation even set a law that punishes any institution that holds events commemorating the Nakba. Finally,

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<sup>(35)</sup> Bishara, Azmi, Azmi Bishara Website, 2018,  
<https://www.azmibishara.com/ar/%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B0%D8%A9/%D8%B9%D8%B2%D9%85%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9>

<sup>(36)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>(37)</sup> Arabs of 1948: Defending the Identity, Al-Quds Net,  
<https://qudsnet.com/post/223401/%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8-48-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9>

the occupation allows 75% of the Knesset members to vote on removing any member who is not completely loyal to the 'State'<sup>(38)</sup>.

## Conclusion and Results

It has been the purpose of the occupation's governments to eliminate the cultural identity and roots of Arabs. Although Palestine has been occupied for more than 70 years, none of the efforts exerted by the occupation could destroy the Arab identity or presence. Today, Arabs constitute over 20% of the total population in the occupied lands, and the majority in Galilee. However, they only own less than 3% of the lands.

Various conditions affected the Arabs of 1948 and resulted in more challenges; some of which are:

1. The lack of communication between the Palestinians in the occupied lands and the surrounding Arab communities, and the occupation's efforts to merge them in the Israeli community.
2. The occupation's implementation of 'divide and conquer' method in order to weaken the Arabs in the occupied lands.
3. The policy of separation. The occupation tried to separate the Druze from the Circassians and forced them to serve in the military. It also separated Muslims from Christians, and Muslims or Christians from themselves.
4. The little culture and knowledge the new generation of 1948 Arabs have. A big number of Arabs has already been entirely merged in the settlers' community.
5. The bans on all national activities such as protests, demonstrations and seminars. The occupation even punishes the participants, uses violence to disperse the crowds, and bans the possession of any Palestine-related items such as the Palestinian flag and map, the pictures of martyrs and leaders, and the literature of the revolution or other related publications.

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<sup>(38)</sup> Ibid: On International Day for Supporting their Rights: Laws and Measures suffered from by Arabs of 48.

6. Arab youth's attempts to engage in the Israeli community; hoping for more privileges and facilitation.
7. The lack of support from Arabs in general and the Palestinian Authority in particular.

## Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following:

1. Creating communication channels with the Palestinians in the occupied lands in order to achieve a sense of longing to the Arab nation and the Palestinian cause.
2. Reinforcing the Arab identity, the Palestinian rights, and the concept of 'occupation'.
3. Raising the awareness of Palestinians in the occupied lands, so they would better understand the basic issues. The occupation keeps trying to divert the Palestinians away from such concepts, and to occupy them with other unimportant issues.
4. Developing programs to improve the joint national work through including the national symbols, culture and knowledge, and employing the Arab youth's potentials in what serves the Palestinian cause.
5. Developing programs that adopt the youth and emerging generations, and protect them from the Israelization plans.
6. Providing the Palestinians in the occupied lands with the necessary financial and spiritual support to help them fight against the Israeli Judaization policies.

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