

July 20, 2007

A racist Jewish state

By Haaretz Editorial

Every day the Knesset has the option of passing laws that will advance Israel as a democratic Jewish state or turn it into a racist Jewish state. There is a very thin line between the two. This week, the line was crossed. If the Knesset legal counselor did not consider the bill entitled "the Jewish National Fund Law" as sufficiently racist to keep it off the agenda, it is hard to imagine what legislation she will consider racist.

In 1995 the Supreme Court rescued the state from callously discriminating against its Arab citizens through the Ka'adan case, which prohibited the Israel Lands Administration from discriminating against non-Jews by leasing land through the Jewish Agency. Since then the attorney general has stated that such discrimination is unacceptable - also when it is carried out through the Jewish National Fund. The MKs were unable to accept this egalitarian ruling, and on Wednesday a large majority of 65 voted in favor of a preliminary reading permitting such discrimination. The bill is also backed by the head of the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, MK Menahem Ben-Sasson.

Any explanation by the supporters of the bill seeking to beautify it should be rejected immediately by anyone who cares about the country's image. This bill reflects an abasement of the Zionist enterprise to lows never imagined in the Declaration of Independence. Even though the Jewish National Fund purchased the lands for the Jewish people in the Diaspora, the State of Israel has already been established and these lands must now serve all its citizens.

For those living for tomorrow and not the past, the aim is to create in Israel a healthy, progressive state where the needs of the two peoples should concern the leaders and legislators. The Jewish National Fund's land policy counters the interests of the state and cannot discriminate by law against the minority living in Israel.

The clause in the bill stating that "the leasing of JNF lands for the purpose of settling Jews will not be seen as unacceptable discrimination," even though it involves 13 percent of state-controlled lands and allows for further expressions of discrimination. For example, the establishment of a university only for Jews on JNF land, or a hospital, or a movie theater.

It is not surprising that MK Uri Ariel, who favors the redemption of lands by Jews also beyond the Green Line, is the person who initiated the Jewish National Fund bill. But the support of Benjamin Netanyahu, Ami Ayalon, Michael Eitan, Reuven Rivlin and Shalom Simhon is a very bad omen for the future of legislation in Israel. The Ka'adan case in the Supreme Court failed to bring about change. The power to discriminate was passed on to communities' acceptance committees that reject candidates by reverting to the clause of "being ill-suited to the community." If it was not for the Supreme Court's ruling in the Ka'adan case, it would have been possible also to reject non-Jewish candidates from Russia.

The Ka'adan ruling was exceptional in setting red lines, allowing a broad range for change, establishing norms and preventing the debasement of the rule book. It turns out that the Supreme Court is not omnipotent. In an instant, a racist Knesset can overturn its rulings.

Title: Ridiculous

Name: Solomon Kutnicki

City: Haifa

State: Israel

You are so smug and would like to rail against racism. Well how about railing against fraud. All money from sold property must be returned to all the thousands of families who donated money for the express purpose of settling Jews. Anything less is theft.

Title: The JNF predates the state and the state did not pay for the JNF

Name: Steven

City: L

State:

The JNF is for Jews. It is not now, nor has it ever been for Israelis. An Arab can be an Israeli just like a Jew can. The JNF was funded by Jews over the last 100 years for Jews development in the Holyland. Just as Jews have no right to build on any land owned by an organization, people do not have a right to build on land owned by the JNF with out the OK of the JNF. It is not racism it is pure logic. Only a racist would find the JNF to be racist. Is the United Negro Fund racist in the US because they do not help poor Jews go to University?

Title: If the JNF break their contract with donors we can demand refunds

Name: Nannette

City: London

State: UK

If Ha`aretz thinks that by allowing the JNF to keep the land for Jews is racist, they should also consider the contracts that were made with many Jews who chose to donate large sums on a regular basis.

We PAID for the land for over 100 years. The editor has obviously NOT paid money into the JNF, or he wouldn't have written such an inane article.

Of course, contracts can be broken, but then I'm sure he'd be delighted if Israel were to offer a refund to ALL known donors, WITH interest, so that Israel could give the land to Arabs.

Of course this will cost Israel over a hundred billion dollars, and he won't mind the country going bankrupt so he can continue promoting HIS favourite causes - the Arabs, the slow destruction of Israel, and global antisemitism.

Title: LAND FOR JEWS IN ISRAEL????

Name: Brant

City: Hilton Head

State: SC

When an editorial shrilly suggests there's no room for argument it becomes propaganda. One wonders whether this clause would exist were there not so many daily threats to the Jews of Israel; were there not the treasonous behaviour of the Tibi's of the world; were there not a growing allegiance to Islamic hegemony that crosses borders and does not care; were there Arab neighbors who knew some other language except "no" or "not one Jew". It is naive of the committed left in Israel and elsewhere to suggest Israel do everything it can to pursue perfection and simply risk being overwhelmed by people who hate it. The exit from Gaza proved enough about how little the Arabs are committed to compromise. I'd rather be a flickering light and still burning, even if I didn't meet the standards of Haaretz, then be remembered as the Light Unto the Nations that was snuffed out because it believed the Arabs would love it if only it was "progressive".

Title: WHAT IS RACIST IS ARAB GENOCIDALISM AGAINST JEWISH STATE

Name: G. Marcus

City:

State: Israel

Once you grasp that Israel is the target of a RACIST Arab Holy War (Jihad) of annihilation, just because Israel is a non-Arab and non-Moslem nation-state in the Middle East, then you can begin to grasp the real "who's who" in terms of racism in the current conflict.

Arab genocidalists are the real racists... The Jewish nation-state is only defending itself against such racism!

Title: David Gross is not telling the truth

Name: Dr. Fisher

City:

State:

This man is not telling the truth. 99% of Israel's state land was confiscated from the Palestinians, most of whom were expelled. Those landowners who remained were viewed as "absentees". It was a legal trick to steal their land.

Besides, Jews are not natives in Palestine. They are native to Russian, Polan, Khazaria. They are not semites. They are East European white people. Look at their faces. They don't look Middle Eastern.

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