

Palestinians, Africans, and opponents of colonialism reject apartheid

Do not harm the good name of the Robert Bosch Foundation by collaboration with the JNF

Dear Professor Rogall,
Dear board members of the Robert Bosch Foundation,
Dear Minister Schmid,

On 3 December 2015, there was a meeting in Stuttgart between the board of **directors of the Robert Bosch Foundation** (which owns 92% of the multinational automobile supplier Robert-Bosch GmbH), the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and representatives of the Israeli embassy, the Baden-Württemberg State government (Minister for Economic Affairs Nils Schmid) and prominent businesspeople and politicians. According to the reports by the Jüdische Allgemeine newspaper on 10 December and the Jewish National Fund itself (on its website), the main topic was joint projects in third countries. The two organizations appear to be focusing on Africa and Arab countries. Sustainability and innovation are key concepts which are mentioned again and again in these reports. **Utilization of German know-how by the JNF is also a subject.** A central concern of representatives of the JNF and the Robert Bosch Foundation was a topic at the meeting: **since JNF projects are often rejected, the Robert Bosch Foundation is supposed to act essentially as a foot in the door for them.** We strongly oppose these intentions, for there are good reasons for rejecting the JNF.

On the basis of research, including on-site research, we know that the history and racist activities of the JNF are not—as claimed—in the service of sustainable development and environmental protection, but are linked closely to the expulsion of the Palestinians and the ethnic cleansing of the historic territory of Palestine.

As the Israeli historians Benny Morris (*The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, Cambridge, 2004), Ilan Pappé (*The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oxford, 2006) and the sociologist Uri Davis (*The Jewish National Fund*, 1988) have shown with extensive material, that it was representatives of the JNF in particular who urged the “transfer” of the Arab population out of the country, in order to take possession of the land and create a population that was as exclusively Jewish as possible. **The former chairman of the land division of the JNF, Yosef Weitz, for example, wrote in My Diary, vol. 2: "The only solution is to transfer the Arabs from here to neighbouring countries. Not a single village or a single tribe must be let off".**

What the JNF-KKL describes as afforestation and greenery measures usually had the function after 1948 of hiding the remnants of the villages whose inhabitants had been driven out by Zionist militias. This was intended to hinder the Palestinian refugees in claiming their right of return (this individual human right is reinforced by the UN Resolution 194 of 1948).

Even those Palestinians who only fled to the next village are not permitted to return to their village or home. (1), (2)

By the way, the “Wald deutscher Länder”* in the Negev, for which many deceived Germans donate, also stands on the ruins of a Palestinian village. Before their expulsion in 1948, the Abu-Sukut clan and the family of Dr. Awad Abu Freih lived there. In a video on youtube, Dr. Awad Abu-Freih, who lives in the country, describes in Hebrew (the film has English or German subtitles) how the JNF is concealing under this wood what remains of his village. He makes clear that he and his family have never abandoned their claim to return to the land that belongs to them. (3)

The role of the JNF has become known in recent years mainly by the forced resettlement of the Palestinians in the Negev (who are Israeli citizens) and the destruction of their homes and villages. Human Rights Watch in 2008 published a study on the situation of the Negev Palestinians, in which the central role of



BDS-Southafrica demonstrates against the JNF

the JNF in the systematic discrimination against the Palestinians is described (and nothing has changed in its role in securing apartheid conditions since then): “The state controls 93 percent of the land in Israel, and a government agency, the Israel Land Administration (ILA), manages and allocates this land. The ILA lacks any mandate to disburse land in a fair and just fashion, and members of the Jewish National Fund, which has an explicit mandate to develop land for Jewish use only, constitute almost half of the ILA’s governing council....” (4). For the land possessed by the JNF, they write: **“Thus the 13 percent of land in Israel owned by the JNF is by definition off-limits to Palestinian Arab citizens”.** (5)

It should also be noted that 80% of the land within the borders of the ceasefire line of 1948 was confiscated, and not purchased, by government agencies. The land laws of the State of Israel and the actions of government agencies and the JNF in allocating the land represent a clear violation of Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention to this day. (6)

The actions against the Palestinians in the Negev by government institutions and JNF also alarmed the EU Parliament, which denounced them in 2012 (Resolution of the EU Parliament, 5 July 2012, P7_TA(2012)0298 – Sections Q and 12).

