

THE DAY OF THE LAND MARCH 30



Since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, Palestinian land has been subject to confiscation, expropriation and outright theft at the hands of the Israeli government. In 1947, Palestinians owned 97% of the land that would become Israel; by the close of the war of 1948, 94% of that land had been expropriated by the Jewish National Fund, a Zionist quasi-governmental organization that prohibits the sale or lease to or use by Palestinians of that land. The close of that war and the creation of 800,000 refugees, however, did not mark the end of land confiscation, but only the beginning; the Palestinians who remained and became citizens of Israel were subject to repeated restrictions on land use, denial of building permits, and overt confiscations, especially in the area of the Galilee.

In 1967, the Israeli military occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Since that time, Israel has continued its illegal and brutal military occupation while seizing ever more Palestinian land in the Occupied Territories. Nearly half of the West Bank has now been confiscated and "protected" for Israeli colonization purposes; the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem have been expanded deeply into the West Bank, and the city illegally annexed in its entirety to the state of Israel. In both the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinian water resources are diverted for Israeli use—inside 1967 borders and in the settlement colonies that pepper the Occupied Territories. 88% of the water resources of the Occupied Territories are diverted for use in the illegal settlement colonies, while the millions of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza are left to share the remaining water.

However, after 1967, land confiscation and resource theft was never limited to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the 1970s, a program of "Judeization," or the building of internal settlement colonies in predominantly Palestinian Arab areas of Israel, was implemented. Palestinian youth in the Galilee were encouraged to leave the region and denied permits to return; harsh taxes, levies and fines were imposed upon Palestinian communities in the area, with very little return in the form of services.

These programs were implemented in order to force Palestinians to leave the area—to engage in a process of ethnic cleansing that would leave the area free of Palestinian presence. These harsh laws were a continuation of the expulsion of three-fourths of the Palestinian population in 1948 and the oppression and occupation of still more Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; they were a blatant exercise in racism, revealing the Israeli state's dedication to creating a "Jewish majority" in all of Israel at the expense of the rights, dignity and lives of Palestinians.

On March 30, 1976, a set of laws were scheduled to go into effect; Israel planned to seize 20,000 acres of Palestinian-owned land in the Galilee in order to build internal, Jewish-only settlement colonies, stealing Palestinian land while further dispossessing its owners. In response, the popular organizations of Palestinians in Israel — including trade unions, student alliances, women's organizations and political parties—called a general strike for March 30. Palestinian labor served to keep the Israeli economy functioning, serving as a highly exploited labor force; the Palestinian population of Israel had long been suppressed and denied their rights and human dignity. On the night of March 29-30, Palestinians took to the street and took action—in the Galilee, specifically in the towns of Sakhnin, Deir Hanna and Arabe, in the Negev, and throughout the West Bank and Gaza—striking, barricading and blockading roads and demanding their rights and control over their own land. By the end of the day, six Palestinians protesting were dead, killed by Israeli soldiers. Nevertheless, the Palestinians' steadfastness and commitment was not broken; they continued to organize, continue their general strike and demand their liberation and an end to racism, colonial rule, military occupation and oppression. The six Palestinians who died on Land Day became martyrs to the common struggle of Palestinians for liberation, equality and freedom.

Since 1976, the Day of the Land is commemorated throughout Palestine, by Palestinian citizens of Israel, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and Palestinians living as refugees. It is a day of action, a day of struggle, and a day of resistance, in memory of those who were killed in the struggle for justice and to continue that struggle.

PROTEST!

**EMERGENCY MARCH FOR PALESTINE AND IRAQ
DAY OF THE LAND - SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2003**

9:30 AM - MEET AT NEW BRUNSWICK TRAIN STATION

11:00 AM - MEET AT TIMES SQUARE, 42nd and Broadway, NYC

NEW JERSEY SOLIDARITY www.njsolidarity.org info@njsolidarity.org