

Arab and Jewish Refugees - The Contrast

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“This is the first war in history which has ended with the victors suing for peace and the vanquished calling for unconditional surrender.”

Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, 1967



Jewish refugees from Arab countries – 1950



Palestinian Arab refugees – 1950

How and why did Palestinian Arabs leave, and who was responsible?

It is important to set the historical record straight: The overwhelming majority of Palestinian refugees left what was then the newly-established State of Israel on their own accord due to structural weaknesses within Palestinian society and their leadership.

The pressure of wartime conditions triggered the collapse of what was already a fragile Palestinian society, particularly when Palestinian leaders chose to oppose the Jewish state by a show of arms rather than by accepting a UN plan for their own state. Those events set the stage for the forceful expulsion of countless other Palestinian Arabs from Jewish-held areas. That military necessity resulted after seven Arab armies invaded western Palestine with the goal of exterminating the newly born State of Israel.

On their own accord, an estimated 600,000¹ Palestinian Arabs fled a war zone, which their leaders had created. An estimated 250,000 to 300,000² of those refugees in 1948 left even before their homes became part of a war zone.

The human tragedy of being uprooted notwithstanding, Palestinian refugees were neither hapless targets nor innocent bystanders. The first stage of the 1948 war was a fierce interethnic or anti-Zionist civil war in which Palestinians were the aggressors and the initiators; the second half was an all-out war involving regular armies, whose participation the Palestinians engineered. The violent path that Palestinians chose – and the ensuing fear, disorientation, and economic deprivation of war – led to their own collective undoing.

The collapse of Palestinian society and mass flight

What caused the collapse of Palestinian society? In part, it was the absence of an alternative Arab infrastructure after the British pulled out. In addition, serious cleavages dating to Ottoman times existed in local Arab society. Because Palestinian Arab society had been so dependent on the British civil administration and social services, Britain's departure left Arab civil servants jobless. As a result, most social services and civil administration ceased to function in the Arab sector, disrupting the flow of essential commodities such as food and fuel, which added to the hardships, the uncertainty, and the dangers.

In contrast, Jewish society in Palestine, or the *Yishuv* as it was called in Hebrew, had established its own civil society over the span of three decades under the Mandate. The *Yishuv* created its own representative political bodies and social and economic institutions, including health and welfare services, a public transport network, and a thriving sophisticated marketing system for manufactured goods and food – in short, a state-in-the-making. It was best described by the 1934

British report to the League of Nations:

“During the last two or three generations the Jews have recreated in Palestine a community, now numbering 80,000, of whom about one-fourth are farmers or workers upon the land. This community has its own political organs, an elected assembly for the direction of its domestic concerns, elected councils in the towns, and an organisation for the control of its schools. It has its elected Chief Rabbinate and Rabbinical Council for the direction of its religious affairs. Its business is conducted in Hebrew as a vernacular language, and a Hebrew press serves its needs. It has its distinctive intellectual life and displays considerable economic activity. This community, then, with its town and country population, its political, religious and social organisations, its own language, its own customs, its own life, has in fact ‘national’ characteristics.”

And as time past:

“Those characteristics have been strengthened and magnified in the course of the following twelve years. To-day there are in Palestine almost 300,000 Jews. There is a constantly flowing stream of men and money, new industries are being established, citriculture is expanding, new settlements are springing up, towns are being enlarged by suburb after suburb.”³

During that same period, the Arabs of Palestine, however, had invested all of their energies into fighting any form of Jewish polity-in-the-making. Although the British encouraged creation of an Arab Agency parallel to the Jewish Agency that had orchestrated and financed development of the Jewish sector, a similar Arab organization failed to develop. So it was no surprise that when the British departed, the Palestinian Arabs remained unorganized and ill prepared not only for statehood (which they rejected in any case), but also for sustained conflict with their Jewish adversaries. In the end, the war caused horrific casualties for the Jews and left thousands of Palestinian Arabs without their homes.⁴

History could have been different.

The British tried in vain to get local Arabs to follow a path of state-building similar to that of the Zionists once they envisioned the division of western Palestine in the 1920s. But the failure – in fact, the refusal of Palestinian Arabs to develop as a society under the tutelage of the British - had been an enduring feature of indigenous Arabs in Palestine for generations.

To this day, in fact, Palestinians reject the notion of Jewish institutions and symbols of Jewish peoplehood, labeling them as apartheid and racist, with their only goal the dissolution of the Jewish character of Israel (see the chapters “Rejectionism” and “Palestinians” for details). Palestinians were, and to a great extent remain, a society with fundamental weaknesses that have *nothing* to do with Zionist aspirations or actions. It is a society characterized by tribal rivalries and social cleavages, rife with distrust and plagued by poor leadership (see the chapters “Democracy” and “Human Rights”). In a seminal work tracing the disintegration of Palestinian society in 1948 and the resulting refugee problem, Professor Kenneth Stein of Emory College, a scholar of land tenure systems under the Ottoman Turks and the British Mandate, points to the lack of social cohesion, coupled with a long history of unscrupulous money lenders, real estate brokers, and dishonest village leaders (*mukhtars*) robbing Palestinian villagers of their lands well before the arrival of the first Zionist:

“By 1947, Palestinian Arab society had become highly susceptible to insecurity and flight. Indeed, a combination of reasons caused hundreds of thousands of Arabs to leave Palestine after November 1947, not the least of which was the internal societal changes that led to slow disintegration of communal bonds. Although Palestinians became refugees in [the] 1947-48 period, the origins of their social collapse can be partially attributed to the fractious nature of Arab society and its steady dissolution over the previous century.”⁵

Another facet of the spontaneous exodus was the fluid nature of the country’s Arab population, according to Aryeh Avneri, who traced the demographic history of western Palestine over the centuries in his book *Claim of Dispossession: Jewish Land Settlement and the Arabs*. Indeed, the Arab narrative, which speaks of perpetual residence in Palestine for 1,300 years, does not stand up to scrutiny. For 250 years the population remained almost static – rising from 205,000 Muslims, Christians, and Jews in 1554 to only 275,000 in 1800. Other historic documents from 1830 onward demonstrate that an increase in Arab immigration was registered with the influx of the first Zionist settlers in 1880, yet the population still ebbed and flowed. Arabs fled during the 1936-1939 Revolt, mainly due to fratricide directed against Palestinian Arab moderates. After the British crushed the revolt, the refugees returned. Describing the Arabs in Palestine in the 19th century, Avneri calls them “a tiny remnant of a volatile population which had been in constant flux as a result of unending wars [E.H. and other factors such as disease].”⁶

Arab leadership was the first to flee, deserting its citizenry

Even before the outbreak of hostilities in 1948, Palestinian social, political, and economic elites betrayed their people, fleeing to neighboring countries, which created a climate of flight and left a leadership vacuum. That in turn spurred disillusionment and demoralization, setting an example for hundreds of thousands of other rank-and-file Palestinians to take to the roads.

Howard Sachar, in his volume *A History of Israel*, notes:

“The departure of mukhtars, judges, and cadis from Haifa and the New City of Jerusalem, from Jaffa, Safed, and elsewhere, dealt a grave blow to the Arab population. The semifeudal character of Arab society rendered the illiterate fellah⁷ almost entirely dependent on the landlord and cadi, and once this elite was gone, the Arab peasant was terrified by the likelihood of remaining in an institutional and cultural void.”

In fact, like the elite, a vast number of other Palestinians fled before the outbreak of hostilities, and still larger numbers fled before the war reached their doorstep, according to Efraim Karsh, a scholar of the 1948 war at the Department of War Studies and head of the Mediterranean Studies program at London University’s King’s College:

“By April 1948, a month before Israel’s declaration of independence, and at a time when the Arabs appeared to be winning the war, some 100,000 Palestinians, mostly from the main urban centers of Jaffa, Haifa, and Jerusalem, and from villages in the coastal plain, had gone. Within another month those numbers had nearly doubled; and by early June, according to an internal Hagana report, some 390,000 Palestinians had left. By the time the war was over in 1949, the number of refugees had risen to between 550,000 and 600,000.”

In January 1948, Hussein Khalidi, Secretary of the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) – a coalition of six political factions established at the start of the Arab Revolt in 1936 and the Palestinians’ only representative framework – complained to the Mufti:

“Forty days after the declaration of a jihad, and I am shattered.... Everyone has left me. Six [AHC members] are in Cairo, two are in Damascus – I won’t be able to hold on much longer.... Everyone is leaving. Everyone who has a check or some money – off he goes to Egypt, to Lebanon, to Damascus.”

As the flight of the leadership spread, the stampede effect spread to the middle classes and the peasantry, as the last British High Commissioner for Palestine General Sir Alan Cunningham noted in his report to London as the Mandate era wound to a close:

“The collapsing Arab morale in Palestine is in some measure due to the increasing tendency of those who should be leading them to leave the country.... In all parts of the country the effendi class has been evacuating in large numbers over a considerable period and the tempo is increasing.”⁸

Karsh encapsulated the process in a May 2001 article in *Commentary*⁹ on “The Palestinians and the Right of Return”:

“In 1948, both the Jewish and the Arab communities in Palestine were thrown into a whirlpool of hardship, dislocation, and all-out war – conditions that no society can survive without the absolute commitment of its most vital elites. Yet while the Jewish community (or Yishuv), a cohesive national movement, managed to weather the storm by extreme effort, the atomized Palestinian community, lacking an equivalent sense of corporate identity, fragmented into small pieces. The moment its leading members chose to place their own safety ahead of all other considerations, the exodus became a foregone conclusion.”

The divergent level of commitment was also a matter of geopolitical realities, not just societal structure. As another scholar of the period, Professor Yoav Gelber of Haifa University, notes:

“Unlike the Jews, who had nowhere to go and fought with their back to the wall, the Palestinians had nearby shelters. From the beginning of hostilities, an increasing flow of refugees drifted into the heart of Arab-populated areas and into adjacent countries.”¹⁰

Gelber, whose volume *Palestine 1948* traces the disintegration of Palestinian Arab society, recapped the domino effect that set mass flight in motion in an article written for the History News Network – “Why Did the Palestinians Run Away in 1948?”¹¹

“When riots broke out, middle-class Palestinians sent their families to neighboring countries and joined them after the situation further deteriorated. Others moved from the vicinity of the front lines to less exposed areas in the interior of the Arab sector. Non-Palestinian Arabs returned to Syria, Lebanon and Egypt to avoid the hardships of war. First-generation rootless emigrants from the countryside to urban centers returned to their villages. Thousands of Palestinian government employees – doctors, nurses, civil servants, lawyers, clerks, etc. – became redundant and departed as the mandatory administration disintegrated. This set a model and created an atmosphere of desertion that rapidly expanded to wider circles. Between half to two-thirds of the inhabitants in cities such as Haifa or Jaffa had abandoned their homes before the Jews stormed these towns in late April 1948. Dependence on towns that had fallen, the quandaries of maintaining agricultural routine and rumors of atrocities exacerbated mass flight from the countryside. Many hamlets that the Haganah occupied were empty.”

The first five-and-a-half months of the war began with riots in so-called mixed cities where Jews and Arabs lived, escalated to attacks on Jewish transport until the violence grew into a bitter guerrilla warfare, as interethnic wars tend to be.¹² Gelber notes that:

“In the absence of proper military objectives, the antagonists carried out their attacks on non-combatant targets, subjecting civilians of both sides to deprivation, intimidation and harassment.” Of the first stage of the war, he writes: “Contrary to later accusations, the documentary evidence proves that throughout this period [i.e., prior to the invasion], the Yishuv had no comprehensive strategy of expulsion. Furthermore, its leaders lacked policy on Arab affairs in general. The circumstances of civil war dictated attitudes towards the Palestinians, and developed in response to challenges to the security of Jewish inhabitants. Local initiatives to settle past accounts between Jewish settlements and Arab villages by driving out unwanted neighbors were rare.”¹³

Although both sides committed atrocities and engaged in bloody reprisals, the Palestinians have turned the Jewish ones into a pillar to support their charge that Palestinians were innocents terrorized into fleeing by the Jews. They have inflated fatalities and embellished incidents, both real and imaginary, with lurid “details.”¹⁴ At the same time, Arabs have ignored the atrocities they committed against Jews, and the Arabs’ role in spreading panic has also been conveniently swept under the carpet. The Deir Yassin massacre has become an icon, used by Palestinians for its emotional impact, similar to the way the death of 12-year-old Muhammad al-Dura at the beginning of the second *Intifada* has been used today, with facts becoming irrelevant.¹⁵

The Deir Yassin massacre was genuine, but manipulation of the tragedy for propaganda purposes only hurt the Arab cause, adding to the flight of more Palestinian Arabs.¹⁶ During the war, the head of the Arab Higher Committee or Palestinian leadership called on the Arab media to inflate the number of civilian fatalities at Deir Yassin, a fortified Arab village next to Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem, which Jewish forces attacked in April 1948. Arabs claimed the number of fatalities, many of them non-combatants, was 250 or more – not 110, which was bad enough. Moreover, reports of the atrocity were laced with false tales of Arab women being raped, stories designed to convince neighboring Arab states to invade and bolster resolve among local Palestinian Arab combatants. That tactic also boomeranged – a fiasco admitted by Arab leaders in retrospect,¹⁷ prompting even more Arabs to flee in fear of Jewish forces.

Arab narratives now admit Palestinians fled or were deported, but pin the flight on Deir Yassin, with or without admitting their own role in spreading panic. Yet Arabs committed similar atrocities against Jews during the corresponding period, and no flight occurred. The first attack began on a public bus near Lydda (Lod) the day after passage of the partition plan. That attack was followed by two more atrocities: the April 1948 ambush and murder of 79 Jews in a convoy of doctors, nurses, and their guards on their way to Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, and the lynching of 127 Jewish prisoners of war at Kfar Etzion by an Arab mob in May 1948.

Throughout the first stage of the war, Arab leaders sent mixed signals, with local civic leaders often trying desperately to stem the flow and calm residents, according to Gelber. In January 1948, Palestinian Arab leaders even called on neighboring nations to close their borders to Palestinians. But other voices neutralized such efforts, says Karsh, as Arab leaders in neighboring countries, Muslim clerics and some local Arabic newspapers called upon urban residents to leave, saying the evacuation was temporary, designed to clear the way for Arab troops to advance.

One Cairo newspaper, *Akhbr El-Yom*,¹⁸ for instance, quoted the Mufti of Jerusalem on the first day of the invasion appealing to the Arabs of Palestine to leave the country for “the Arab armies were about to enter and fight in their stead....” In other cases, Arabs issued threatening warnings that those who stayed would be viewed as “renegades.”¹⁹ And in fact, in two major cities with large Arab populations – Haifa and Jaffa – Arab authorities organized the exodus, ordering Arab residents to leave. In Tiberias, the British suggested an orderly exit, which Arab leaders accepted. Writes Karsh:

“In the largest and best-known example of such a forced exodus, tens of thousands of Arabs were ordered or bullied into leaving the city of Haifa ... despite sustained Jewish efforts to convince them to stay.... In Jaffa, the largest Arab community of mandatory Palestine, the municipality organized the transfer of thousands of residents by land and sea.”²⁰

Karsh quotes the British commander in Haifa, Major-General Hugh Stockwell, as telling the Arabs of Haifa as they prepared to depart:

“You have made a foolish decision. Think it over, as you’ll regret it afterwards. You must accept the conditions of the Jews. They are fair enough. Don’t permit life to be destroyed senselessly. After all, it was you who began the fighting and the Jews have won.”²¹

Recently discovered 1948-vintage documents found in the basement of the Israel Labor Federation in Haifa²² shed further light on the exodus. In addition to April 1948 fliers that called on Arabs to stay, one document reveals an Arab community leader told Jewish labor leaders seeking to convince the Arabs to stay that the Syrians had instructed Haifa’s Arab residents to leave because the Syrians were going to bomb the city.

Karsh claims that in countless other townships and villages, representatives of the AHC, local Arab militias, or the armies of the Arab states – particularly Jordan’s Arab Legion - ordered all inhabitants, or at least all women and children, to leave their homes.

Typical of the mixed signals, according to Karsh, were scenarios such as the following:

“... in early March 1948, the AHC issued a circular castigating the flight out of the country as a blemish on both ‘the jihad movement and the reputation of the Palestinians,’ and stating that in places of great danger, women, children, and the elderly should be moved to safer areas within Palestine.”

The flight, however, had gone beyond the tipping point and there was no turning back. Tens of thousands of refugees flooded Jordan and other neighboring countries. One-third ended up in Arab-held areas west of the Jordan River – that is, within western Palestine, mostly today’s West Bank.

Palestinian political leadership demonstrated reckless disregard for the relative strength and weakness of their society and that of their adversaries.

This is a pattern traceable from the Mufti of Jerusalem in the 1920s and 1930s to today’s leadership. That disregard, however, was paralleled by the failure of Palestinian leaders and the Palestinian people to understand the price of the war they launched.

