

It Ain't Over 'Til It's Over

We did not weep
when we were leaving –
for we had neither
time nor tears,
and there was no farewell.
We did not know
at the moment of parting
that it was a parting,
so where would our weeping
have come from?

*--Palestinian poet Taha Muhammad Ali, writing of the
forced departure from his village of Safuriyya in July 1948.*

The word Nakba (Arabic for “catastrophe”) is commonly used to describe the expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and land during the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The Nakba continues to this very day, over 70 years later.

Let's take a visit via Zochrot* to the pre-1948 village of al-Ras al-Ahmar, northeast of Safuriyya and Nazareth in the Galilee.

The village was situated on the flat summit of al-Ras al-Ahmar (“the red peak”). Villagers raised crops including wheat, barley, and ervil (eri'ilia), and had other types of produce and property, such as goats, beehives, vineyards, and a press that was used for processing either olives or grapes.

In the late nineteenth century, travellers described al-Ras al-Ahmar as a stone village situated on a high hill on which the villagers maintained gardens. The village population was estimated to be between 150 and 350.

A spring on the north edge of the site supplied the villagers with water for domestic use, and for citrus and other fruit trees which were grown on village lands lying to the north. In the 1942/43 season 350 dunums were planted with olive trees. In 1944/45 a total of 4,728 dunums was allocated to cereals and 1,008 dunums were irrigated or used for orchards. Relics in al-Ras al-

Ahmar, such as mosaics and wine presses with tessellated floors, provided evidence that the site was inhabited in the classical or Byzantine period.

The village was attacked by Israeli forces on October 30, 1948. Israeli historian Benny Morris writes that the residents fled when they heard of the atrocities perpetrated the night before at the nearby villages of Safsaf and Jish by the Israeli Sheva' (Seventh) Brigade.

By May 1949, the empty village had been renamed Kerem Ben Zimra and was being readied to receive new Jewish immigrants.

In recent years, Zochrot's Eitan Bronstein interviewed one of the settlers who in 1948 occupied the emptied Palestinian homes. He said that he was on guard, especially at night, against infiltrators. “They came to steal what is there.... We shot them”.

So, in the occupiers' eyes, the village inhabitants were “infiltrators” who came to “steal” their own belongings.

Now 71 years later, Israel continues to destroy Palestinian homes. On just one day – April 29, 2019 – Israeli occupation forces destroyed 31 structures in multiple neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. Palestinian land in the West Bank land is regularly seized and classified as a “closed military zone”.

The Nakba is still with us. Yogi Berra said “It ain't over 'til it's over”. It ain't over.

* Zochrot (Hebrew for “remembering”) is an NGO whose work promotes acknowledgement and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the Nakba.

This flyer was written by Jewish Voice for Peace New Haven (www.jvpnh.org) and distributed at the New Haven Sunday Vigil on Sunday, May 27, 2019. We welcome JVP members who join this vigil once a month.

Since 1999, the New Haven Sunday Vigil has been held here every week from 12-1pm at Broadway, Park and Elm Streets in New Haven, CT, to emphatically say NO to the state of permanent, ongoing war against the world being waged by our government and its allies- a war which is terrorizing the planet and destroying lives in order to consolidate enormous power and wealth in the hands of a very few people.

JOIN US TO RESIST THIS ENDLESS WAR!

<https://newhavensundayvigil.wordpress.com>