

Don't Call Me Ishmael; Don't Call Me Israel—Call Me One Democratic State!

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"Who excavates Muslim Palestinian graves and mosques in [Palestine's] depopulated towns and why?", asks Haifa-based Palestinian advocate [Jehad Abu-Rayya](#).

"Recently," he goes on, "these desecrations have been on the increase—In the village of Beit Jibreen, in the village of Al-Lajjun, in the village of Amwas, in the village of Al-Ghabisiya, village of Hittin—and these are only a few of such attempts before Israel implements its [Trump's] plan [in reference to the forthcoming annexation of parts of the West Bank]. This list does not include the demolition, desecration, and erosion of [Palestinian] graves and shrines in Jaffa, Safed, Ain Hud, Sindiyana and others."

Jehad Abu Raya's post of his article ([من ينش القبور والمساجد في البلدات المهجرة ولماذا؟](#)) on Facebook generated outrage and comments such as the following translated from Arabic:

"They are afraid of history, afraid of Mujahideen, even in their graves, because they are thieves, and the thief is always in fear and does not feel safe. Even in my town, there were excavations inside the shrine and mausoleum of Abu al-Hija. They excavate and place a small plaque and write on it their history and in the future they say this shrine is about us Jews and goes back in history for such and such a year. Beware those who counterfeit history."

"There is a big difference between robbing graves and digging graves to conceal history. Grave robbers are thieves looking for valuables to pilfer, a sin against God; the deliberate destruction and concealment of history, such as what happened in the cemetery and the depopulated village of Benechir at the bottom of the Carmel Mountains in Haifa [is another matter]."

"This is a new old file. We, a group of tour guides, have noticed through our tours and visits to these sites that the matter has worsened and has become disturbing, as it is a blatant violation of the sanctity of holy sites and Islamic cemeteries. And if the perpetrators are seemingly unknown, then the purpose behind the deed reveals the truth."

"Of course, they are not able to erase us, so they erase our ancestors."

"They stole the country and made the people homeless—no morality and no conscience."

As one of the comments above states, this ongoing erasure of Muslim and Palestinian

history and presence in Israel is “a new old file”:

Speaking at a closed discussion in the summer of 1967, a conversation published in 1968 in the Israeli journal *De’ot* (‘Opinions’), Israel Eldad (Sheib) says:

I have always said that the deepest and the profoundest hope symbolizing redemption is the re-building of the [Jewish] Temple ... then it is obvious that those mosques [al-Haram al-Sharif and Al-Aqsa] will have, one way or another, to disappear one of these days ... Had it not been for Deir Yassin — half a million Arabs would be living in the state of Israel [in 1948]. The state of Israel would not have existed. We must not disregard this with full awareness of the responsibility involved. All wars are cruel. There is no way out of that. This country will either be Eretz Israel with an absolute Jewish majority and a small Arab minority, or Eretz Ishmael, and Jewish emigration will begin again if we do not expel the Arabs one way or another.

The ongoing desecrations and erasures of Muslim mosques and grave sites described by Jihad Abu Rayya are simply a manifestation of Israel’s very existence. Israel was established as a Jewish state. It was not intended as a state for all its citizens. Rather it was, and is, a state for Jews—i.e., every Jew throughout the world is a potential citizen; Palestinian Arabs and their heritage must be erased or excluded for such a Jewish state to “exist”.

In 1950, the Knesset passed two laws, the Law of Return (“Every Jew has a right to immigrate to the country”) and the Absentee Property Law [‘Absentee’, as in forcibly driven out and dispossessed]. These laws, along with Israel’s Nationality Law of 1952, defined the state’s Jewish character.

Despite the above, Palestinian right of return is universally recognized in international law and repeated UN resolutions beginning with Res 194 (III), 11 Dec 1948.

It is important to note here by way of highlighting Israel’s and Zionism’s racist character that, as Uri Davis writes, it is

not only the Palestinian non-Jew—first and foremost the Palestinian Arab ‘absentee’—who is excluded from his or her right to undisputed citizenship [in Israel]. Large categories of Jews are similarly excluded: Jewish bastards, Jewish persons born to non-Jewish mothers, Jewish persons born to Jewish mothers who converted to another religion, and non-Jews converted to Judaism by conservative or reform rabbis (only the Jewish Orthodox conversion procedure is effectively recognized in Israel).

The Black Lives Matter movement and current uprising against racism has resonated in Western and post-colonial societies worldwide. Political Zionism is a racist ideology. It shares a common view with secular anti-Jewish racism on the existential status of Jewish minorities in Gentile communities—that the Jew cannot be, by definition, an equal citizen and a free individual in a non-Jewish society (not because of inferiority or sin, but because Jews have a special status). For the political Zionist, Jewish society must also be segregated in Palestine, renamed by the Zionist as Eretz Israel. Thus Anti-Palestinian Arab racism and Israeli apartheid both originate in the Zionist ideology of the Jewish state.

The Times of Israel [report](#) that “Israel could easily destroy Jerusalem’s flashpoint Al-Aqsa

mosque, but emphatically does not want to, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said,” is far from reassuring.

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