The AHC, the media and other Arab notables entrenched themselves in their tradition of rejectionism and violence, rejecting accommodation even as a ploy or a tactic. Driven by blind hatred, Palestinian leadership has time and again failed to grasp its own weaknesses and the strengths of its adversaries, as illustrated in 1948 when it failed to grasp the nature of the conflict it had initiated. As Gelber charges, Palestinian leaders were “unaware of the difference between an anti-colonial insurrection and a national war.”²³

Palestinian leaders preferred to conduct the struggle from safe asylum abroad as they had done during their rebellion against the British from 1936-1939. The Arab states contributed to the chaos by being able neither to determine Arab Palestine's political future nor to let the Palestinians shape their own destiny.

That failure to read the map of the mess they created was exacerbated by a parallel blunder: the Palestinians as a group failed to grasp the price of their complicity.

The Land of Israel, or western Palestine, is a narrow land bridge between Asia Minor and Africa, between the desert and the sea. It has been of great strategic importance since time immemorial. In ancient times it was the object of rivalry between empires to the north and south, and after the Arab conquest in the seventh century, it exchanged hands between rival caliphs several times, while local warlords also vied for control of greater pieces of land. When rival empires or rival caliphs fought for control, local inhabitants were in the habit of moving out of the way until the dust cleared.

In 1948, the Palestinians' shortsighted response to the rigors of war resulted in catastrophic ramifications for them.

By starting a civil war, Palestinian Arabs became belligerents in the conflict, forfeiting the right to flee when their homes became a war zone and expecting to be allowed back as if nothing had happened, if they happened to lose the war they started.

Palestinians quote the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which says: “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country,”²⁴ while ignoring their own complicity in their flight. Indeed, freedom of movement is neither a collective right nor a blanket right, according to Swedish jurist Stig Jagerskiold. Writing on “Freedom of Movement” in an academic volume dedicated to *The International Bill of Rights*, Jagerskiold stressed:

“There was no intention here to address the claims of masses of people who have been displaced as a by-product of war or by political transfers of territory or population, such as the relocation of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe during and after the Second World War, the flight of the Palestinians from what became Israel, or the movement of Jews from the Arab countries.”²⁵

That view is further supported by the fact that under international law, humanitarian law conventions such as the 1949 Geneva Conventions for the Protection of Victims of War make no mention of a ‘Right of Return.’ Even if one’s yardstick for legal-status is “close and enduring ties to the country” or the right to consider western Palestine (Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza) home under the Mandate, as some jurists would argue, the claim of innocent refugee status does not apply.

The inability of Palestinians to grasp that their traditional way of responding in wartime – running away – lost its validity by virtue of their own role in the 1948 conflict, has become is a major obstacle to peace, discussed separately in this chapter. Yet that inability has become a major obstacle to peace, discussed separately in this chapter.

Objectively, the claim that Arab Palestinians were innocent bystanders ignores the facts: the sides in the conflict were not two rival empires – outsiders, or rival caliphs. It was a conflict between two national or ethnic groups. Palestinians represented one side in the conflict – and in fact the side responsible for starting the war.

The Palestinians were responsible for escalating the war – a move that cost the Jews thousands of lives and Palestinians their homes. By their own behavior, Palestinians assumed the role of belligerents in the conflict, invalidating any claim to be hapless victims.

Even historian²⁶ Benny Morris recently revised his evaluation of the Palestinians and the core of their refugee problem. Taking the Palestinians to task in a 2003 article in the *New Republic*, Morris writes that “... the collapse of Palestinian society in 1948 – the *Naqba* or catastrophe in Arabic – took place under the hammer blows of the war of their own making,” yet Palestinians habitually prefer to blame someone else:

“... In a metaphysical spin, [they] viewed [the Naqba] as ‘an immense conspiracy and ... a monumental injustice’ against themselves. Indeed, one of the characteristics of the Palestinian national movement has been the Palestinians’ view of themselves as perpetual victims of others – Ottoman Turks, British officials, Zionists, Americans – and never to appreciate that they are, at least in large part, victims of their own mistakes and iniquities.”²⁷

More to the point, Professor Morris writes that “after a serious re-examination of [his] own political assumptions,” he has come to the conclusion that the heart of the conflict is the inability of Palestinian Arabs to accept that Jews have ties and rights in the Land of Israel, and that Israel is a legitimate entity:

“I have come away from my examination of the history of the conflict with a sense of the instinctive rejectionism that runs like a dark thread through Palestinian history – a rejection, to the point of absurdity, of the history of the Jewish link to the Land of Israel; a rejection of the legitimacy of Jewish claims to Palestine; a rejection of the right of the Jewish state to exist. And, worse, this rejectionism has over the decades been leavened by a healthy dose of antisemitism, a perception of the Jew as God’s and humanity’s unchosen.”

(Those 80 years – and some would say 120 years – of rejectionism, which Morris acknowledges, are outlined in the chapter “Rejectionism.”)

Although a majority of Arabs fled of their own accord, it is also true that Jewish troops forced many residents of Arab villages out of their communities or banished them to Arab-held areas. Yet those cases must be viewed in context. They were the results of a ‘change in the rules’ of the war that Palestinians caused by imploring five Arab armies to invade the country.

During the first stage of the war, Jews did not expel Arabs, even though a bitter and costly interethnic war raged.

However, that policy changed as the number of Jewish casualties mounted. As the war dragged on, grim determination and growing anger at what their neighbors had wrought, replaced the Jews' hopes of reconciliation. Local deportations were triggered by the pending invasion of five Arab armies, which posed a truly existential peril to Israel that required a swift response.

Gelber describes the mood:

“Unlike the pre-invasion period, certain Israeli Defense Force actions on the eve and after the invasion aimed at driving out the Arab population from villages close to Jewish settlements or adjacent to main roads. These measures appeared necessary in face of the looming military threat by the invading Arab armies. The Israelis held the Palestinians responsible for the distress that the invasion caused and believed they deserved severe punishment. The local deportations of May-June 1948 appeared both militarily vital and morally justified. Confident that their conduct was indispensable, the troops did not attempt to conceal harsh treatment of civilians in their after-action reports.”²⁸

How many Palestinians were banished and how many fled? According to Gelber:

“... more than half of the total number of refugees at the end of the war fled and were not banished. Until April ... they ran away primarily from the chaos, the anarchy, the economic deterioration and the miserable living conditions under circumstances of civil war. During April and May they fled because the fighting was approaching their doorsteps, directly hit them or threatened to subordinate them to a Jewish rule.”²⁹

The most prominent exception was the ouster of 50,000-60,000 residents of Lydda (Lod) and Ramle, located 12 miles from Tel Aviv and adjacent to the international airport. They were banished at gunpoint in June 1948 and sent across the lines into Jordanian Legion-held territory a few miles away. According to Gelber, no deliberate premeditated policy of expulsion prompted the ouster. And events at Lydda and Ramle did not set a pattern of forced deportations in other major Arab towns such as Nazareth, although it definitely dampened resistance elsewhere.³⁰ After the cities had surrendered, renewed Arab resistance led to 250 Arab casualties and summary expulsion of *all* inhabitants in the aftermath. Forced deportations, when implemented, were dictated predominantly by ad-hoc military considerations and the temperament of local commanders on the ground, in the midst of a bloody and costly battle for survival.

Had there been no war, no refugees would have resulted. Rather than accept a Jewish state after five-and-a-half months of warfare, Palestinians called upon their Arab brethren to invade and crush the nascent Jewish state.

The Arab League's April 10, 1948 decision to invade on May 14 to 'save Palestine,' as the British Mandate ended, marked a watershed event, for it changed the rules of the conflict. Accordingly, Israel bears no moral responsibility for deliberately banishing Palestinians in order to "consolidate defense arrangements"³¹ in strategic areas, as the *Yishuv* organized to battle five well-equipped and well-trained aggressor armies.

For Palestinian Jews in late March through June 1948, the situation was perilous. The British would not allow Jews to organize as a regular army until after their departure on May 14. The State of Israel was declared late in the afternoon of May 14. On May 15 when the invasion began, Israel had one tank, five field guns, and two armored cars with gun mounts. It had no fighter aircraft. In opposition, it faced five advancing Arab armies with 40 tanks, 140 field guns, 200 armored cars and 74 fighters and bombers.³²

The transformation of the *Yishuv's* lightly armed militia – the *Haganah* – into a regular army had to be accomplished as the Arab invasion advanced, as well as during the first cease-fire. Moreover, although the British declared their neutrality, they continued to confiscate Jewish weapons – even stopping a weapons ship carrying five field guns outside the port of Tel Aviv on May 13, 24 hours before their withdrawal, and 48 hours before the Arab invasion.³³

With the pending invasion following Israel's declaration of independence, it is no exaggeration to say the new state's very existence hung in the balance.

The new Jewish state found it imperative to eliminate all potential pockets of resistance in key areas if it was to survive. Dislodging all Arab inhabitants from sensitive areas in proximity to Jewish settlements, establishing territorial continuity between blocs under Jewish control, and ensuring control of key transportation arteries were a military necessity. As May 14 approached, Israel could not afford to risk a Fifth Column at its rear in addition to all other aspects of its militarily inferior situation. The cost of defeat was hammered home by a stream of dire warnings from Arab capitals, with perhaps the most chilling for Israel coming from Jimal Al-Husseini, the vice-president of the AHC, who publicly declared:

“The Arabs have taken into their own hands, the Final Solution of the Jewish problem. The problem will be solved only in blood and fire. The Jews will be driven out.”³⁴

Three years after world Jewry had lost a third of its people in the Holocaust, Israelis were not about to test whether Al-Husseini's words were merely rhetoric or a real threat, and so they prepared for the worst.

Arab narratives of the war seek to reverse roles in 1948, suggesting the well-organized Jews were Goliath and the unorganized Arabs were David. The facts tell a different story: in the first three weeks of the war the Egyptians advanced to within 28 miles of Tel Aviv, after overrunning a string of Jewish settlements in the south in which 400 defenders fell; Syrian forces established a beachhead in the Upper Galilee; and the Jewish Quarter of the Old City fell to Jordan's Arab Legion, which also cut the road between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and were entrenched at Latrun, a mere half-hour drive from Tel Aviv.

The cost to Israel to halt the Arab onslaught and gain the upper hand was horrendous: during the first four weeks following the invasion, 1,600 Israelis were killed – a quarter of all the war's casualties.³⁵ Put another way, it was as if on a per capita basis the U.S. military lost 80,000 soldiers in Iraq in one month.

Throughout the first weeks of the invasion, the flow of escapees who left Jewish-controlled areas to seek shelter in Arab-dominated areas in the interior, then under the invader's protection, continued unabated. Five days before the invasion, an IDF intelligence report³⁶ cited that "... the escape spread into exclusive Arab areas. Previously, the flight involved villages bordering on Jewish regions and members of the wealthy and middle classes. Now it is a mass psychosis and an all-out evacuation."

In only sporadic cases did local commanders encourage Arabs to leave with artfully placed rumors that they would be better off saving what possessions they could and get out before the Jews arrived. Noting the mood and the motivation of Israeli soldiers in his volume *Palestine 1948*, Gelber writes:

"The disposition of IDF soldiers towards the Palestinians had become extremely harsh and unforgiving. Regarding them responsible for the calamities that had befallen the Yishuv since the invasion, the Israeli troops thought that the Palestinians were worthy of their fate and deserved to pay a heavy price for summoning the invaders."³⁷

After 5½ months of civil war, Palestinians were viewed as a Fifth Column for advancing Arab armies. Consequently, many of those who remained were deliberately driven out of Israeli-controlled areas in the direction of Arab-held territory, and when they tried to return in the midst of the war and its aftermath, their villages were razed.³⁸

In May 1948, even the departing British High Commissioner Sir Alan Cunningham, no particular friend of the Jews, supported the fact that such steps were justified as a matter of sheer survival:

"The Jews for their part can hardly be blamed if in the face of past Arab irregular action and of continued threats of interference by Arab regular forces, they take time by the forelock and consolidate their position while they can."³⁹

The Palestinians' fatal mistake of calling in the Arab states was compounded by the Arabs' refusal to seize the opportunity to end the war by abiding by an open-ended cease-fire negotiated in late July 1948, even after the Jews had halted Arab advances and clearly begun to gain the upper hand. Thus, by failing to keep the truce, they created, by their own hands tens of thousands of additional refugees from Arab-dominated areas. On September 6, 1948, the *Beirut Daily Telegraph* quoted Emil Ghory, Secretary of the Arab Higher Command, as saying:

"... the Arabs did not want to submit to a truce. They preferred to abandon their homes."

Indeed, following a second truce, the Arabs lost the entire Negev, as well as the central Galilee – a second Arab stronghold.

Gelber, the historian, suggests Palestinians' deep-seated sense of victimhood for their situation was poorly placed:

"They have been victims - but of their own follies and pugnacity, as well as of their Arab allies' incompetence."⁴⁰

Palestinian narratives – even those detailed in Palestinian academic studies – simply ignore or warp uncomfortable facts. The depth of their inability to accept even partial responsibility for their plight and their rejection of resettlement as an Israeli plot intended to rob them of their heritage does serve one purpose: it unites all Palestinians from academics to peasantry, yet it is a unity based on faulty premises.

Palestinian historiographer Dr. Nur Masalha prepared a 30,000-word paper on “Israel’s Moral Responsibility Towards the Palestinian Refugee Problem” for the PLO’s negotiation affairs department.⁴¹ Not once does it mention Palestinian rejection of the partition plan, the months of guerilla warfare, or the calls to neighboring Arab countries to invade. To believe Masalha is to believe that Jews simply planned to expel Palestinians from the advent of Zionism and went about brutally doing so in 1948. Gelber’s conclusion:

“As far as the Palestinians are concerned, the wrong done to them can only be righted and the disasters ended through a return to their homeland and restitution of property.”

In an article published by the Palestinian diaspora and Refugee Center on “Israeli Resettlement Schemes for Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967,”⁴² Dr. Norma Masriyeh Hazboun, another academic, assumes that resettlement is against the interests of the refugees:

“For the Arabs and Palestinians, resettlement would have been an admission that a return to Israel proper was not the only solution.”

The paper assumes that Israeli plans to close the refugee camps after 1967 by resettling refugees in less cramped surroundings, or facilitating voluntary emigration to countries in South America where large Arab immigrant communities flourish had sinister motives:

“The Israelis sought an end to the refugee camps, which represented a visible reminder of the refugees’ plight in 1948; and a focal point of Palestinian identity and militant resistance, requiring constant army surveillance. By breaking up the concentrations of refugees, the Israelis assumed that they would be able to sever the refugees’ link with their homeland, i.e., their sense of nationhood and right to self-determination.”

In an April 2002 op-ed piece in the *Washington Post*,⁴³ Hussein Agha, described as “a senior associate ... at Oxford who has been involved in Israeli-Palestinian affairs for more than 30 years” summed up another plan under the headline “A way home for Palestinian refugees.” The feasibility of Agha’s plan lay in the fact that it would not endanger Israel demographically.

It would only whittle down Israel's size to a Zionist enclave along the coastal plain, minus most of the Galilee and the Negev, a mini-state a fraction of the size of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem established by the Crusaders:

“First, refugees and their families would be given the choice to return to the general area where they lived before 1948 (along with the choice to live in Palestine, resettle in a third country or be absorbed by the current country of refuge if the host country agrees). ... The next best option from the refugees' perspective would be to live among people who share their habits, language, religion and culture, that is among the current Arab citizens of Israel. Israel would settle the refugees in its Arab-populated territory along the 1967 boundaries. Those areas would then be included in a land swap and end up as part of a new Palestinian state.”

The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), which monitors the Arabic media, examined the Arab dialogue surrounding the Right of Return and concluded:

“Contrary to the idea that has spread in Israel over the past years, the Palestinian demand for the implementation of the Right of Return is a real demand and not one expressed merely for domestic consumption or a negotiation tactic.”

Gelber believes the chasm between the two sides stems from a peace dialogue that is being conducted on two different levels that do not converge. In the epilogue to his volume, *Palestine 1948*, Gelber wrote:

“Ultimately, the vast majority of Israelis seeks coexistence with the Arabs and understands that such coexistence requires compromise and concessions on Israel's part. The domestic controversies among Israelis do not concern the principle of compromise and concession, but its implementation: How far to compromise and what should be the limit of accommodation. The Palestinians strive for neither coexistence nor compromise but for justice: The final and permanent settlement with Israel should remedy the wrongs that have allegedly been done to them, at least since the UN partition plan if not since the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Justice as framed by the Palestinians is an absolute: pure – recognizing no compromises, exclusive – with no apparent leeway for reciprocity in the pursuit of ‘righting historical wrongs.’⁴⁴

That insight is also reflected in “Bitter Lemons,” a Website dedicated to the exchange of views between Palestinians and Israelis. In an interview, Rima Tarazi, a musician and President of the Board of the General Union of Palestinian Women, underscores the point:

“The Intifada has actually reaffirmed my conviction that the Palestinian people will never remain still until their rights are restored.... Negotiations have been taking place, but one does not negotiate over rights. One negotiates over means and timetables. That's it. Once these inalienable rights are recognized, then we start coming to the negotiating table.”⁴⁵

Her mindset reflects the monolithic nature of Palestinian demands for a Right of Return that unites the whole spectrum of Palestinian society, from peasants and rank-and-file Palestinians to the intelligentsia and cultural movers and shakers who Westerners expect would hold more moderate views.

