

Below are two statements that were signed by British Jews and then by Jews in North America in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the UK:

To the Editor:

On April 30, 2008, a group of over 100 British Jews signed a letter to the editor of the Guardian as follows:

"In May, Jewish organisations will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. This is understandable in the context of centuries of persecution culminating in the Holocaust. Nevertheless, we are Jews who will not be celebrating. Surely it is now time to acknowledge the narrative of the other, the price paid by another people for European anti-semitism and Hitler's genocidal policies. As Edward Said emphasised, what the Holocaust is to the Jews, the Nakba is to the Palestinians.

"In April 1948, the same month as the infamous massacre at Deir Yassin and the mortar attack on Palestinian civilians in Haifa's market square, Plan Dalet was put into operation. This authorised the destruction of Palestinian villages and the expulsion of the indigenous population outside the borders of the state. We will not be celebrating.

"In July 1948, 70,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes in Lydda and Ramleh in the heat of the summer with no food or water. Hundreds died. It was known as the Death March. We will not be celebrating.

"In all, 750,000 Palestinians became refugees. Some 400 villages were wiped off the map. That did not end the ethnic cleansing. Thousands of Palestinians (Israeli citizens) were expelled from the Galilee in 1956. Many thousands more when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza. Under international law and sanctioned by UN resolution 194, refugees from war have a right to return or compensation. Israel has never accepted that right. We will not be celebrating.

"We cannot celebrate the birthday of a state founded on terrorism, massacres and the dispossession of another people from their land. We cannot celebrate the birthday of a state that even now engages in ethnic cleansing, that violates international law, that is inflicting a monstrous collective punishment on the civilian population of Gaza and that continues to deny to Palestinians their human rights and national aspirations.

"We will celebrate when Arab and Jew live as equals in a peaceful Middle East. "

As American Jews, we honor our British brothers and sisters who have spoken out about what the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel -- the 60th anniversary of the Palestinian Naqba -- means for Palestinians and Jews alike. Like our British brothers and

sisters, we will not be celebrating. Hannah Schwarzschild

<http://notimetocelebrate.wordpress.com/>

NO TIME TO CELEBRATE: Jews Remember the Nakba

This May, Israel will mark 60 years of statehood. In cities across the U.S. and Canada, major Jewish organizations will sponsor celebrations of "Israeli Independence Day." Meanwhile, Palestinians around the world will mourn 60 years since the Nakba - Arabic for "catastrophe" - of 1948. Sixty years ago, Zionist militias destroyed over 500 Palestinian villages and made more than 800,000 Palestinian people refugees in order to create a Jewish state in a land where the majority was not Jewish. This does not deserve to be celebrated.

Today the Palestinian Nakba continues. In order to maintain Israel's artificial Jewish majority, the Israeli government has continued campaigns of ongoing displacement, violence, and occupation. Inside of the 1948 borders of Israel, Palestinian citizens are denied equal rights to Jews under the law. Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem are denied access to land, water, healthcare, and other basic resources. Palestinians throughout historic Palestine experience international isolation, economic devastation aided by the erection of a 730-kilometer wall, and continued closures and invasions including the current horrific siege of Gaza. Today there are more than 6 million Palestinian refugees around the world, all of whom are denied their internationally recognized Right of Return to their homes and land. Meanwhile, we are invited to live on that same land simply because we are Jewish. We renounce this "right" to "return" given to us by Israeli law.

In addition to 60 years of occupation and dispossession, this anniversary marks decades of creative and powerful Palestinian resistance to Israel's violence. With this statement, we support this struggle, which is so often ignored or vilified in the U.S. media.

As Jews committed to justice, we imagine an "independence" that does not depend on an ethnically or religiously exclusive state or on the displacement of indigenous people. As North American Jews, we refuse to celebrate the ongoing colonization and dispossession of Palestinian lives and communities funded by U.S. foreign aid. There has never been Jewish consensus around Israel: not in 1897, not in 1948, and not today. We reject the notion that we have been chosen to displace others. We support Palestinian people's right to return, individually and collectively, to the homes they lost in 1948 and in the violent decades since then.

In response to these historical events and a call from Palestine to mark

their significance, we refuse to celebrate "Israel 60." We will take action to make our shared position clear and visible. In cities across the U.S. and Canada this year, we pledge to participate in or to support:

- Refusal to participate in Israeli Independence Day activities;
- Peaceful disruption of these events;
- Nakba commemoration events and actions organized by Palestinians and the Palestine solidarity movement;
- Incorporation of Nakba remembrance into our Passover seders;
- The movement for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions of Israel;
- Other efforts to challenge the perceived Zionist consensus among American Jews through education of Jewish and broader communities about the Nakba, about the colonial nature of Zionism, and about the history of Jewish dissent and Palestinian resistance.

As North American Jews, we stand together with Palestinians in mourning 60 years of al-Nakba and in honoring 60 years of vibrant resistance.