The main activities of the JNF are overt apartheid projects, which are also supported by donations from abroad. In December 2013, Allison Deger reported on the well-known US. blog Mondoweiss: “Over the next 10 years the Jewish National Fund aims to inject \$1 billion into programs to increase North American immigration to Jewish-only communities in the Negev and Galilee.... In a fundraising packet to perspective project donors the JNF touts a \$400 million southern desert plan to establish 18 exclusively Jewish localities, and construct similar communities in the Galilee under the pioneering tag line “Go North”. JNF priority areas are in regions inhabited by Israel’s highest concentration of Arab-Palestinians...” (7)

As a consequence, the ILA and JNF deprive the Palestinians of their livelihood. In the Negev, the Palestinian villages Um Al Hieran (700 inhabitants) and Atir (500 inhabitants), among others, are currently being destroyed, even though a court confirmed the clear legal rights of the villagers. Um Al Hieran is supposed to make way for an exclusively Jewish settlement, and Atir for the JNF forest Yatir. These are only two known cases. (8)

The JNF also plays a major role in the construction of settlements in the West Bank. The Jewish-Palestinian civic action group Tarabut, in its report of January 2013, showed how the JNF supports the theft of water in the Jordan Valley with its projects. The Tirza Reservoir, built by the JNF (1997-2003), dams the floodwaters of the largest river in the West Bank, supplies water to Israeli settlements, and creates a water shortage in the surrounding area. It was the JNF that built the Alon Road (1980), which isolated the Palestinians in the West Bank hill country from those in the Jordan Valley. (9), (10)

Environmental experts contradict the JNF’s description of itself as an ecological organization emphatically. In 2012, Eurig Scandrett, a Scotsman, participated as an expert in an excursion by Friends of the Earth to the JNF parks. In a detailed analysis of JNF activities, he concludes: **“Environmentalists everywhere should recognize that the JNF is not an environmental organization. It is a racist vehicle of colonial exploitation of the environment of the Palestinian people.”** (11)

The more the activities of the JNF become known internationally, the more social and environmental action groups re-

fuse to cooperate with it. For example, the Finnish organizers of the World Village Festival (Kepa – an umbrella organization of civic groups), after careful examination, in May 2015 excluded the JNF from their event. (12)

The Palestinian BDS movement, with over 170 civil-society organizations (political parties, labor unions, et al.), as well as the entire international BDS support movement, call for a boycott of the JNF as a central pillar of colonialism in Palestine. The movement has been successful internationally in this point, too. In South Africa, the Reggies Toy Stores chain ended its support of the JNF in 2013 after nationwide protests. (13) The British prime minister David Cameron in 2011 withdrew tacitly from his position as patron of the JNF. (14)

The rejection of the JNF has a long history, based on a multitude of experiences and studies. We find it hard to imagine that the Robert Bosch Foundation or the Baden-Württemberg Minister Nils Schmid would use their good name to try to make Africans who suffered under colonialism and apartheid ignore such facts.

If the Robert Bosch Foundation supports such illegal activities by the JNF, you and the company will lose the confidence of many people that Bosch enjoys internationally—especially in the Near and Middle East.

WE CALL ON YOU:

Do not dirty your hands on the JNF's supposedly green cloak.

Observe human rights in your international relations, too.

End your collaboration with this colonial apartheid institution, the Jewish National Fund.

More information:

senderfreiespalaestina.de/jnf/index.html

senderfreiespalaestina.de/jnf-links.htm

ipk-bonn.de/gesellschaft/news/2013032601.html

(1) uridavis-official-website.info/righteous_gentile_forest.htm (2) zochrot.org

(3) youtube.com/watch?v=qIq_XIHZpoE

(4) hrw.org/reports/2008/iopt0308/1.htm

(5) hrw.org/reports/2008/iopt0308/4.htm

(6) globalresearch.ca/israel-s-discriminatory-land-policies/14579

(7) mondoweiss.net/2013/12/launches-immigrants-zionism

(8) 972mag.com/bedouin-village-of-atir-to-be-replaced-with-forest-of-yatir/107905/

(9) tarabut.info/en/articles/article/JNF-in-the-Jordan-Valley/ (10) tarabut.info/en/articles/article/where-jnf-mony-goes/

(11) stopthejnf.org/documents/JNFBookVol4.pdf (Open Letter to Environmental Movement)

(12) alternativenews.org/english/index.php/activism/bds/773-israel-finland-tension-over-boycott-of-jnf

(13) polity.org.za/article/sa-statement-by-alan-horwitz-stopthejnf-south-africa-national-spokesperson-reggies-toy-stores-end-their-support-for-israels-jewish-national-fund-23012013-2013-01-23

(14) electronicintifada.net/content/british-prime-minister-steps-down-jnf-patron/10027

* Forest of the German States