The forgotten Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

For a host of reasons – practical to parochial – Israel has failed to raise the issue of the mammoth injustice done to almost a million Jews from Arab countries. The scale and the premeditated state-sponsored nature of persecution that prompted the 1948 flight of nearly 1,000,000 Jews from their homes has only recently begun to emerge.

Arab publicists have sought to detach entirely the flight of Jews from Arab lands from the Arab-Israeli conflict, claiming they are two separate phenomena, and that Israelis should take up the issue with each respective Arab state that was involved, not with the Palestinians.

For decades, American presidents seeking to act as facilitators in settling the Arab-Israeli conflict have been aware that there was a flip side to the Palestinian refugee question: that is, that the rights of former Jewish refugees are no less legitimate than those of Palestinian refugees. Thus, the 1977 Camp David Accords, which established a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, provided that “the parties agree to establish a Claims Committee for the mutual settlement of all final claims.” In a press conference on October 27, 1977, at the time of the signing of the Accords, President Jimmy Carter held that “Palestinians have rights ... obviously there are Jewish refugees ... they have the same rights as others do.” The rights of Jews displaced from Arab lands was again raised at Camp David II in July 2000, when President Bill Clinton invited Israeli Prime Minister Barak and PA Chairman Arafat to hammer out a final status agreement. In the aftermath, President Clinton spoke of “... Jewish people, who lived predominantly in Arab countries who came to Israel because they were made refugees in their own land.”⁴⁶

Because scholars have largely ignored the subject and because most details have been based on anecdotal material, understanding of the phenomenon has been limited. Some believed persecution was sporadic, and uprooting was equally the result of “pull” as well as “push” factors. Previous works such as George Gruen’s article “The Other Refugees: Jews of the Arab World,” and Norman Stillman’s book, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, tend to assign equal weight to more benign ‘push’ factors such as disequilibrium and tensions from colonialism and modernization sparked by the withdrawal of colonial masters (as in Algeria) or from Jewish involvement in dissident groups such as the Communists (as in Iraq) and the ‘pull’ of the attraction of Zionism. The authors were unaware of the *systematic* quality of push factors, consciously orchestrated moves for the wholesale expulsion of Jews. Thus, the genuine scope and nature of how the Jewish refugee problem came about remained elusive until only recently.

Jewish refugees, both from Arab countries and Europe, were resettled because they and their brethren wanted to get on with their lives.

For more than 50 years the phenomena of Jewish refugees from Arab countries went underreported – what some label “the forgotten exodus.” Moreover, Israeli representatives rarely raised the Jewish refugee issue during peace talks, assuming that it was water under the bridge and that Palestinian demands for fulfillment of the Right of Return was mere rhetoric.

Ironically, one of the first persons to note the parallel and its relevance and logic⁴⁷ was Sabri Jiryis, director of the Institute of Palestine Studies in Beirut, who wrote in the Lebanese daily *Al-Nahar* in 1975:

“Clearly Israel will raise the question [of the expulsion of the Jews from Arab countries] in all serious negotiations ... over the rights of the Palestinians.... Israel’s arguments will take approximately the following form.... What happened, therefore, is merely a kind of ‘population and property transfer’ the consequences of which both sides have to bear. Thus Israel gathers Jews from Arab countries and the Arab countries are obligated in turn to settle the Palestinians within their own borders and work towards a solution of the problem.”

Recent interest in the flight of Jewish refugees has been generated by a host of trends. Since September 2000, the Arab refugee question and the Right of Return have been thrust into the forefront in the peace process, presented as a stand-alone phenomenon – a gross distortion of the Middle East narrative. But other cultural and judicial factors also help to explain the new interest in Jewish refugee history. They include the revolution in human rights and humanitarian law worldwide and the growth of multiculturalism which has paved the way for a new receptiveness to acknowledging and validating the experiences and traumas of the Other – be it immigrant populations in general or non-Ashkenazi Jews in particular.

A June 2003 study of Jewish refugees, the first of its kind, casts their flight from Arab lands in a new light. The study, “Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: The Case for Rights and Redress,”⁴⁸ compiled by a team of scholars and other professionals, sheds new light on the nature of the pressures that forced 97 percent of all the Jews in Arab countries to flee ancient well-integrated Jewish communities, some of which had existed for more than 2,500 years.

The scope of the mass exodus is hard to grasp. Less than 8,000 Jews remain in Arab countries today, compared to an estimated 850,000 who lived in North Africa and the Middle East in 1947. Nearly all who remain reside in two countries – 5,700 in Morocco and 1,500 in Tunisia. The other Middle Eastern countries have only a handful of Jews. In the course of a few short years, the Middle East rid itself of more than half its Jews, and by 1976, that number reached 97 percent. That phenomenon of 1948 was dwarfed and swept to the sidelines in comparison to the enormity of the Holocaust. But now, in retrospect, its genuine scale and methodology is coming to light.

The abovementioned study of Jewish refugees, a ten-month collaborative research project, arrived at a number of new germane insights that must be addressed in any dialogue about injustice. The study found new documents that indicate that Arab states consciously and methodically *orchestrated* state-sponsored persecution designed to bring about the expulsion of entire Jewish communities.

Not only did the Arab campaign against Jews include incitement and sporadic attacks described in much of the literature, writes Canadian law professor and Canadian Minister of Justice Irwin Cotler, it was also far more systematic and accompanied by what Cotler brands “mass human rights violations ... including Nuremberg-type laws against their Jewish citizens” – acts that Cotler, a longtime human right activist, brands evidence of “criminal intention if not criminal conspiracy.”

“If we look at the concerted pattern of state sanctioning of repression, and of systematic legislation which criminalized and disenfranchised Jews and sequestered their property, then what happened belongs in the annals of ethnic cleansing.”⁴⁹

The study was initiated by Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC), established to rectify the fact that “the Jewish refugee narrative has been expunged from the Middle East narrative.” If Palestinians insist on focusing on justice as the core of the conflict, Jews’ rights also need to be redressed.

Speaking at a June 30, 2003 press conference⁵⁰ marking the release of the study, Cotler said:

“The pursuit of truth, the right to justice and redress are prerequisites for reconciliation.... The integrity of the peace process requires the acknowledgment of the truth and the justice that underpin the conflict.... The time has come to restore the plight, the truth and the justice of Jewish refugees from Arab lands to the Middle East narrative from which they have been expunged. Any narrative of the Middle East ... that does not include justice for Jewish refugees from Arab lands is ... an assault on truth, and memory and justice. It has to be part of any peace process if that peace process is to have integrity.”

An overview of the injustices done to Jews in Arab countries and the deprivation they suffered in being resettled is covered in Part II of this chapter.

IN A NUTSHELL

- There would be no Palestinian refugees if the Arabs had accepted the UN partition plan and refrained from attacking Israel in 1948. They bear responsibility for their own refugee problem.
- Most Arab Palestinians fled because of flaws in their own society that weakened their ability to prevail in a war that they themselves started, not because they were expelled. Thousands of Arabs who chose to stay are today citizens of the State of Israel.
- Arab Palestinians exacerbated the refugee problem twice: once, by changing the rules of the game – calling in neighboring Arab armies, forcing badly outgunned Israelis to deport some Palestinians over the lines, then by refusing to keep a ceasefire, adding more Arab Palestinians to those who became refugees.
- The Palestinian-Arab refugee problem, including their demands for compensation and their plans to demand and implement the Right of Return, amounts to yet another strategy to destroy the State of Israel.
- Two refugee problems were created that demand redress: Arab refugees who due to their belligerence as a society, bear a significant part of the blame for their own predicament, and peaceful Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

The Scope of the Refugees Problem

Continuation of War by Other Means

“It is well known and understood that the Arabs, in demanding the return of the refugees to Palestine, mean their return as masters of the Homeland and not as slaves. With a greater clarity, they mean the liquidation of the State of Israel.”⁵¹

Egyptian Foreign Minister Muhammad Salah al-Din Al-Misri, October 1949

Turning Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz’s⁵² famous edict on its head, in the Palestinian case, the politics of the refugees is the continuation of war by other means.

Although the number of original Palestinian refugees remains in dispute, the real issue is not how many there were in 1948, but the fact that today, millions of Arabs claim to be refugees.

The cited number of original Palestinian refugees ranges from 300,000 to over one million depending on the speaker, the definitions, the data used, and ulterior motives.

When the worst of the fighting was over, Arab and Jewish sources presented similar estimates, before inflation of the numbers became politically expedient for both host Arab countries and the refugees, according to Professor Yoav Gelber. Arab sources in September 1948 put the number at 450,000; the Jews put the number at 424,000.⁵³ A September 1948 progress report from the UN mediator on Palestine⁵⁴ set the number even lower – “the exodus of more than 300,000 Arabs from their former homes in Palestine.”

Revised figures by the Israeli government and Israeli scholars based on extrapolations from demographic data prepared by the Mandate authorities for the UN in 1947 (*Survey of Palestine*) vary between 520,000 and 650,000. Yet, by 1950, UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) registered 914,000 refugees⁵⁵ and most Palestinian claims vary between 750,000 and 914,000,⁵⁶ depending on the source. In any case, simple arithmetic shows the maximum number could not exceed more than 604,000 to 650,000. In his volume *Claim of Dispossession*, Arieh Avneri places the number of refugees at 650,000 at most. On November 30, 1947 (the day the war began), the number of Arabs who lived in villages and towns in the area that subsequently became Israel (inside the future Green Line – that is, areas from which Palestinians fled or were expelled) was 809,100.⁵⁷ The first census Israel conducted in 1949 following the aftermath of the war found 160,000 Arabs still living in Israel. Therefore, the total number of Arab refugees, *including* nomads and illegal entries, could not have been more than 650,000.

The *Carta Historical Atlas* puts the number slightly lower, based solely on *permanent* Arab residents: on December 31, 1948 (at the end of the war), 1,309,000 Arabs resided within all of western Palestine – 545,000 of them were permanent residents of the West Bank and Gaza (not refugees, mostly indigenous villagers and some townspeople). In the wake of the war, 160,000 Arabs remained within the Green Line. Thus, the total number of Arabs who became refugees could not have exceeded 604,000.⁵⁸

That number represents a *maximum*. The actual number of genuine refugees may be less when one takes into account Arab immigrants who had recently arrived in Mandate Palestine and simply went back to their country of origin⁵⁹ and Christian Arabs who chose to emigrate elsewhere (see the chapter “Freedom of Religion”). Indeed, in a report to the UN General Assembly in 1950⁶⁰ the director of UNRWA noted:

“The figures for Lebanon (128,000) are confused due to the fact that many Lebanese nationals along the Palestinian frontier habitually worked most of the year on the farms or in the citrus groves of Palestine. With the advent of war they came back across the border and claimed status as refugees.”

Initial UN estimates put the number of Arab refugees at 700,000 to 730,000. Yet, by 1950 UNRWA had registered 914,000 persons as refugees.

UNRWA Director Howard Kennedy concluded in 1950:

“... fictitious names on the ration lists pertain to refugees in this area. All earlier attempts at a close census of those entitled to relief have been frustrated, but a comprehensive survey, now under way, is achieving worthwhile results in casting up names of dead people for which rations are still drawn, fraudulent claims regarding numbers of dependents (it is alleged that it is a common practice for refugees to hire children from other families at census time), and in eliminating duplications where families have two or more ration cards. The census, though stubbornly resisted, will eliminate many thousands from the lists of refugees now in receipt of rations.”

An accurate statement of the number of genuine refugees resulting from the war in Palestine is unlikely to be provided now or in the future. In fact, it is almost impossible to define closely the word ‘refugee’ as applied to the work of the Agency, without leaving certain groups of deserving people outside those accepted, and conversely, including groups who probably should not be in receipt of relief.

The director was apparently referring to criteria that included people who were newcomers who had only been in Palestine for a minimum of two years, and excluded refugees from Palestine located in countries where UNRWA did not operate.

In 1961 UNRWA Director Dr. John H. David admitted that Arab countries inflated their refugee figures in the 1950s to get more funds, and that in 1960 an estimated 150,000 UNRWA cards were forged in Jordan alone.⁶¹ One critic notes the highly irregular demographic pattern on UNRWA rosters – which declines from 15 percent (age 26-35) to 10 percent (age 36-45) to 7 percent (age 46-55) ...

then spikes to 12 percent for those age 55 and older. The critic believes the actual number of refugees is 30 percent lower than UNRWA's rosters.⁶²

Arab rulers' collective hatred and cruelty toward its Jewish citizenry

During the years 1948 to 1956, nearly 850,000 innocent, peaceful Jews, who were non-combatants, fled or were expelled from Arab countries by Arab leaders in reprisal for the establishment of the State of Israel. Most came to Israel. In short, there was a transfer of populations that caused suffering and left hundreds of thousands of penniless refugees on *both* sides.

Arab refugees were not the only victims of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In essence, the years 1947-1956 witnessed a transfer of populations similar to the transfer of populations in 1947-48 between Pakistan and India, but the *other* victims – almost 850,000 Jewish refugees who lost their homes and livelihoods in Arab countries during the first two decades after Jewish statehood - have been forgotten.⁶³ As Daniel Pipes noted:

“The Muslim Middle East ... lost its Jewish population about as thoroughly as Central and Eastern Europe had a few years earlier [in the Holocaust].”⁶⁴

In fact, an estimated 85 percent⁶⁵ of the Jewish refugees, including the poorest and most destitute members of Jewish communities in Arab countries, arrived on Israel's doorstep – 330,000 between 1948-1951 alone.⁶⁶ Yet those facts are ignored in most Middle East narratives.

Since the Babylonian exile of Jews from the Land of Israel in 587 BCE, Jews have resided in Arab lands.⁶⁷ The 1,400-year history of the Jews under Arab and Muslim rule was marked by times of prosperity and times of oppression. In some times and places,⁶⁸ individual Jews served as advisors to the ruling class and played key roles in advancing medicine, business, and culture. At the same time, Jews (and Christians) as a whole were considered *dhimmi*, a "protected" group of second-class citizens – subjected to punishing taxes, forced to live in cramped ghetto-like quarters, relegated to the lower levels of the economic and social strata, and the object of periodic pogroms.⁶⁹

During the 1930s, anti-Zionist sentiment in Arab lands was matched by pro-Nazi sentiment; in fact, the leader of Palestinian society and the head of the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) – the mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini – spent the war years in Berlin, selling Hitler on the merits of a Final Solution among Jews in the Middle East as well.⁷⁰

Indeed, first steps in that direction were taken in North Africa by the pro-Nazi Vichy French, who enacted anti-Jewish regulations. In Tunisia, some Jews were rounded up and sent to forced labor camps, and a small number were even deported to European death camps.⁷¹ In Iraq in 1941, mobs killed 180 Baghdad Jews, and injured many others in a major pogrom that caused extensive damage to private and community property.⁷² Similar attacks took place elsewhere in

other Arab countries, and November 2, 1945, the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, became the occasion for widespread rioting, murder, and destruction of synagogues and Jewish property in Aleppo, Syria, Cairo, Egypt, and Tripoli, Libya.⁷³

Anti-Jewish hostility rose significantly in the last years of the Mandate. But with the establishment of the State of Israel and the subsequent 1948 war, the nature of the attacks changed dramatically. Persecution of Jews in Arab nations became systematic and planned, with state-sponsored repression designed to oust the Jews. On May 16, 1948, two days after Israel's declaration of independence, the headline of the *New York Times* reported the dire circumstances of Jews in Arab lands: "Jews in Grave Danger in All Moslem Lands."⁷⁴ The *Times* article reported on the:

"... text of a law drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League which was intended to govern the legal status of Jewish residents of Arab League countries. It provides that beginning on an unspecified date all Jews except citizens of non-Arab states, would be considered 'members of the Jewish minority state of Palestine.' Their bank accounts would be frozen and used to finance resistance to 'Zionist ambitions in Palestine.' Jews believed to be active Zionists would be interned and their assets confiscated."

While the newspaper noted that "conditions vary in the Moslem countries," it warned of the potential scale of violence:

"It is feared, however that if a full-scale war breaks out, the repercussions will be grave for Jews all the way from Casablanca to Karachi."

Far from scare headlines, Arab governments imposed harsh measures against local Jews, stripping them of their civil rights and abridging their human rights, expropriating their property, and banishing them from civil service and other forms of employment.⁷⁵ Those moves were coupled by physical attacks, including bombings, pogroms, arrests, and executions. The scope and similarity of the attacks were indicative of an organized coordinated program by member governments of the Arab League to expel Jews from their countries.⁷⁶

Yet even *prior* to such formal attacks, as realization of a Jewish state began to take practical form, many Arab leaders viewed their Jewish citizens as hostages of a sort. Two weeks prior to the United Nations vote on the petition plan, Heykal Pasha, the Egyptian delegate to the UN, told the assembly:⁷⁷

"The proposed solution might endanger a million Jews living in the Muslim countries. Partition of Palestine might create in those countries an anti-Semitism even more difficult to root out than that of Nazism. If the UN decides to partition Palestine, it might be responsible for the massacre of a large number of Jews."

