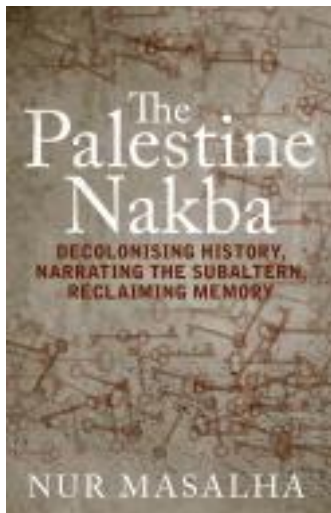


The Palestine Nakba

The establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine and the myth of Jewish return after two thousand years of exile to a “land without a people, for a people without a land” were accompanied by a great injustice. The diplomatic success of the Zionist movement in close cooperation with the leading imperial powers caused, however, a catastrophe for the indigenous population and the owners of the land, the Palestinian people. “Palestine” was wiped off the map. Since then, the Palestinians commemorate this historical event for the 64th time as al-Nakba (the catastrophe). And this catastrophe continues until today.

The creation of the State of Israel led to the destruction of 500 Palestinian villages and towns, and the whole population disappeared from the political map. Out of 900 000 only 160 000 remained in what was called Israel. They had to endure 18 years of harsh military rule, with severe restrictions on their movement. The bulk of their land was expropriated based on dubious laws. After the Six Day War in 1967, Israel occupied the rest of historical Palestine and expelled another 300 000 people. Since this “glorious” victory, left and right-wing Israeli governments alike, colonized the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and transferred 500 000 their own population against international law in what was left of Palestine.



On Israel's Independence Day, May 15, 1948, the Israeli government encourages the so-called “Israeli Arabs” to celebrate the Zionist colonization of their land and the destruction of historic Palestine. In Israeli school books, the Nakba is just not mentioned. The Palestinian kids get a special treatment of Zionist ideological indoctrination. They are educated according to the Zionist narrative that distains their cultural heritage and comes close to a “cultural genocide” (Raphael Lemkin). According to Lemkin, it means the destruction and elimination of the cultural patterns of a group or of the “soul of a nation”, which is exactly, what happens in Palestine.

The policies of the Israeli governments have always aimed at a “memoricide” and the de-Arabisation of Palestine. The policy of renaming and the self-reinvention of a Hebrew terminology started already long before the State of Israel was established. After 1948 the Israeli government under David Ben-Gurion started a “biblicisation” of the Arab geography by placing events, actions and places in-line with biblical terminology, such as the transformation from al-Majdal to biblical Ashkelon. A political misleading role plays the Jewish National Fund (JNF) through his so-called reforestation or the “green-washing” of the Nakba. The JNF collects donations that are tax-privileged in the United States or in Western Europe, although the JNF is not a charitable Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) but a part-state institution. The organization has always been and continues to be instrumental in the colonization of Palestine and the expropriation of Palestinian land.

In the late 1980s, it had the impression as if some Israeli historians, sociologists and political scientists came to grips with the crimes and injustices that were committed by the Israeli army in the cause of the establishment of Israel. “New historians” emerged on the scene and published books, in which the dominant Zionist historic narrative was rejected or at least put into perspective. Leading in the rewriting of Zionist history were Simcha Flapan, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim and Ilan Pappé. In the decade of the

“New Historians” between 1990 and 2000 they made good progress in exposing the true face of Zionism and its ideological underpinnings. But with the final collapse of the so-called peace process at Camp David in July 2000 and Ehud Barak’s statement that there is no peace-partner on the Palestinian side, the whole of the so-called Zionist left and the peace-camp switched sides and blamed PLO-chief Yasser Arafat for the failure, although Barak was the main rejectionist and U. S. President Bill Clinton his partner. In the cause of time, the “new historians” felt strong headwind not only from the political but also from the scientific establishment. Especially, the public mobbing of Ilan Pappé forced him out of the country. In British exile, he can continue to work and teach freely as a historian.

In contrast, Benny Morris returned to the Zionist consensus and exposed himself as a supporter of the idea of “transfer”. In his infamous interview with Ari Shavit in the Israeli daily “Haaretz” from January 9, 2004, Morris justified the “ethnic cleansing” done by David Ben-Gurion. And if there is “the choice between ethnic cleansing and genocide (...) I prefer ethnic cleansing.” The so-called liberal Zionism with which the Zionist left is identified, sees Israel’s injustices beginning with the occupation of June 1967, whereas historians like Ilan Pappé makes 1948 events the vocal point of the Israel Palestinian conflict.

Without addressing the Nakba, the key site of the Palestinian consciousness and the most important event that links the Palestinians in Israel, the refugees and the Palestinians under Israel colonization in the OPT together, the Palestinian victims have strong reservations to forgive their Israeli perpetrators. The history of the conflict must be decolonized because it has been predominantly written by Zionist historians. To accept the Palestinian narrative in Israeli school books should be self-evidence because almost 25 % of Israel’s citizens are Palestinians. “While the Holocaust is an event in the past”, writes Nur Masalha in his worth reading book “The Palestine Nakba”, the Nakba did not end in 1948 but continues through forced displacement and continued colonization of the West Bank to this day.

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