

Nakba Education Project

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Recently, the Knesset passed a bill in its preliminary stages that would render it illegal to commemorate the *Nakba*. The bill states, ironically, that "it is proposed that the law prohibit actions tantamount to the marking of Independence Day or the actual establishment of the state as a day of mourning, and that a harsh penalty be imposed on those who exploit the democratic and enlightened character of the State of Israel in order to destabilize it from within." If the bill passes its final reading those who violate this law will be subjected to three years of imprisonment.

Already the Zionist Ministry of Education imposes a Zionist historical narrative on Palestinians in 1948 Palestine and as Jonathan Cook points out, Palestinians have "no control over its educational curriculum, which is set by officials charged with promoting Zionism, and its schools are effectively run by the secret police, the Shin Bet, through a network of collaborators among the teachers and pupils."¹ This enforced censorship exists simultaneously as the ongoing forced displacement of Palestinians across historic Palestine, in Naqab, Gaza, Al Quds, Aqraba, and numerous Palestinian villages and cities.

While education and commemoration of the *Nakba* remains contested in Palestine, it is no less important internationally. The Badil Resource Center in Bethlehem is in the process of developing a physical and on-line *Nakba* education project that will enable educators to teach not only the historic *Nakba* of 1948, but also the ongoing displacement of Palestinians forcibly removed from their land on a daily basis over the past 61 years, often with the financial support of the U.S. for Jewish colonization. The online exhibit offers audio-visual narratives, histories, geography and interactive tools for educators to engage with people in Palestine. While these resources will be available globally, its use value in an American educational context is particularly crucial given American acquiescence to the Zionist version of historical and current events.

Our paper will discuss Badil's *Nakba* education project and its potential as a tool of intervention in American education, media, and discourse that corrects the silencing of Palestinian history and reality. We will explore the possible impact that this resource might eventually have on U.S. foreign policy.

¹ Jonathan Cook, *Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair*. (London: Zed Books, 2008), 160.