In March 1949, after the State of Israel was declared and the Arab offensive blocked, the Syrian newspaper *Al-Kifah* warned of a new role for Jews as hostages, declaring:

"If Israel should oppose the return of the Arab refugees to their homes, the Arab governments will expel the Jews living in their countries."⁷⁸

Iraq, which had one of the oldest, most prosperous, and well-integrated Jewish communities in the Arab world, launched some of the most draconian measures against its Jews. Zionism was made a capital crime. The August 1948 arrest and execution of a wealthy member of Iraq's Jewish community was accompanied by a series of other anti-Jewish measures that set the stage for a mass exodus, including the expulsion of Jews from civil service jobs. When in 1950, the authorities announced that Jews could leave the country within a year, provided they forfeited their citizenship, 95 percent of Iraq's 2,700-year-old community left. By 1951, a community of 150,000 had dwindled to only 6,000. Soon after their departure, the community's substantial assets, public and private, were frozen, leaving members of the Iraqi Jewish community both stateless and penniless.⁷⁹ On July 27, 2003, six elderly Jews from Iraq were flown into Israel on a secret flight, leaving only 29 Jews who chose to stay in Iraq.

By 1958, only a decade after Israel declared statehood, more than half of the 850,000 Jews in Arab countries had fled, including, in essence, the entire Jewish communities of Iraq, Algeria, Libya, Syria, and Yemen.⁸⁰

Although their plight has never received the attention of Arab refugees from Israel, second-generation children of the exodus from Arab lands have begun to speak of their parents' suffering, particularly those transformed from well-off middle-class families into penniless refugees. Two such offspring, among the generation now in their late 50s and 60s, broke the silence surrounding their parents' lives in the *Jerusalem Post* much the way children of Holocaust survivors who never spoke of their experiences came forward decades later and even formed support groups to share their experiences. In the August 2003 article,⁸¹ Victoria described how her family was airlifted out of Iraq in 1952:

"In Israel they took us to a maabara [transit camp]. In Baghdad we were rich. We had a big house. I had my own room. We had servants. In the transit camp, we lived in a tent, and everything was wet and muddy. My mother cried all the time.... We never talked about what happened. Even in the transit camp. ... I think they were too traumatized."

Meir from Tunis recalled:

"My father had been a jeweler. He had two stores and we lived well.... My parents hadn't wanted to leave Tunis. They had no choice. They were afraid, like all the Jews were.... We went from wealth to nothing. ... After a few years [in France] we came to Israel."

Today people like Victoria speak of a sense of secondary victimization – victimized not only by the Iraqis who expelled them, but also by the absorbing society, Israeli veterans who “put immigrants in camps and didn't want to hear our stories” and the world that “only cared about the Palestinian refugees and swept our misery under the rug.”

Today they want recognition of their suffering. Meir underscored:

“[My parents] never talked about their fears, and they never talked about how bitter and sad their lives were. But as a child, I could tell. We were refugees ... and when we came to Israel, we tried to hide how poor we were. But now I understand, and even though my parents wouldn’t talk about it, I want our story told.”

The UN and its agencies – The worst offenders

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and Jews lost their homes and their livelihoods. Yet the Jewish side of the Middle East refugee story has been purged from the narrative, and one of the worst offenders is the UN.

The UN was already aware in 1950 that the war had created two refugee problems, but it was not asked to take responsibility. In an October 1950 interim report⁸² to the UN, the director of UNRWA made a passing reference to the Jewish refugee problem, saying Israel spurned the very idea of Jewish refugees – even for 17,000 Israelis who had been uprooted in the course of the fighting in western Palestine. Israel rejected the notion that they or any other Jewish refugee become wards of the international community, and the UNRWA director offhandedly noted, “the Israel Government indicates that the idea of relief distribution is repugnant to it.” Except for those two sentences relating solely to displaced Israelis within western Palestine, the UN chose to ignore the fact that in 1950, at the time the UNRWA director was writing his report, hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab lands had flooded Israel and were living under deplorable conditions, many in tents and wooden, tin, and fabric huts.

Since then, the UN’s Middle East narrative has been distorted by its failure to even *mention* the existence of Jewish refugees in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Of 687 resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict that the UN General Assembly adopted since 1947, 101 have dealt with refugees. Yet all 101 are devoted *solely* to Arab refugees, with nary a mention of the more than three-quarters of a million Jewish refugees.

Indeed, the only UN agency that took action for the Jewish refugees was the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, which sought to expedite transfer of assets to Jews from Egypt who had already fled, and conducted quiet diplomacy to try to alleviate the plight of Jews held hostage in Arab lands, according to a report on the expulsion of Jews from Arab countries released by Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC) in June 2003. These steps by any measure were feeble compared to the UN’s *massive* support and concern for Palestinian refugees – both in terms of funding, creation of special UN frameworks for Palestinians only, and a steady stream of public resolutions that created inalienable rights for Palestinians, effectively rewriting history.

Adds Professor Irwin Cotler, an international human rights lawyer and currently serving as Canada's minister of justice, and a key member of JJAC:

“It is inconceivable and unjust for any narrative of the Middle East – be it a narrative of the peace process, be it a narrative by the United Nations, be it any juridical or historical narrative – not to include as well the truth and justice of Jewish refugees from Arab lands and their right to redress.”⁸³

If world opinion, and particularly the European community, prefers to cling to its traditional view that Palestinians are solely innocent victims of circumstances beyond their control, then both Arab refugees from western Palestine and Jewish refugees from Arab countries should be viewed as *joint victims* of the Arab war against Israel in 1947-48, and *both* deserve redress.

Israel's re-settlement of Jewish refugees from Arab countries, displaced persons from Europe and others was a Herculean endeavor, where latitude for personal choice of where to settle was limited.

The magnitude of Israel's humanitarian endeavor between 1948 and 1954 is staggering.⁸⁴ A nation of 650,000 absorbed a destitute population of 685,000 newcomers, all in the midst of and in the aftermath of a draining war. During the first four years of statehood, 51 percent of the Jewish refugees were from African and Asian countries.⁸⁵ By 1959, more than half of North African and Middle Eastern Jews had fled – most to Israel, the rest to other non-Arab countries. The influx of immigrants from Arab lands and post-Holocaust Europe doubled the population of Israel in three and a half years, and tripled it by the early 1960s.

Jewish refugees from Arab countries were not the only refugees flooding into Israel and pressuring the social services of the fledgling state. Between the fall of 1948 and the summer of 1949, 100,000 refugees from Europe – displaced persons (DPs) as they were called at the time – arrived in Israel in the wake of the Holocaust, most of them destitute. In large measure, because of Israel's acceptance of those refugees, combined with the efforts of Jewish communities elsewhere around the world, 52 refugee camps or DP centers in Europe were closed within a year's time.⁸⁶

Yet resettlement of Jewish refugees was no picnic. Conditions were stark.⁸⁷ Severe rationing of everything from food to detergent to clothing was imposed for three years, and rationing of many basic commodities continued for a full decade, from April 1949 to February 1959. Health services were severely overtaxed as a result of crowding, poor sanitation, and the prevalence of TB, trachoma, and other contagious diseases. Jewish refugees were housed in every possible shelter. That included 110,000 who moved into homes abandoned by Arabs in mixed cities and in deserted Arab villages.⁸⁸ The majority – men, women, children, the young, and the elderly – lived in tent cities and makeshift shanties (or immigrant encampments) under deplorable conditions, until they moved into wooden huts and tiny two-room cinderblock dwellings.

An overview of the absorption process in the 1950s described conditions in the immigrant encampments:

“The structure of the camps was essentially similar: families lived in small shacks of cloth, tin, or wood, no larger than 10 to 15 square meters each. Other shacks housed the basic services: kindergarten, school, infirmary, small grocery store, employment office, synagogue, etc. The living quarters were not connected to either water or electric systems. Running water was available from central faucets, but it had to be boiled before drinking. The public showers and lavatories were generally inadequate and often in disrepair. A paucity of teachers and educational resources severely hindered the attempts to provide the camp children with suitable education. Work, even relief work, was not always available.”⁸⁹

The last vestiges of these transit camps (*maabarot* in Hebrew) – 113 in all, housing a quarter of a million inhabitants in 1951 – were not dismantled until the 1960s.

Palestinians believe they have an inalienable right to decide where they are to be resettled. This has not been the case of other refugees, be they Jewish ones or others.

When people are abruptly uprooted, for the overwhelming majority, external realities (who will let them in, prospects of a job) and the ‘powers-that-be’ dictate where they begin to put their lives back together. Jews fleeing the Nazis, lucky enough to find a haven, ended up in unfamiliar, far-flung places including Shanghai and Cuba. Eight hundred Vietnamese refugees who came to the United States in 1973, for instance, settled in the vicinity of St. Cloud (pop. 8,000) in the windswept plains of rural Minnesota.⁹⁰

The Jewish refugees who fled or were expelled from Arab countries or survived the Holocaust and came to Israel were hardly coddled either. It is instructive to note how they were resettled, and the price some have paid in the short- and the long-term. Thousands of Jewish families – from educated urbanites from Central Europe to cave dwellers from the Atlas Mountains, were literally dumped⁹¹ in isolated spots throughout the country ‘right off the boat,’ where one-and-a-half-room ‘houses’ and an outhouse had been hastily erected and were told they were to become farmers. Most did. Three hundred new agricultural villages were established to resettle Jewish refugees in this manner within four years – equal to the number of settlements established during the previous 65 years (1882-1947) of Zionist endeavor. Others were resettled in what became known as ‘development towns’ in the boondocks, designed to ‘service’ clusters of rural settlements. Some to this day suffer from high unemployment, mediocre education, and other social ills.

Resettlement of such magnitude was a harsh enterprise that left little latitude for individual choice or adequate planning, and many refugees still bear the scars of those stark years. To this day, hundreds of thousands of ordinary Israelis live in what were once mass public housing complexes in cities and development towns erected in the 1950s and 1960s, substandard and poorly suited for large families. While many of these depressed neighborhoods have been rehabilitated, Israel still pays a heavy price in socioeconomic gaps, human tragedies, and ethnic tensions tied to the parent society's inability to meet all the developmental needs of the refugees from Africa and Asia. Yet, all the hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Arab countries that Israel absorbed in the first two decades of statehood have rebuilt their lives and become productive citizens, as have the 100,000 DPs who survived the Holocaust.

Since then, Israel has taken in other waves of 'unwanted' or persecuted Jews from across the globe, including one million immigrants from the former Soviet Union and 70,000 Jews from Ethiopia in the 1990s. To appreciate the scope of such a mass influx, imagine that on per capita equivalent, the United States would absorb the entire population of France.

Unlike the Palestinian-Arab refugees, who are aided each year by millions of dollars from the UN, the Israeli government shouldered the absorption of Jewish refugees into the new state in its early years through absorption budgets and international loans, donations from world Jewry, and a small amount of American foreign aid. The Palestinian refugees by contrast have chosen to remain in refugee camps, their leader stubbornly demanding that they be returned to Israel. Neither their leaders nor the international community has put pressure on Palestinians or neighboring Arab countries to resettle Arab refugees, or at least force the 1.3 million UNRWA camp dwellers⁹² to bear responsibility for their own intransigence.

Palestinian refugees who since 1950 have been fed, dressed, and educated with other people's money should be given the choice of modest assistance in resettling, or, after 55 years of refugee status, begin to bear responsibility for their decisions to remain refugees.

Some Jewish refugees who escaped from Arab nations fled to North America and Europe, where they were absorbed into Jewish communities. But the vast majority escaped to the newly established Jewish state. According to the JJAC report, Arab governments seized more than \$1 billion in communal and private property (at 1947 values) belonging to those who left – an amount that in today's dollars would exceed \$100 billion. Israel spent astronomic sums – most donated by the Jewish people – to assist Jewish refugees from Arab countries in their flight and rehabilitation in Israel.

Arab countries are guilty on three counts of causing the Arab refugee problem, and should be required to play a major role in resettling Palestinian refugees.

1. By their conduct in the war – encouraging Palestinians to move out of the way in expectation of a quick victory, they amplified the scope of the flight.
2. By their invasion of Israel – motivated by greed and the desire to inherit parts of the former Mandate, not a desire to establish a Palestinian state – they forced Israel to take extreme measures against a clear Fifth Column, sending Palestinians across the lines into other Arab nations' hands merely to survive the onslaught.
3. After the war, they refused to help Palestinians rebuild their lives – including the period of 19 years in which Egypt and Jordan controlled the Gaza Strip and the West Bank respectively.

Today, while 38 percent of the approximately four million UNRWA - registered Palestinian refugees (1950-2002) live in the West Bank and Gaza (1.5 million), the remaining 62 percent are spread out in neighboring Arab countries, a large percentage in Jordan.⁹³

Ironically, if it wanted to, the Arab world could solve the Palestinian refugee problem tomorrow, given the vast tracts of land and tremendous resources under Arab control.

Various schemes to resettle some of the original refugees in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Libya were proposed in the 1950s when the number of refugees was of manageable size. International funding was also offered. Yet all such plans were rebuffed both by Arab leaders and the refugees themselves.

The main stumbling block, according to John McCarthy, an expert on refugees associated with the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) – a Christian ministry that has assisted in the resettlement of over a million persons over the past three decades – is the Arab world's refusal to absorb Palestinian refugees: "We can [resettle] people if we have the help, just the permission of the governments. But you must remember one thing: The Arab countries don't want to take the Arabs.... [These refugees] are simply pawns."⁹⁴

After Israel took control of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and Gaza in the 1967 Six-Day War, the Civil Administration attempted gradually to close the refugee camps by offering Palestinians in Gaza plots to build houses and rehabilitate themselves, but the effort attracted few takers. Even the 4,917 families who did leave the camps in Gaza between 1967 and 1987⁹⁵ under Israeli rehabilitation plans challenged the status quo.

Even more absurd, the UN in a string of anti-Israeli resolutions condemned those efforts. One General Assembly resolution,⁹⁶ passed in 1985 – 45 years after UNRWA was established – called upon Israel to stop trying to convince refugees to leave the camps and purchase houses or plots to rehabilitate their lives in exchange for demolishing their former homes in the camps, stating:

“... measures to resettle Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip away from the homes and property from which they were displaced constitute a violation of their inalienable Right of Return ... [the General Assembly] reiterates strongly its demand that Israel desist from the removal and resettlement of Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip and from the destruction of their shelters.”

Ironically, the same so-called policy has continued, even after Palestinians were granted self-rule under the Oslo Accords with the vision of a two-state solution. Rather than expecting Palestinians to rebuild their lives under their own government, UNRWA in April 1994 chose to recognize the Palestinian Authority as a special host to the West Bank and Gaza refugees in the UNRWA camps, a move that restricts the PA from undertaking steps to accommodate their release from the camps.⁹⁷

Palestinian refugees living in neighboring countries have also been purposely left in limbo for more than 55 years, turning camps into hotbeds for violence – against both Israel and host nations.

Lebanon, for example, has taken harsh steps to prevent what the Lebanese label “implantation” of almost 400,000 UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees into Lebanese society. About 50,000 Palestinians, mostly Christians, acquired Lebanese nationality,⁹⁸ according to Dr. Abbas Shibliak, director of the Palestinian diaspora and Refugee Center during the 1950s and 1960s, yet the overwhelming majority have been marginalized.

To preserve the delicate sectarian balance that otherwise could spark another civil war between Muslims and Maronite Christians, Lebanon not only bars Palestinian refugees from acquiring citizenship, it also blocks Palestinians from opportunities that could help rebuild their lives, even as guest workers, according to the *Jerusalem Report*. The 1997 article found that:

“... as refugees rather than citizens, Palestinians are barred from over 70 professions, including medicine, law and engineering. Even to engage legally in physical labor, they need to get special work permits. ... In 1994 the government of Rafiq al-Hariri ordered the security forces to close all Palestinian clinics and pharmacies – which are illegal by definition, since Palestinians are barred from those professions.”

Iraq under Saddam Hussein had only a small number of Palestinian refugees, yet it also refused Palestinians their basic rights, keeping them in limbo as political weapons against Israel. For instance, refugees in Iraq were not allowed to own homes or cars; while some were employed in Saddam’s civil service as his “favorite stepsons,” others subsisted on meager stipends for food and clothing in exchange for Baath party membership.⁹⁹

On the other hand, Palestinians have not exactly endeared themselves to their hosts, having been a divisive and ungrateful community in all too many Middle Eastern states.

Witness, for example, the battleground they created in Lebanon, exacerbating the Lebanese Civil War. When Saddam invaded Kuwait, they cheered his aggression, leading to the eviction of almost 400,000 Palestinian guest workers from the Gulf States in 1991 when Iraq was ousted.

Ironically, Palestinian Arabs who remained in Israel after the end of the British Mandate became full citizens.

While Arab rhetoric about Palestinians' rights and 'Israeli apartheid' are rampant, Palestinian Arabs who became citizens of Israel in 1948, and even Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza when Israel was in control, have been better treated and offered more economic opportunities than those living among their own brethren in Arab countries.

