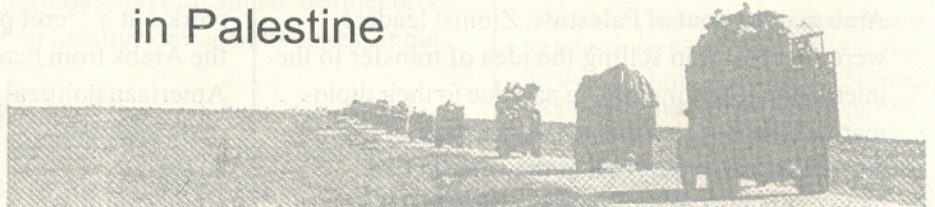


al majdal aims to raise public awareness and support for a just solution to Palestinian residency and refugee issues

reversing ETHNIC CLEANSING in Palestine



While the phrase ethnic cleansing has become common to our lexicon in the past decade - conjuring up images of innocent women, children and men fleeing their homes and lands - the cleansing of populations along ethnic, religious or racial lines existed long before the western media "discovered" it in the Balkans and Central Africa in the 1990s. The saturated media coverage of these two arenas of conflict, moreover, has left a seemingly indelible impression that ethnic cleansing is primarily the result of some intrinsic or historic ethnic hatred, usually characterized by violent or genocidal actions of one ethnic group against another.

In fact, while the phrase, ethnic cleansing, may be a relatively recent addition to our common vocabulary, the practice is not so uncommon, though the terminology may be different. In the Americas, for example, colonization nearly wiped out the entire indigenous population. In South Africa, apartheid led to the removal of black South Africans from their lands, forcing many into the reserves known as bantustans. What is common to these, and other examples of ethnic cleansing, is the forced relocation of ethnic, religious or racial groups in order to strengthen strategic, political interests through greater demographic homogeneity or "purity". Intrinsic or historic hatred is rarely the primary motive, though ethnic cleansing is often accompanied or "justified" by a belief in ethnic, racial, or religious supremacy, and/or the notion of supremacy of rights.

Although much attention has been focused on the violent aspects of ethnic cleansing in the past decade, the slaughter of innocent civilians and the destruction of their homes and villages is not the only means to achieve demographic homogeneity - though clearly the most visible. Forced relocation of ethnic, religious or racial groups often results from structural violence based on economic exploitation and discrimination, a kind of "low-intensity" ethnic cleansing. In the 19th and 20th century western colonialism destroyed the indigenous social and economic fabric in many regions of the world in order to reshape it to serve western economic and political interests. Narrowly defined rights of citizenship and land ownership, which served the interests of those groups willing to serve as the guardians of the colonial order, led to the forced relocation of many peoples throughout Central America, Asia and the Middle East.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Refugee Campaign Update
- Palestine Solidarity in Europe: "We Need a New Concensus Against Ethnic Purity in the Middle East."
- Restitution Petition Update
- Refugee NGO Profiles
- UNRWA Donor Update
- Canada Camp: Speeding up the Slow Return to Gaza
- Israel Hosts Albanian Refugees on Palestinian Refugee Lands
- Profile: Palestinians In Egypt
- "How Do You Imagine Palestine?" - Poem from Shatila Camp
- Jerusalem Campaign Update
- ID Card Confiscation: January - May 1999
- Campaign to End ID Card Confiscation and the Israeli Supreme Court: A New Forum of Resistance or a Distraction?
- US Ambassadors Residence in Jerusalem Reveals Prejudice on Final Status of the City

annual (4 issues) - US\$20

published by

BADIL Resource Center

for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights

PO Box 728, Bethlehem, Palestine
tel/fax. 972-2-274-7346, 277-7086
email: info@badil.org
url: www.badil.org

subscription