Under Israeli administration, employment opportunities for Palestinians from the Territories increased dramatically. At its peak, 200,000 Palestinian workers found jobs in Israel,¹⁰⁰ with wages double that in the West Bank and Gaza. The number of university students also grew exponentially. Those employed in Israel included not only unskilled farmhands and sanitation workers, but also production line workers, auto mechanics, self-employed skilled craftsmen, and building contractors. But by 2003, the number of Palestinians employed in Israel had dropped to 20,000, due to Palestinian violence since 1987 which has been marked by disruption of work and physical attacks on Israeli employers¹⁰¹) – another case of Palestinians wearing out their welcome. (For more details, see the chapter "Human Rights.")

The Case of Jordan

The one Arab state where gross maltreatment of Palestinians was not the rule is Jordan, which offered citizenship to Palestinians not only on the East Bank (formerly called Transjordan) but also on the West Bank as part of a unification plan that Jordan instituted after illegally annexing the West Bank in 1950. Article 3 of the Jordanian citizenship law was amended to state in section b:

“Any person who was not Jewish and who had Palestinian citizenship prior to 15 May 1948 and whose ordinary residence in the period between 20 December 1939 to 16 February 1954 was in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is a Jordanian person.” [EH Transjordan's name was changed to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan when the West Bank was annexed, becoming part of the Kingdom.]¹⁰²

All Palestinians on the West Bank – villagers and city dwellers who had not been uprooted – received Jordanian citizenship in the 1950s, as did Palestinian refugees who fled to the East Bank. That move transformed Jordan demographically – tripling the population – as more than half the newcomers were refugees. A policy of integrating Palestinians into the Kingdom, giving them full civil and political rights¹⁰³ during the 19 years King Hussein controlled the West Bank, led to a *de facto* Palestinian state whose population today, even without the West Bank, is at least 70 percent Palestinian Arab. Refugees were mainstreamed into Jordanian society and to this day play a key role, particularly in economic life.

West Bankers continued to hold Jordanian citizenship even after Israel took over the West Bank until 1988 when Jordan unilaterally passed a new citizenship law that stripped West Bank residents of their citizenship,¹⁰⁴ making more than 800,000 inhabitants at the time stateless after four decades as Jordanian subjects. Thus, they joined the plight of most of the Palestinian refugees in Syria (411,119), Lebanon (391,240), Egypt (58,363), Iraq and Libya (108,910), Saudi Arabia (291,811), Kuwait (37,140), the other Gulf States (117,099), and elsewhere in the Arab world (6,149)¹⁰⁵ – kept in limbo as stateless persons, armed only with limited residency rights that Arab states regularly and arbitrarily revoke or curtail. The most well known case of such status came with the 1995 expulsion of 1,500 Palestinians from Libya after the Oslo Accords. That move left 200 families, including children, literally stranded in the middle of the desert.¹⁰⁶ However, the abridgement of Palestinians’ basic human rights in Arab lands – lack of freedom of movement; prohibitions on employment; lack of access to government services, including public education; and prohibition on property ownership, are widespread and worsening, according to Dr. Abbas Shibliak, Director of the Palestinian diaspora and Refugee Center in a monograph on *Residency Status and Civil Rights of Palestinian Refugees in Arab Countries*.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, about 1.6 million Palestinian refugees today reside in Jordan,¹⁰⁸ enjoying the privileges and protection of Jordanian citizenship. In 1996, five of 31 Jordanian cabinet posts and nine of 40 senators in the Jordanian parliament were Palestinians. Also telling is that although 258,204 Palestinians live in ten camps run by UNRWA, 81 percent of the UNRWA-registered refugees in Jordan live *outside* the camps as normal citizens, and even UNRWA admits only 2.5 percent are hardship cases, according to the U.S. Committee for Refugees.¹⁰⁹

Dr. Amnon Kartin, a Tel Aviv University geographer who has conducted demographic research on Jordan, says:

“A Palestinian refugee with initiative who lives in Jordan and wants to get ahead faces virtually no obstacles. In general, their economic situation is no worse than that of the Bedouin [who form the basis of the country’s indigenous population].”¹¹⁰

Yet Palestinians continue to claim eligibility for refugee status. And they receive refugee status from both UNRWA and the UN by virtue of a special exemption that places Palestinians beyond the limitations of the UN Refugee Convention and Protocol.¹¹¹

Although more than 40 percent of Palestinian refugees have been resettled and have rebuilt their lives, including those living in Jordan (and a portion in Lebanon) they continue to demand their right to return to Israel.

It's not just that more than 40 percent of the four million Palestinian refugees worldwide and 62 percent of all the registered refugees hosted by neighboring Arab countries¹¹² who have citizenship continue to demand the right to go to Israel; it is the international community that has supported such a scandalous habit by warping the way refugees and Palestinian refugees are tallied.

When UNRWA first began counting refugees in 1948, it had no precedent for its method. There is no precedent in treatment of refugees for UNRWA's methods of defining refugee status, adopted in 1948. Its definition differs greatly from all other refugees in the world: *Any* displaced Arab who had been *in the country* at least *two years* prior to the 1948 war was considered a refugee. No less outrageous, UNRWA considers every descendant of the original refugees to be refugees – millions of people – providing funds to perpetuate a problem, rather than solve it.

The Palestinians' refusal to get on with their lives as Jewish refugees have done, as refugees everywhere else in the world must do, has been legitimized not only by support from their Arab brethren. The behavior of international relief organizations and world leadership also continues to lend support to the Palestinians' belief that clinging to a dream of going back to Israel is acceptable. Absent is the guidance that a reality check is required or that clinging to such beliefs simply perpetuates the conflict and generates anger and hatred.

In 1948, the UN inexplicably set a cutoff date for refugee status at two years' residency in western Palestine. UNRWA's operational definition of Palestinian refugees was: "... persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict."

That definition is all the more questionable given the permeable nature of western Palestine's frontiers and the fluid quality of the residency, particularly among the urban proletariat, a portion of whom came from neighboring countries. By virtue of that definition, thousands of Arabs were granted instant nationality with a meal ticket attached. Indeed, the estimated number of Palestinians hailing from elsewhere in 1948 ranges from 100,000 to 170,300.¹¹³

Moreover, refugee status was based solely on the word of the applicant. And in fact, UNRWA admitted its figures were inflated in a 1998 *Report of the Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East* (July 1997-30 June 1998):

“UNRWA registration figures are based on information voluntarily supplied by refugees primarily for the purpose of obtaining access to Agency services and hence cannot be considered statistically valid demographic data; the number of registered refugees in the Agency's area of operations is almost certainly less than the population recorded.”¹¹⁴

Inflating figures was expedient for host countries as well, as a means of transferring social burdens onto international shoulders. Refugees remain on UNRWA rosters without any means test or other criteria used by welfare agencies elsewhere around the world, refugee status having become a claim for repatriation, not a claim of destitution.

Neither the UN nor the PLO see any contradiction between the fact that the UN granted individuals Palestinian refugee status based upon a minimum of *two years' residency* in Palestine, while the PLO speaks of Palestine as the *ancestral* home of Palestinian refugees.¹¹⁵

UNRWA's definition of refugee and its charter put no time limit on humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. Thus, a large proportion of the UN's budget has been channeled to supporting them, when countless other new refugees in the world desperately need help and want to rebuild their lives.

Only a few decades ago, Palestinians constituted less than 5 percent of the total number of global refugees. Today they account for the largest refugee group – 17 percent of some 24 million refugees in the world.¹¹⁶ The *Journal of Refugee Studies*¹¹⁷ gives a more balanced picture. It is filled with stories of uprooted people seeking to rebuild their lives elsewhere – articles on Somali and Kurdish refugees in London, Cambodian adolescents forced to cope (successfully) with social and cultural dislocation in Quebec, recipients of political asylum from Asia and Africa suffering from post-traumatic syndrome in the Netherlands, and the phenomena of 'hosting fatigue' in Tanzania and among other African nations burdened by refugees who have no agency like UNRWA to support their uninvited guests indefinitely.

More than seven million people around the world were newly uprooted in 1999 alone, some becoming refugees, most of them internally displaced persons,¹¹⁸ according to the U.S. Committee for Refugees. Yet, UNRWA – the only international organization devoted to serving one small group – consumes the lion's share of global rehabilitation resources and provides Palestinians with a host of services and benefits – from medical services and education to youth clubs – assistance that refugees elsewhere in the world are denied.

An in-depth study of UNRWA,¹¹⁹ conducted by the Center for Near East Policy Research in March 2003, reveals the gross inequality between care for Palestinians under UNRWA – an agency created solely for 3.9 million registered Palestinian refugees, and UNHCR – the United Nations High Commission for Refugees that cares for 19.9 million other refugees in the rest of the world.

The figures were taken by the Center from respective Websites of UNRWA and UNHCR:

	UNRWA	UNHCR
Number of refugees served (millions)	3.9	19.9
Budget	\$315,000,000	\$881,000,000
Number of countries/ territories where it operates	5	120
Number of offices maintained	5	277
Size of staff	23,000	5,000

UNRWA invests just over \$80 per capita in Palestinians (down from \$200 per capita 30 years ago), compared to \$44 per capita invested by UNHCR elsewhere in the world. In fact, refugees in many places, including refugees from North Korea, receive no aid whatsoever. Such discrepancies also extend to manpower, where the ratio of staff to refugees is 1 to 170 at UNRWA and 1 to 3,980 for the rest of the world's refugees.

Clearly, the plight of refugees is serious cause for concern throughout the world. "Residents of at least 17 African countries," for example, "became newly uprooted because of civil wars, armed insurgencies, communal violence, and repression," according to the *World Refugee Survey 2003*¹²⁰ released by the U.S. Committee for Refugees in May 2003. Yet, the USCR charges, "Displacement of nearly 3 million Africans [went] largely unnoticed by the rest of the world" [because] "the world focused its attention on events in other regions of the globe."

Much of that attention focuses on the Palestinians who not only grab the headlines, but also the lion's share of assistance. A USCR policy analysis for Africa found:

"A million people fled their homes last year in Burundi alone because of civil war, but the name 'Burundi' rarely if ever appeared in newspapers or on television screens. To make matters worse, many of Africa's uprooted people received little or no humanitarian assistance or protection because donor nations choose not to give adequate support to relief efforts."

Indeed, "more than one million Burundians remained uprooted, including some 375,000 refugees in neighboring countries ... and an estimated 600,000 internally displaced persons," according to statistics from the USCR at the end of 2001. The report adds: "UN humanitarian agencies appealed to international donors for \$72 million to assist Burundians during 2002, but received less than 40 percent of that amount – that is, relief in the magnitude of \$28 per capita per annum."¹²¹

Of course, those comparative figures only account for general refugee aid, excluding the massive funding received from donor nations and given to the Palestinian Authority.

It is hard to understand why the United States foots a third of UNRWA's \$293 million bill,¹²² but has not demanded any changes in Agency policy or demanded that Palestinians be put on the same footing in terms of legal status as refugees elsewhere displaced by civil war and inter-communal violence.

The UN's 1951-1967 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees never mentions descendants of refugees, notes Jurist Ruth Lapidot, a professor of international law at Hebrew University and a member of the permanent court of arbitration at The Hague.¹²³ A refugee is defined as:

“... any person who: (2) owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it, ...”

Thus, says Lapidot, not only is UNRWA's definition of Palestinians markedly broader than refugees elsewhere, Palestinians were given sweeping immunity from the universal definition:

“There is no mention in this definition of descendant. Moreover, the convention ceases to apply to a person who *inter alia* ‘has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality.’ Under this definition, the number of Palestinians qualifying for refugee status would be well below half a million persons. However, the Arab states managed to exclude the Palestinians from that definition, by introducing the following provision [i.e. clause 1D] into the convention that turned UNRWA into a ‘shelter’ from loss of refugee status:

This Convention shall not apply to persons who are at present receiving from organs or agencies of the United Nations other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protection and assistance...”

In that manner, the UN abrogates both the letter and spirit of the Convention – just as countless other UN frameworks have been compromised by anti-Israel pro-Palestinian manipulation (see the chapter “United Nations Bias”).

Perhaps a prime reason for the Palestinian immunity clause stems from the fact that Jordan granted citizenship to Palestinians in the course of annexing the West Bank in 1950. Today, 58 percent of all the registered refugees either live in Jordan (1.68 million) or on the West Bank (627,000), and the percentage was even greater in the 1950s since the birth rate in Gaza is much higher. Thus, the overwhelming majority of refugees were offered citizenship, and it is believed that most of them¹²⁴ – up to 98 percent – indeed chose to accept it in the 1950s.

But as Lapidot points out, the Convention clearly states that it ceases to apply to a person who, *inter alia*, “has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality.” Thus countless Palestinians, to this day – the eternal refugees – can remain “stateless refugees” while at the same time enjoying Jordanian citizenship.

Indeed, only 1.5 million of 3.5 million registered UNRWA refugees lack citizenship, according to a comprehensive study of the Palestinian refugee problem published by Bar-Ilan University's BESA Center in 2001.¹²⁵ Yet Palestinians claim that four million refugees have the inalienable right to Israeli citizenship under international law. Nothing is more ironic.

While opposing the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 by force, systematically engaging in terrorism that particularly targets unarmed Israel civilians, refusing to accept Israel's right to exist, Palestinians see nothing outrageous in trying to mobilize the UN's Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to claim Israel is obligated to accept four million Palestinians as citizens under the Covenant's protocols, arguing that

“... the entire group of 1948 externally displaced Palestinians would, based upon their pre-existing ‘presumptive’ status as the nationals of the State of Israel, be extended an offer of actual nationality status, or citizenship.”¹²⁶

UNRWA's agenda is equally suspect. It focuses solely on education and welfare (and protecting its own corporate interests by maintaining the status quo). The Agency has not resettled one Palestinian Arab refugee or closed one refugee camp since 1948. Its last attempt was in 1952 when it sought to invest \$200 million in a resettlement project that envisioned the creation of new houses and jobs, but the money was left untouched by potential recipients.

In 1958, six years later, former UNRWA Director Ralph Galloway charged:

“The Arab states do not want to solve the refugee problem. They wanted to keep it an open sore, as an affront to the United Nations, and as a weapon against Israel. Arab leaders do not give a damn whether Arab refugees live or die.”

Today, refugee camps that operate under UN auspices have become the center of terrorist activities. Israeli raids have uncovered countless illegal arms caches and safe houses for terrorists, bomb making and suicide-belt assembly rooms, and metal workshops where rockets are manufactured with Israeli population centers as their target.¹²⁷

UNRWA camps not only serve as weapons factories and magazines for explosives. When the IDF entered Jenin's UNRWA camp, they discovered the camp was booby-trapped from top to bottom – with bombs planted not only in cars and dumpsters, but also in houses - “inside cupboards, under sinks, [and] inside sofas.”¹²⁸ IDF soldiers further revealed that civilian refugee camp residents engaged in a host of combat roles. Women and children prepared and detonated bombs and booby-traps, as well as manning exposed positions to serve as lookouts; children served as couriers with bombs and ammunition packed into their schoolbags while ambulances ferried armed men; a mosque minaret served as a sniper post; and homes served as gun positions and safe havens for combatants, using civilians as human shields – even “hav[ing] a woman or even a child open the door to approaching Israeli soldiers, forcing them to hesitate just long enough to allow a combatant holed up in the house to shoot first.” The IDF also found posters glorifying *shahids* in the Jenin camp's UN offices.

Open-ended status

In addition to the UN's unprecedented two-year residency clause and the special immunity clause regarding citizenship, the UN's definition has made Arab refugee status an open-ended quantity for Palestinians, extending refugee status to all descendants of the 1948 refugees.

As a result, UNRWA's March 31, 2003 rosters¹²⁹ list 3,973,360 registered refugees – almost four million persons – that the Palestinians demand have the right to choose whether to accept compensation or return to Israel. It should be noted that Israel's population in 2003 totaled five million Jews and just over one million Palestinian Arabs.

Arab spokespersons label the desire to maintain a sustainable Jewish state “racist” or “apartheid” and rebuff Israel's reply that an influx of returnees would be national suicide for Israel, suggesting Israelis must “move beyond apocalyptic rhetoric.”¹³⁰

By its definition and refusal to adopt a policy that would press the Arabs to resettle the refugees, the UN has ballooned the Palestinian refugee problem into a scope that, lamentably, may be insolvable – an issue discussed in part 3.

UNRWA laconically explains in its literature that “the number of registered Palestine refugees has subsequently grown from 914,000 in 1950 to more than four million in 2002, and continues to rise due to ‘natural population growth.’”

‘Natural’ is also a questionable description. Having failed to defeat Israel on the battlefield, Palestinians have consciously and publicly adopted a policy of using the Palestinian womb as a weapon to demographically overrun Israel.¹³¹

They hold the dubious honor of the highest birthrate in the world – 7.1 children per couple in Gaza and five children in the West Bank, double that of the rest of the Arab world, while the death rate is the lowest in the Middle East.¹³² Thus, every 20 years the number of so-called refugees – automatically recognized by the UN – doubles. Outdoing their own record birthrate, Palestinians announced with unconcealed glee in July 2003 that the Arab population in the West Bank and Gaza had risen by 9 percent in the second and third year of the al-Aqsa *Intifada* (2001-2003), the highest growth rate in the world after the Negev Bedouin.¹³³ By contrast, the population of the U.S. grew by 13 percent in the past decade.¹³⁴

To a certain extent the term ‘refugee camp’ is misunderstood. UNRWA refugee camps are not tent cities, as one might assume from CNN footage of Rwanda or other refugee camps. It is true that *both* Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees lived in flimsy tents in the first years after the 1948 war, including an unusually brutal winter in 1950 when it snowed on the coastal plain. However, all tents were dismantled by 1955. Since then, refugees have dwelt in cinderblock housing units. The camps also include community services, electricity, and running water – utilities that did not exist during the 19 years of Egyptian rule and were only introduced after Israel took over Gaza in the Six-Day War.

In many ways, their housing is similar to, if not better than, the barrios and tin shantytowns that characterize poor people in many corners of the Third World. And from the standpoint of health and education, they have fared much better than the masses in many developing nations, including Arab countries.

The world is not a perfect place. Over the last century, about 135 million refugees were created.¹³⁵ Only the Palestinians have retained their refugee status for such a length of time,¹³⁶ turning their situation and their growing numbers into a weapon to attack Israel.

In 1922, in the aftermath of a territorial war between Greece and Turkey, the League of Nations called for an exchange of nationals and finalization of the border between the two sides. In the course of the settlement, two million Greeks who had been Turkish citizens were relocated to Greece, and 500,000 Turks who had been Greek citizens were relocated to Turkey. Similar rivalries in Cyprus that led to hostilities between the two ethnic groups culminated in a population transfer into separate Greek and Turkish sectors.

In 1945, in the aftermath of World War II, a staggering 70 million displaced persons existed, but not one DP is left today, for all have rebuilt their lives to one degree or another. Ten million to 15 million ethnic Germans who were expelled from Poland, Russia, and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia immediately after the war were deported to a devastated postwar Germany totally unprepared to help them rebuild their lives. They received neither restitution for the expropriation of their property nor apologies. Some two million died in the process.

In 1947, at the same time as it was disengaging from Palestine, Great Britain was also withdrawing from India, leading to the birth of the independent states of Pakistan and India. The two new nations agreed to a massive transfer of populations of Hindus from Pakistan to India and Muslims from India to Pakistan to defuse ethnic and religious tensions. While Kashmir remains disputed territory, both states granted citizenship to their respective refugees.

The Arab world doggedly insists that UN Resolution 194 *requires* Israel to return Palestinian refugees to Israel.

Palestinians like to quote two UN Resolutions. They claim that 242 (adopted in 1967), which speaks of “a just settlement of the refugee problem” relates solely to Palestinians, and that 194 (adopted in 1949) *demand*s “return of refugees.” Those false claims not only warp the resolutions’ intent, actual wording, and legal standing: they ignore the fact that Resolution 194 stipulates that “Governments and authorities concerned” will be involved in helping to find a solution to the refugee problem (not just Palestinian refugees); further, the resolution specifically states that the recommendation applies only to those who “wish to ... live in peace with their neighbors.” Considering their record, Palestinians hardly qualify.

Lastly, while the UN never related to Jewish refugees in any separate manner in 1950 or subsequently – in essence, ignoring their existence, by 1968 it had become clear that the Arab refugees had been turned into a political weapon. The late Arthur Goldberg, who at the time of the drafting of Resolution 242 was U.S. ambassador to the UN, stated¹³⁷ in a 1988 article that there were attempts by the Arabs' patron – the Soviet Union – to mobilize the wording of 242 as an opportunity to narrow the 1948 refugee problem to Arabs by speaking of 'Palestinian refugees' not simply 'refugees.' The Soviet ploy, however, was rebuffed. The wording adopted "affirms *further* the necessity ... (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem" – not only the Palestinian/Arab refugee problem. Drafting of 242 was an exceedingly lengthy procedure that took months and discussion of every 'if, and, or but.' The omission was not a matter of unintentionally sloppy wording (see the chapter "UN Resolutions").

Ironically, the Arab states have come to embrace Resolution 194 five decades later as if it were the Holy Grail. It is ironic because they voted *against* the resolution in 1949 precisely because it did not establish a Right of Return, because it constituted *de facto* recognition of Israel and because it called on "Governments or authorities responsible" to solve the refugee problem – i.e., governments in the *plural*, not just Israel.

Palestinians have the *chutzpah* to claim they meet the prerequisite that they are "refugees wishing to return to their homes and [willing to] live at peace with their neighbors."

Israeli historian Benny Morris eloquently expressed the fact that the Palestinians have clearly and systematically demonstrated their ineligibility, noting their dismal record:¹³⁸

"... The Palestinian and pan-Arab rout of 1948, the nakba or 'catastrophe' and the continuous defeats that Israel has since inflicted on the Arab world ... are seen by most Palestinians (and probably by most Arabs and Muslims) as a basic violation or disruption of the 'cosmic order,' something humiliating and unfathomable."

Adds Morris:

"... decades of Palestinian guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and deception had persuaded the Israeli leaders that they could take nothing on trust, and that the Palestinian leadership would have to demonstrate a willingness and an ability, over an extended period of time, to honor agreements and to curb their killers."

In A Nutshell

- In 1945, after World War II there were 70 million displaced persons, including 10 to 15 million ethnic Germans who were expelled from Eastern Europe. All have resettled and rebuilt their lives. Only in the Arab world – (among both the Arab nations and the Palestinians) – has the Palestinian refugee issue been allowed to fester and grow, to be used as a weapon against Israel.
- The concentration of international aid for Palestinian refugees discriminates against other refugees around the world who truly want to be rehabilitated and get on with their lives.
- The United Nations is one of the worst offenders in expunging the existence of a second refugee problem beside the Palestinians – the Jewish one, from the historic narrative of the Middle East.
- Solving the Jewish refugee problem by resettling 650,000 Jews from Arab countries in Israel was a major endeavor that involved much suffering and has left a lot of scars.
- UNRWA's special criteria for refugee status has ballooned the scope, and perpetuated the problem, rather than solving it.
- The international community pays the bill for Palestinians' refusal to settle the conflict and insistence on the Right of Return, squandering resources at the expense of other innocent refugees throughout the world.

Arab Responsibility and Solutions

Myths and Facts

The Palestinian devotion to the Right of Return stems from a desire to see the end of Israel by 'demographic conquest.' And the creation of a Palestinian mini-state on the West Bank offers little likelihood of a permanent peace. One reasonable solution lies in the resettlement of Palestinian refugees elsewhere in the vast territory of the Middle East.

While nothing is easy in the Middle East, attempts to solve the refugee problem must be based on realistic assessments. There are numerous barriers along the road, among them psychological, sociological, political, and economic ones, which need to be recognized as food for thought by policy-makers and others concerned with the refugee issue.

It is clear that demographically, Palestinians have painted themselves into a corner by turning themselves into a demographic time bomb in order to pursue a pipe dream. Refugees will have to give up the dream of returning to Israel and get on with their lives. But that is not all. For the foreseeable future, a Right of Return to the West Bank for four to five million refugees is economically unsustainable – a recipe for more Palestinian grief and more conflict with Israel – not less. For real peace to be achieved, a viable resettlement plan – if there will ever be any Palestinian takers – must be global in scope. It means the Arab states directly involved in the wars that caused the creation of the Arab refugee problem must be part of the solution.

Barrier 1: The Palestinians cling to and promulgate the myth of “ownership”

The myth says that 94 percent of the land of Palestine between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea belonged to the Palestinian Arabs. Historically and politically the claim is baseless, and the Palestinians' demands for compensation are of such magnitude – from billions to trillions of dollars – that serious discussion about it is unrealistic.

Palestinians repeat a mantra: If Zionist settlers bought 6 percent of Palestinian real estate (a genuine statistic) the rest of Palestine – about 94 percent – must have been Arab land.¹³⁹ This propaganda, that the Jews robbed the Palestinians of their land in 1948, grossly distorts reality. Most of the land belonged neither to Jews *nor* to Arabs. It was land in the public domain similar to government-controlled public land in the United States and Crown lands in England or Jordan. Public land was inherited by the British from the Ottoman Empire and upon independence was rightly inherited from the British Mandate by the State of Israel.

The land tenure system, dating from Ottoman times, had severely limited private ownership. Most land (65 percent) was *muri* – land owned by the Emir that became public land under the Mandate.

The country was denuded and underdeveloped.¹⁴⁰ “Half of the land area of Palestine was not owned by anyone and was not registered [in anyone’s name],”¹⁴¹ writes Professor Kenneth Stein, an American scholar from Emory University who for the past 25 years has studied land policy in Palestine under the Ottoman Turks and the British Mandate.

Stein says that Palestinian villagers were, for the most part, landless peasants who lost their holdings due to the avarice of their own people – and the land-holding elites: “Arab moneylenders, land agents and land brokers relentlessly pillaged the peasantry prior to modern Zionism advent in Palestine.”

For historical reasons, the land tenure system led to concentration of land held in the hands of *effendis*¹⁴², who during the Ottoman and Mandate periods “showed little or no sense of social obligation to assist in the amelioration of the [Palestinian] peasants’ economic condition.”¹⁴³ The villagers’ distress emanated from a moribund feudal system of common landholdings that were rotated among farmers and depleted the soil. A tradition of dividing up so-called private land among *effendi* offspring created uneconomic al farming units. These practices, coupled with natural disasters such as periodic droughts, plagues of locusts and other scourges left rural Palestinians destitute and landless. Many lost their collective and private holdings because of their debts or because they had sold their land for cash¹⁴⁴ well before they were supposedly dispossessed by the Zionists.

“[Arab] Landowners have sold substantial pieces of land at a figure far above the price it could have fetched before the War. In the early days, it is true, much of the selling was done by Arab owners domiciled in Syria; but in recent transactions mainly Palestinian Arabs have been concerned, and those transactions have been considerable.”

From the Palestine Royal Commission report presented by the [British] Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty July, 1937.

Those conditions were exacerbated by the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt against Zionist settlement and British authorities, which decimated local Arab leadership as “... traditional Palestinian Arab communal structure and authority splintered and bonds between social classes fragmented.”¹⁴⁵

Despite these internal weaknesses, Palestinian Arabs driven by blind hate embarked on a rampage of violence – the 1948 war – against what Stein labels “a demographically inferior but institutionally and organizationally superior Jewish community,”¹⁴⁶ that had catastrophic results for both sides.

Not one Arab speaks of Arab countries recognizing their complicity in creating the refugee problem or believes they should bear the burden of resettling the Arab refugees.

To this day the contribution of the wealthy Arab states – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Gulf Emirates – is a mere 2.2 percent of UNRWA's budget.¹⁴⁷ The Arabs continue to see the refugee problem as a one-way street, though two refugee populations deserving equal treatment were created due to Arab aggression.

A recent study by Justice for Jews found that the assets of former Jewish communities confiscated by Arab governments are estimated at \$100 billion at today's valuations.

Still, Arabs reject a tradeoff between Jewish assets and Palestinian assets. "There is no linkage here. Israel has to negotiate directly with Lebanon, Morocco and Egypt,"¹⁴⁸ said Daoud Baraket, Palestinian coordinator for Refugee Negotiations in 1999. That has not prevented Palestinian spokespersons from using reparations paid by Germany to victims of Nazism as a yardstick or precedent for Palestinians – an idea Israeli officials find "morally, politically and legally repugnant."¹⁴⁹

Palestinians in Israel and around the world mark May 15 (the day the State of Israel came into existence) as a day of mourning – the *Naqba*, the catastrophe/disaster. This perception, says Professor Shlomo Avineri, symbolizes Palestinians' inability to come to terms with Israel's right to exist:

"Whoever wishes to be attentive to the Palestinians' pain must see things in their proper political and moral contexts. [Naqba¹⁵⁰] is a neutral term, as if one were discussing a natural disaster. But what happened to the Palestinians in 1948 was the result of a political decision on their part, and political decisions have consequences."

Palestinians' inability to recognize their own complicity, argues Avineri, indicates their failure to recognize the legitimacy of the Jewish state to this day.

"... We should say it openly and forthrightly: The Palestinians who mourn on May 15th do not believe that their decision to prevent the carrying out of the partition of the Land of Israel was either incorrect or immoral. What they regret is that they lost that war, not that they began it... The fact is that even today Palestinians refuse to accept that we are talking about rights against rights; from their standpoint we are talking about rights against injustice. This is the basis of the insistence on the right of return. The tragedy is that this viewpoint fundamentally prevents compromise."

Barrier 2: Palestinian leaders don't want the refugees resettled

Palestinian leaders still dream of being repatriated to Israel and expect the international community to pay the bill. The time has come for the tail to stop wagging the dog.

In 1999, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat told an Arab League meeting that the Palestinians' "right to return to their homeland is our conviction and one which we will never compromise."¹⁵¹ Yet the assumption that Palestinians suffer solely from bad leadership is too simplistic. For the Palestinians, the Right of Return is not a bargaining point. It is an entrenched principle, a matter of broad consensus.

Tel Aviv University geographer Dr. Amnon Kartin says Arab and Turkish experts who studied Palestinian peasants in Jordan – the Arab country where Palestinians have been best received and are most integrated – found the demand was "terrestrial," not something that can be "bought off with money"... assuming the necessary funds could be raised:

"The whole existence of the refugees in Jordan is summed up in a desire to go home. That is apparent in their conversations with their children and from their glorification of the past. It runs like a thread through their literature and their discourse.... It's not just a manipulation."¹⁵²

This insight reflects countless interviews with refugees. For instance, one 67-year-old refugee from Jaffa living in the Balata camp outside Nablus in PA-controlled territory explained:

"It is a sacred principle. I have lived in many countries and everywhere I went I was treated as a refugee. Here too in Balata. ... The whole peace process was a deception and a bluff. What do we get out of it if I can't go back to Jaffa? ... Even if I will have enough money to buy half of Nablus, that would still not solve the problem. Even if I had a million dollars, I would still be treated as a refugee. What good will money do me? ... The main thing is to return to Jaffa."¹⁵³

Similar sentiments were expressed by his 25-year-old son, an educated person who is employed as a Palestinian police officer, who studied in Iraq and has never been to Jaffa. He is the kind of refugee one would expect might be more realistic about a return:

"Who will compensate me and my family for all the suffering we went through? Financial compensation cannot replace the Right of Return. I prefer to live in a tent in Jaffa than to stay here. The main thing is to go back to where I belong."

Native Jordanians (i.e., the Bedouin who made up the indigenous population of Transjordan) also support that demand, believing Palestinian co-citizens who have become the majority should return to Palestine – by that they mean western Palestine, a demand that is echoed among the Lebanese and citizens of other neighboring countries who also live with Palestinians.

Palestinians concentrate their energies on collecting evidence of assets inside Israel, both real or imaginary. Palestinian think tanks focus on devising detailed plans by which Israel could absorb four million refugees. In a special report on “Palestinian Thoughts on the ‘Right of Return,’”¹⁵⁴ the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) found three models – all of which lead to “the end of Israel’s existence as a Zionist state with a Jewish majority.” One model argues that most refugees came from rural areas in the Galilee and the Negev, and that four million Palestinian returnees could easily fit in among existing Israeli moshav and kibbutz farm settlements.

In one of more than four dozen papers he has written on the “Right of Return,” Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, a former member of Palestine National Council, founder of the Palestine Land Society and a key researcher on refugee affairs, matter-of-factly writes:

“Demographic analysis of Israel today shows that the concentration of Jews today is largely in and around pre-1948 Jewish land and that Palestinian land is still largely empty.... Apart from a few urban centers (mostly Palestinian towns originally) in which urban Jews live, only 154,000 rural Jews control and exploit this vast Palestinian land. Contrary to Israeli claims, the return of the refugees will not cause mass dislocation of Jewish immigrants, although they have no right to seize Palestinian property in the first place. The return, however, may initiate voluntary relocation of some of the 154,000 rural Jews.”¹⁵⁵

Such plans would flood Israel with an additional four million Palestinians in a nation whose population totals about five million Jews and one million Arabs, and would also voluntarily liquidate 90 percent of the kibbutz and moshav settlements in the country. Such a plan would quickly turn the Galilee and the Negev into *de facto* Arab territories and make Israel a bi-national state. With the high Palestinian birth rate, an Arab majority within a few short years could simply vote Israel out of existence.

Barrier 3: Arab Israelis – are they settled refugees – or?

Many Arab Israeli citizens increasingly bring up their own feasibility studies for the Right of Return that are as sweeping [and unrealistic] as the studies done in Gaza and the West Bank.

In 1967, Israel adopted an ‘open border’ policy that effectively erased the Green Line between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. Israel also initiated an ‘open bridge policy’ that allowed Arabs – mainly Palestinians living in Jordan and the Gulf States - to visit the West Bank and Israel under a “Summer Visit” program. The assumption behind both policies was that interaction between Israeli Jews and Arabs might actually push forward the prospects for peace. It was assumed that when visiting Arabs saw Israel and the relatively well-paying jobs Arab residents from the West Bank and Gaza held in Israel, anti-Zionist feelings would be undermined. Similarly, Israel expected that the policy encouraging closer relations between Arabs from the territories and Israeli Palestinian Arabs would moderate the attitudes of their Arab neighbors. Those Palestinians who remained

in Israel in 1948 became full citizens of Israel and enjoyed far better educational and economic opportunities, as well as the benefits of democracy.

Ironically, the open-door policies backfired, as the contact radicalized Israeli Arabs, strengthening their identity as Palestinians and their intolerance of their minority status. Today¹⁵⁶ few Israeli Arabs identify themselves as part Israeli; rather they see themselves as Palestinians in solidarity with their Arab comrades on the West Bank, in Gaza and elsewhere.

Their hostility towards Israel as a Jewish state has grown, as has their demand for an internal Right of Return and the right to separate from the Jewish state culturally ... and ultimately politically.¹⁵⁷

Mohammed Dahla is a prominent and prosperous Arab lawyer from Nazareth who has publicly called for Palestinian autonomy in the Galilee and most of the Negev, where Bedouin have an 8 percent annual birth rate.¹⁵⁸ Urbane and well acquainted with Western culture, Dahla studied law at the Hebrew University, served as the first Arab law clerk for Israel's Supreme Court and was the first Arab lawyer in Israel's Civil Liberties Union. He is the kind of person one might expect to be a moderate. Yet in an in-depth profile in *Haaretz*,¹⁵⁹ Dahla's antipathy toward Israel and rejection of Israel as a Jewish state was deep and profound, reflecting the Arabs' inability to accept the very idea of minority status for Arabs *anywhere* in the Middle East, even in the .01 percent of the Middle East used by a Jewish state. Indicative of this mindset, Dahla told *Haaretz*:

“... I know that, in fact, we are not a minority. The whole idea of a minority is foreign to Islam. It is appropriate to Judaism but foreign to Islam. When you look around you see that we are really not a minority: that in this country there is a majority that is actually a minority and a minority that is actually a majority.”

Regarding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Dahla said:

“The solution I prefer is one democratic state for the two peoples.¹⁶⁰ But if the binational direction is not followed, then obviously a shrunken and punctured and fragmented Palestinian state that doesn't even have its own airspace will not be enough. It won't be a state, it will be a joke. Therefore, if the two-state solution continues to be insisted on, autonomy in Galilee will definitely be on the agenda. And that autonomy will have to be not only cultural but territorial as well. With policing powers and effective control of the land and of the natural resources. Three autonomous areas of this kind will have to be created: in Galilee, in the Triangle¹⁶¹ and in the Negev. Palestinians living in Lod or Ramla or Jaffa will have to be given personal autonomy that will have an associative relationship to the three Palestinian cantons in the State of Israel.”

Reflecting the words of Rima Tarazi, (cited in Part I of this chapter on refugees) Dahla expressed a similar monolithic ‘my-rights vs. your-sins view’ that leaves no room for accommodation:

“...one must understand that there is no balance of rights here. There is no balance of our right v. your right. And that is because at the point of departure, the Jews had neither legal right, nor historical right, nor religious right. The only right they had was the right of distress. But the right of distress cannot justify 78 percent [of Mandatory Palestine becoming Israel]. It cannot justify the fact that the guests became the masters.”

Of course, Dahla is not the only prominent Israeli Arab to express such positions. Raaouda Atallah, head of the Arab Cultural Association in Nazareth and sister of Azmi Bashara a Member of Israeli Knesset - the Israeli parliament of the State of Israel, has initiated a “back-to-your-roots” program. Field trips to sites where their former homes once were are designed to build a movement among Israeli Arabs who were uprooted in the 1948 war.

What Atallah and others expect from the movement is a growing demand among Israeli Arabs for the Right of Return to their original towns and villages, for those who were uprooted from their homes in the course of the 1948 war and resettled elsewhere in Israel. Of course, over the past 55 years the land and urban neighborhoods have become Jewish cities, towns and villages.

Another Right of Return advocacy group estimates 250,000 Israeli Arabs should be recognized as Palestinian refugees, according to attorney Wakim Wakim, secretary of the National Council for the Defense of the Rights of Displaced Persons in Israel. In an interview with the dovish Hebrew daily *Haaretz* in July 2001, he said:

“We demand unequivocally to return to our villages. We insist on our right to realize the right of return. We will not agree to accept compensation. Any agreement that is signed between the PA and Israel that disavows our right of return to our villages will not be binding on us, and is null and void.”¹⁶²

Such attitudes are widespread. percentage of Israeli Arabs willing to identify themselves as ‘Israeli Arabs’ [e.g. rather than Palestinian Arabs/Palestinian, that is – applying the term ‘Israeli’ solely to ‘Jews’] has dropped from 63 percent in 1995 to 33 percent in 1999, according to a survey of attitudes of Israeli Arabs towards Israel conducted by Haifa University sociologist Sammy Smouha. The percentage of those rejecting Israel’s right to exist as a state rose from 6.8 percent in 1995 to 15.6 percent in 2001; among Negev Bedouin the 2001 survey found a staggering 42.5 percent deny Israel’s right to exist. The percentage of Israeli Arabs rejecting Israeli’s right to exist as a *Jewish-Zionist* state rose from 35.3 percent in 1995 to 46.1 percent in 2001.¹⁶³ In 2000, a poll published by the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot*¹⁶⁴ showed 66 percent of Israeli Arabs asserting they would support the Palestinians in any confrontation with Israel, and only 13 percent would support their own country.

Palestinians inside and outside Israel consider Israeli resistance to the Right of Return and the loss of Jewish hegemony illegitimate and racist concerns. Meanwhile, Arab nations for decades have refused to naturalize Palestinians who live in their countries, and do not allow children to take on their mother's nationality if the father is a stateless Palestinian.¹⁶⁵

Although Jordanian law specifically bars Jews from becoming citizens (and makes selling land to Jews a capital offense), pro-Palestinian UN committees have no qualms about charging Israel, not Jordan, with “institutional discrimination.” A so-called investigation in 1998 suggests Israel violates the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, and charges Israel with discrimination against its non-Jewish citizens, calling for a review of “re-entry and family unification policies for Palestinians” – a code phrase for the “Right of Return.”

Between the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and 2001, 23,000 Palestinians from the West Bank who married Israeli Arabs (an estimated 140,000 persons, including dependents) were granted permanent residency status or citizenship in Israel almost automatically.¹⁶⁶ The Citizenship Law was amended in July 2003, after statistical analysis conducted by the Ministry of Interior revealed Israel's humanitarian gesture was being systematically exploited on a large scale to create a “through the back door” *de facto* “Right of Return.” In addition to the demographic issue, serious security issues also had to be addressed.

Since the outbreak of the al-Aqsa *Intifada*, Israeli security services uncovered 20 cases in which former West Bank residents, permitted to live in Israel with their Israeli Arab spouses, took advantage of their Israeli identity papers and freedom of movement to help carry out terrorist attacks.¹⁶⁷

In response, Israel plugged loopholes by curtailing the number of such couples who could establish residency inside the Green Line to exceptional cases and applicants who identify with the Jewish state. After all, Israeli officials reasoned, why allow an unchecked flow of Palestinian families into the Jewish state when a political entity already is earmarked for Arabs? Unless, of course, the purpose of that flow is to undermine the 80-20 percent balance between Jews and Arabs in Israel. The result is a vitriolic media campaign to smear Israel as racist and apartheid.

Defending the law, Ruth Gabizon, a Hebrew University law professor, wrote in the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot* in August 2003:

“Anyone who wants a stable solution of ‘two states for the two Peoples’ can't demand recognition of the right of Palestinians to family unification inside Israel. In principle, Palestinian families should rightly unify in their own state, and Jews be unified in theirs. This principle will assist in stabilizing self-determination for both Peoples and curtail the danger of a process that will lead to civil war or an irritant in both of the above-mentioned states. Stabilization of this nature, in and of itself, will assist in safeguarding the rights of the

individual and the collective of both Peoples and dealing with requests for family unification on humanitarian and personal foundations, as it should be.”

Keeping Israel a Jewish state is, in and of itself, a *legitimate* goal and value, added Gabizon. It is not something that needs to be carried out solely under the umbrella of security concerns.

The need for a Jewish state where Jews can protect themselves and develop their own national life and culture is one borne out by history. Responsibility for maintaining Israel’s character as a Jewish state, she says, naturally entails control over the nature of immigration. “Along side the imperative to strictly safeguard the rights of minorities is the imperative to safeguard that minority rights do not include the right to undermine the ongoing existence of the Jewish nation-state itself,” wrote Gabizon.

What does a Jewish state mean, and how can Israel be both democratic and a Jewish state? Part of the answer rests on the dominance of Jewish-Hebrew culture, a milieu reflected in a host of domains, from Hebrew as the dominant national language¹⁶⁸ and vocabulary for artistic expression to Jewish state symbols and the weekly day of rest.

In the political sense, Jewish self-determination rests on an uncontested Jewish majority, although Israel’s Arab ethnic minority enjoys equal rights as citizens, including the right to form political parties and representation in the Israeli Knesset. But by virtue of demographics, Jews – a pluralistic electorate that ranges from ultra-Orthodox to ultra-secular, from hawks to doves and from very diverse origins and racial stock, and even sexual orientation – are responsible for their own destiny by virtue of the coalition governments they establish.

All nations have criteria and quotas for judging candidates applying for immigration. Those criteria reflect their societies’ preferences and priorities, including the beliefs and origins of the applicants. Israel is no different.

Israel’s situation is complex, given the Arab-Israeli conflict and the abiding aspiration of most of the Arab world to eliminate Israel. In countless documents, Palestinians fallaciously charge that Israel’s laws are contrary to international law.¹⁶⁹

Those laws include Israel’s famous Law of Return, which opens Israel’s gates to virtually any Jew who wishes to settle in Israel and grants him/her immediate citizenship. Palestinians, however, claim that such an immigration policy welcoming Jews as a priority to sustain the Jewish nature of the state is racist. Such attacks on the Law of Return are another weapon in the Arab arsenal designed to demonize Israel and whittle down the Jewish character of the State.

The Law of Return is not racist; it reflects the failure of world to grant asylum to Jews for millennia prior to the Holocaust, and certainly during and afterward.¹⁷⁰ Sustaining a Jewish state ensures that Jews under duress anywhere in the world will always have a safe haven.¹⁷¹ In terms of overall diversity, Israel has opened its doors to hundreds of thousands of immigrants who would never qualify for

visas to the most liberal Western nations. They include the indigent, the sick, the elderly and entire communities of people with poor occupational skills, little education and no money.

Kenneth Stein, the Emory University scholar, writes about Arab tactics and their insistence on the Right of Return:

“Lacking a military option at present, Palestinian refugee return can be the demographic means to make Israel a minority Jewish enclave or canton, established eventually in a majority Arab state. Any door opened and not closed with finality to refugee claims will, through attrition, time, and natural population increase, compromise Israel's demographic majority.”¹⁷²

Palestinian talk of a two-state solution actually means the demise of Israel as a Jewish state and the creation of what the PLO euphemistically calls ‘a democratic and secular state.’

Such a de-Judaized state (Israel) would coexist with a new Palestinian state on the West Bank (without Jews), and with Jordan – which is a Palestinian state in everything but name, where over 70 percent of the population is Palestinian. Such a scenario hardly accepts Israel's right to exist.¹⁷³

Support for the Right of Return is an article of faith, not a bargaining chip, supported at all levels of Palestinian society.¹⁷⁴ It enjoys support from key politicians such as Yasser Arafat, Abu Mazen, and Daoud Barakat (a senior Palestinian official in PA refugee affairs), academic Arab diaspora intellectuals (the late Columbia University English and comparative literature Professor Edward Said) and the poorest refugees and villagers.

Israeli opposition to the Right of Return also garners virtually universal support from the Right-wing Greater Israel movement to New-Left historian Benny Morris and Danny Seidermann, an Israeli lawyer and Palestinian rights activist. Concerning the flight and expulsion of Palestinians and his opposition to their return. Seidermann put it bluntly “It was a necessary evil. There is no such thing as a vegetarian national liberation.”¹⁷⁵ Thus, there appears to be an unbridgeable chasm.

Ironically, the Oslo Accords and all that came afterwards nurtured and amplified expectations among rank-and-file refugees for the Return, and hardened the position of the Palestinian Authority. It began with the actual return of the PLO leadership and their cronies (some 40,000 persons) and was followed by a steady stream of declarations and reassurances since 1993 – first in Arabic and since 2000, in English – that the Right of Return is a hallowed principle without which there will be no peace. It was coupled with the seriousness of the feasibility studies of “Return,” launched and vaunted by the PA as if it is a realistic option.

Israeli Col. (Reserve) Dr. Itzhak Ravid, a research fellow at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya's Institute for Policy and Strategy, adds another reason for the hardening of the Palestinian position¹⁷⁶ vis-à-vis the Right of Return: a growing sense among Palestinian leaders that a Palestinian state was already taken for granted, and if so, there is no need to pay for it in the currency of concession on the Right of Return.¹⁷⁷

The unshakable support of the United Nations and the European Union for the Palestinians work to distance peace, as have declarations expressing an American commitment to creation of a Palestinian state by the year 2005.

Designed to serve as a carrot to entice Palestinians to stop the violence and adopt a more conciliatory stance to bring peace, the Road Map has ironically had the *opposite* effect: it is working in reverse, stiffening Palestinian demands all the more.

Barrier 4: Palestinians maintain the world's highest birthrate and the lowest death rate in the Middle East.

The Arab world – a region plagued by mammoth problems – has succeeded in lowering its fertility rate significantly. Palestinians, on the other hand, in addition to mobilizing their children as combatants to gain the sympathy of the world and vilify Israel, consciously turned the 'Palestinian womb' into a demographic weapon, regardless of its cost to Palestinian society.

UN data show that fertility rates in many Arab countries have declined significantly – from 6.2 children per couple in 1980 to 3.5 in 1998.

That still ranks above the world average of 2.7 children per family, but it is an impressive achievement.¹⁷⁸ The Palestinian birthrate, however, has skyrocketed: 7.1 children per couple in Gaza and five children per couple in the West Bank.

The reasons? First, the death rate (based on indices such as ratios of infant mortality, death of women in pregnancy and childbirth, and longevity) ranks as the lowest in the Middle East, almost reaching Western levels. Second, Palestinians have turned the womb into a political weapon, as they seek to drown Israel demographically and force it out of the West Bank and Gaza. But while such behavior threatens Israel demographically, it threatens Palestinian society's social and economic fabric.

The unprecedented Palestinian birthrate stymies any chance of economic improvement among Palestinians, according to Dr. Ravid's study of the demographics of the refugee problem, *The Demographic Revolution*.¹⁷⁹ Most economic growth in the Palestinian Authority is channeled into housing instead of being used to increase productivity or otherwise bolster the economy. Families cannot support the children they bring into the world, and as a result, they expect the international community to come to their rescue.

At the same time, Palestinians expect Israel to accept 'responsibility' for an open-ended population of 1948 refugees including all of their offspring – a number that doubles every 20 years.

Because the budget of UNRWA remains much the same, the level of health, education and welfare the UN can provide has dropped, further deteriorating the refugees' circumstances. According to UNRWA Director Peter Hansen,

"In the past 30 years, there was a gradual decline in the amount of money we can allocate for each refugee," said Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA). "We went down from an allocation of \$200 a year per refugee to less than \$70 per refugee today. The reason is not that we receive less donations, it is due to the demography of the refugee problem. The increase in numbers makes it very difficult for us to meet the expenses."¹⁸⁰

Dr. Ravid agrees:

"This demographic picture shows that the conflict will be perpetuated not because of the policy perused by this or that leader, but rather because of the demography."

The worse off the Palestinians are, the more fervently they dream that 'returning home' will be viewed as a magic bullet that will solve all their problems. In the meantime, their anger and frustration is vented toward Israel. On the other hand, economic improvement does not seem to improve the prospects of peace ... and, ironically, may work in reverse.¹⁸¹

Economics stagnation and the fervent belief that 'returning home' will be the magic bullet to solve their problems, make it more likely it is that the region will be threatened by instability.

In the meantime, Palestinian anger and frustration is vented away from their leadership and toward Israel. Yet economic improvement alone almost certainly will not improve the prospects of peace ... and may work in reverse.

Barrier 5: A Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza is unsustainable.

Could a Palestinian state be transformed into a Singapore or Hong Kong of the Middle East? The facts suggest that such assumptions are based in pure fantasy. Regardless of the Jewish settler issue, a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza appears to be unsustainable and is a recipe for ongoing conflict because Palestinians will seek to encroach on their richer neighbors in Israel.

Any expectations that the conflict will ease if the Israelis end their border closures, which prevent Palestinians from working jobs in Israel where wages are double, are mistaken and misplaced. The primary economic woes of the Palestinians are not caused by Israeli closures, but by internal Palestinian structural and societal problems, particularly runaway population growth.

Writes Ravid:

“There is no reason to expect a steady rise of the number of workers in Israel in proportion to the growth of the population. With the decline of the agriculture sector [i.e., due to Palestinians channeling limited water resources to provide drinking water for runaway population growth in the Gaza Strip] and no private investments, work opportunities cannot compete with 5 percent (the West Bank) or 6 percent (Gaza) annual growth of the labor force. Keeping pace with this surge would have been impossible even for highly developed economies.”¹⁸²

Instead, Palestinians must integrate their economy into the Arab world, not seek to piggyback their development on Israel’s economy, according to Shlomo Avineri, the Hebrew University social scientist. Why? Because Israel’s GDP is 20 times that of the Palestinians and is equal to half the GDP of the entire Middle East.

Because the conflict has been between two ethnic entities, it cannot be solved by “the allure of economic self-interest,” Avineri wrote in the *Jerusalem Post* while serving as a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Fellowship for Peace in 2000.¹⁸³

The gross imbalance between the two economies is also a sure recipe for strife – not peace. Consequently, Avneri said, it is imperative that Palestinian development be based on self-reliance with Arabs assisting their Arab brethren:

“A common Israeli-Palestinian economic space cannot be based on equal horizontal cooperation, but only on a vertical hierarchal relationship, which, at best, would make the Palestinian state a virtual Bantustan. ... A Palestinian state should be part of an Arab economic state. It is the rich Arab countries who should invest in the future Palestinian economy. Independence also means self-reliance – or assistance from your kith and kin ... this would not entail exorbitant Saudi or Kuwaiti sacrifice.”

Gai Bachor, a scholar at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center’s Counterterrorism Institute, raises another reason for a parting of the ways. Palestinians are not moved to violence by desperation: it is part of their ideology and the terror networks, which require funding, that fuel it.

Bachor noted in August 2003 in the Israeli daily *Yidiot Achronot*,¹⁸⁴ that the three times Palestinian society chose to go to war against Israel were during periods of unprecedented prosperity, not during times of economic hardship.

The first time was during the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt, which followed prosperity brought by the influx of Jewish capital into Palestine and British infrastructure projects. The outbreak of the first *Intifada* in 1987 followed an economic recovery after a period of hyperinflation. The al Aqsa *Intifada*, launched in September 2000, came in the wake of massive investments in the Palestinian Authority that filled coffers and led to a building boom. “Economics,” concluded Bachor, “have failed to advance politics.” Thus, there is no logic to Israelis allowing Palestinians to piggyback on the successes of the Israeli economy.

Even international planners who hope moderation can be bought with economic incentives cannot be overly optimistic. Ravid's study of demographics and economics – *The Demographic Revolution*¹⁸⁵ – deflates optimistic visions of Gaza becoming a Middle Eastern Singapore, talk that raises unrealistic expectations and fuels further frustration and jealousy of Israel.

The findings show Gaza has nothing in common with high-density city-states such as Bahrain, Hong Kong, and Singapore, underscoring how irrelevant city-state models are. A closer look shows the marked characteristic of city-states have in several domains.¹⁸⁶

City-states enjoy high incomes that are used to finance large investments in industry. They have no agriculture and import all food and water from outside sources. They possess strict, highly-structured and orderly sociopolitical organizations and enlightened ecological management, essential for maintaining standards of living and welfare under high-density conditions. And they maintain low birthrates.

All of those conditions, except one, however, are absent from Palestinian society.

In 2000, the birthrate in Singapore was 1.5; Hong Kong, 1.4; Bahrain, 3.2; in contrast, the rate in the West Bank was 5.5; and in Gaza 6.6. In contrast to city-states, Palestinians have many children, and few Palestinian women work outside their homes. Private investment in the business sector is non-existent; the Palestinian workforce has an insufficient educational level to attract investment capital, and with wages higher than those of neighboring Arab countries, they are unable to compete as unskilled labor in the global economy. The only area where parity exists between Hong Kong, Singapore and the Gaza Strip is in population density.

In the year 2000 the density ratio was 7500 persons per square-kilometer in Hong Kong; 6000 per square-kilometer in Singapore, and 3000 per square-kilometer in the Gaza Strip. If Palestinians are left to their own devices, by the year 2020, Gaza will achieve a similar density of 6500 persons per square-kilometer – but that is its only similarity to the Hong Kong and Singapore models.

Concludes Ravid:

“Gaza has not, and will not have the means by which some other small urban-state cities like Bahrain or Singapore have overcome the environmental problem of [a] high-density populated area.”¹⁸⁷

Ravid warns that the influx of Palestinian refugees to any future Palestinian state will only exacerbate regional tensions, because the new state is unlikely to help them resettle permanently – following the model set by other host countries – perpetuating their refugee status and insisting they be resettled in Israel:

“There is a wide political Arab opposition, reinforced by economic interests, to reduce the problem to a social issue. Previous holding of lands, demands for compensation, requirements of reimbursement for ‘hosting’ the refugees by neighboring states - those criteria may have heavier weight than the poor economic conditions of part of the refugees.”¹⁸⁸

In essence, a massive influx of refugees into the West Bank and the worsening of conditions would transform the West Bank into a potent staging area for an assault on Israel, or at least elevate existing hate and frustration.

In 1994 the then-nascent Palestinian Authority declared that it would *not* help improve housing in Gaza and West Bank refugee camps because the refugees would be ‘returning’ to where they came from.¹⁸⁹

Economic indices indicate that a Right of Return of the Palestinian diaspora to a West Bank-Gaza Palestinian state would likely lead to economic collapse.

Although the West Bank is better off economically than Gaza, it cannot sustain an influx of millions of additional Palestinian refugees with limited education and no means of support.

More refugees would only tax an already weak Palestinian economy, which would be forced to provide an unprecedented amount of shelter while saddled with a constantly growing mass of unemployable people. Packing more Palestinians into the West Bank would only intensify hatred of Israel and increase Palestinian demands for the “Right of Return.” In short, Palestinians demand to have it both ways economically - with their own state, and the expectation that Israel will subsidize their runaway birthrate with jobs.

Of course, the economic disparity between Israelis and Palestinians has a long history. Israel’s economic supremacy is the fruit of 120 years of Zionist endeavor, the infrastructure of a modern state – an act that none of Israel’s neighbors, including Palestinians, have been able to replicate. The chasm between the two economies is not caused by Israel’s dominance of the Palestinians who enjoyed unprecedented economic prosperity and enhancement of their standards of living¹⁹⁰ while “Under The Occupation.” It should be noted that the two Palestinian-instigated *Intifadas* largely wiped out those gains. Rather, the chasm exists because these two divergent societies operate differently and belong to two different worlds.

The benefits of Western society carry their own ‘costs’ for high-level services, including having small families, liberating women, educating them and bringing them into the workforce, espousing the values of a civic society, including the rule of law and the payment of income taxes, and an open and competitive mindset (see the chapters “Democracy” and “Human Rights”).

Adhering to such values requires a revolution in deep-seated and cherished values that Palestinians (and many Israeli Arabs and the Arabs in general) view as a form of 'cultural imperialism.' In essence, Palestinians want to enjoy the fruits of Western society without paying the price.

Barrier 6: Would most Palestinians prefer to remain where they are? Optimists prefer to believe that most would 'stay put.' There is no objective basis for this belief – neither in Palestinian opinion polls, nor in terms of market forces and pure economic incentives.

Factor One: The Power of the Belief in the Right of Return

A January–June 2003 survey by the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research¹⁹¹ that sought to poll refugee preferences made headlines when it revealed that “only 10 percent wanted to go back to Israel with Israeli citizenship.” Pundits and policy-makers expressed optimism at the results, which suggested that a way to untie the Gordian Knot of the Right of Return was at hand. Perhaps in reality there was no demographic peril and Palestinians did not plan on voting Israel out of existence, they reasoned.

Yet a closer look at the findings reveals little reason for celebration. The Palestine Center's poll queried refugees in the West Bank/Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan about their preferences by measuring their willingness to accept a number of settlement scenarios, including ones that did not include repatriation to Israel proper.

“Thirty-three percent insisted on 'going back to Israel' – but only 10 percent envisioned themselves as citizens of Israel. The other 23 percent expressed support for a scenario that had an uncanny resemblance to scenarios that the Palestinian advocacy groups and research centers mentioned above proposed. Under those plans, Palestinians would “receive Palestinian citizenship and return to designated areas inside Israel that would be swapped later with Palestinian areas as part of a territorial exchange and receive any deserved compensation.” In short, the scenario envisions refugees 'returning' to Israel and annexing significant parts of Israel into a new Palestinian state. Thirty-seven percent of refugees on the West Bank/Gaza living under Palestinian self-rule chose such a 'solution.'

In another scenario, 25 percent of Jordan's refugees and 31 percent of Lebanon's refugees expressed a willingness to move temporarily to the Palestinian state until a solution could be achieved ... another way of saying they supported continued armed struggle to go back to Israel from a better platform in the West Bank. Thirteen percent of the respondents refused all options – including that one.

The good news, if it can be called that, was that 50 percent said they were willing to accept compensation and settle for “somewhere else”; 31 percent would go to a Palestinian state (including 27 percent of the refugees in Jordan); 17 percent would stay put; and 2 percent would emigrate to other countries (in Europe, Australia, or elsewhere). On closer scrutiny, however, it becomes apparent that refugees are far from realistic when it comes to swapping the Right of Return for compensation (see discussion of compensation under Barriers 7 and 8, below).”

In an interview on National Public Radio,¹⁹² Khalil Shikaki, the head of the Palestine Center that conducted the poll, characterized his findings as a “win-win solution,” declaring cheerfully:

“The overwhelming majority wanted to live in a Palestinian state; only a small minority wanted to live in the State of Israel.” But Shikaki’s findings were roundly criticized. Some Arab critics said (rightly so) “the questions were skewed to get answers that gave up the Right of Return in practice.”¹⁹³

As noted above, most options in the poll offered ‘solutions’ that would either postpone the Right of Return to a later phase of the struggle after a Palestinian state was established, or offered respondents the option of devastating Israel and demolishing it by less direct means. The fact that only 10 percent envisioned “living in a Jewish State as citizens” reflects the fact that Palestinian refugees reject the very idea of being subject to a Jewish polity or accepting minority status, even as a tactical ploy that would allow them to eventually vote Israel out of existence.

To make things absolutely clear, in response to the survey and other ‘dangerous’ peace initiatives,¹⁹⁴ the Palestinian Authority’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nabil Shaat, issued a series of what *Haaretz* defined as “polished statements [that] ... related to the return of refugees as a practical solution – and even as a precondition – to a final status agreement.”¹⁹⁵

For instance, speaking in Beirut in mid-August 2003, the Palestinians’ senior diplomat – with a Ph.D. in economics from University of Pennsylvania’s prestigious Wharton School, considered a moderate in Western circles – clarified that “the right of return to ‘Palestinian cities in the Jewish state’ is an integral part of the Arab peace initiative.” Parallel to its diplomatic offensive, the PA organized rallies in West Bank and Gaza refugee camps and used the slogan, “There is no alternative to a Right of Return.”¹⁹⁶

These ‘solutions’ are reminiscent of a 1988-vintage Herblock cartoon in the *Washington Post*, where Arafat is telling an American official, “We’ll recognize their right to exist, if they recognize our right to decide where.”

Factor Two: Universal Economics Forces

Aside from the pull of an ethos nurtured from birth as reflected in opinion polls among refugees - given the choice, Palestinian refugees in neighboring Third World countries would undoubtedly flood Western Palestine solely on the basis of economic attraction, just as Arabs are flooding into Europe. Wages, health care, education and the general quality-of-life are far lower in their host countries than they are in Israel or the West Bank.

Palestinian forecasts show that if the gates were opened, half-a-million Palestinians would flood into the West Bank – and that is just in the first year.¹⁹⁷ The economic attraction is push-and-pull, given the Arab world's poor economic condition. Real income per capita in most Arab states over the last decade has declined, and today's GDP per capita is slightly lower than it was in 1980, according to the 400-page *Arab World Competitiveness Report 2002-2003*¹⁹⁸ published by the World Economic Forum.

Although world dependence on oil has grown, petrodollars are sitting in Swiss banks instead of being invested in economic development, plaguing the Arab world with zero growth, zero investment and overall economic decline. Their performance is far below that of all other geographic regions.

In contrast, despite the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel is characterized by sustained economic growth and is rated one of the world's emerging economies. It places first in the number of academic papers per capita, second only to the U.S. in technological leadership, and enjoys a quality-of-living standard equal to Western Europe. Recently, Israel placed 22nd in general quality of life rankings according to a host of indices, and ranks fourth in longevity of men. Those factors would explain why in the past decade, Israel has become a desirable destination for non-Jewish foreign nationals – legal and illegal, including individuals from the Third World who are attracted by relatively high wages, a pleasant climate and an open, tolerant society.

Many infiltrate into Israel while on “religious pilgrimage.” Some 55,000 Jordanian nationals infiltrated Israel as illegal workers, arriving on visitor visas and then stayed – an indication of what Israel would face if the Right of Return were implemented.

Barrier 7: The Arabs expect exorbitant levels of compensation on questionable evidence, demand outlandish types of compensation, using grotesque inapplicable parallels from Germany.

Nabil Shaat, the PA's Minister of Planning, claimed at a Washington gathering in 2000 that "there are 435,000 title deeds residing with Palestinians." The claim is indicative of Palestinian longings, but it is questionable whether such deeds can serve as a foundation for compensation, should Palestinians ever agree to accept compensation in lieu of the Right of Return.

Professor Kenneth Stein questions the validity of Shaat's claim: "While there is no doubt that Palestinians fled areas that later became the [S]tate of Israel [and] left land and property behind ... the question is how many Palestinians and which land or property?" Based on a 25-year acquaintance with the Palestinian Lands and Land Registry Department archives, and knowledgeable about the systems' quirks, Stein clarifies:

"The very existence of a title deed or other written evidence in the hands of a refugee, his family or descendants does not automatically substantiate a claim of ownership since land or other immovable property may have been sold and never registered in the Palestine Land Registry Department. A peasant farmer could have a legitimate tax record receipt or a statement that he or his family lived in a village where the land was cultivated or owned individually or collectively, but that land could have been sold at a later date over his head to an Arab broker or Jewish buyer. This was frequently done when the peasant exchanged tenant or ownership rights for absolution of accumulated debts.... Hence, a title deed or other document about land ownership or use issued either in Ottoman or British times does not necessarily constitute an irreversible claim to compensation or to a bona fide claim to repatriation."¹⁹⁹

According to a *Jerusalem Report* survey written in the year 2000 when 'final status talks' were a newsworthy topic,²⁰⁰ Palestinian Arab demands that Israel compensate refugees for the property they left behind (irrespective of the Right of Return) varied greatly. In 1951, the UN Palestine Conciliation Commission set a compensation figure of \$480 million in 1947 terms, or nearly \$24 billion in 1998 adjusted for inflation and a 4 percent rate of return. McMaster University economist Professor Atif Kubursi puts the bill, including psychological suffering and lost income, at *ten times that figure* – \$236 billion in 1998 dollars. Another key researcher on refugee affairs, Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, founder of the Palestine Land Society and an influential figure in Palestinian political circles, puts the figure at double that amount: half a trillion dollars (not counting demands for compensation from the Arab nations.)

In the January–June 2003 survey by the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research²⁰¹ on refugees preferences (cited above in Barrier 6) those willing to accept compensation (50 percent of the participants), were asked what they considered “fair compensation” for giving up the Right of Return. Sixty-six percent of the respondents on the West Bank and Gaza believed that \$100,000 or less would be fair, while 65 percent believed that compensation should be between \$100,000 and \$500,000 per family – unrealistic both in terms of the objective value of actual losses and the ability of the international community to pay (discussed further in Barrier 7).

Palestinians residents are not the only ones demanding compensation. As incredible as it may seem, Arab nations that attacked Israel, then found themselves with Palestinian refugees believe they should be reimbursed for hosting Palestinians!

In his memoirs²⁰² Haled al Azm, Prime Minister of Syria in 1948-1949, admitted that “only a few months separated our call to [Palestinians] to leave and our appeal to the United Nations to resolve on their return,” but that has not prevented Arab states from demanding to be paid for their troubles. Incredibly, as recently as January 2001, the Prime Minister of Jordan, Ali Abul Ragheb, told the *Jordan Times* that Jordan – which was the most dominant force among five invading armies in 1948, and inflicted horrific casualties on Israeli defenders – has the “right to be compensated for the ‘hardships and difficulties’ it suffered as a result of hosting refugees.” This is no passing whim. In 1999 a high-ranking Jordanian official spoke with the *Jordan Times* about Jordan’s demands for compensation, despite the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, and noted that Jordan spends more than \$300 million annually on 13 refugee camps.²⁰³

Palestinians even have the chutzpah to draw parallels to German restitution to the Jews. Addressing that claim in May 2003,²⁰⁴ Shlomo Avineri stressed that if there was a German parallel it was a different one:

“The Palestinian attempt to compare the naqba to the Holocaust is bound in deep moral obtuseness. European Jews who were murdered by Nazis did not go to war against Germany. The Arabs of the Land of Israel went to war and lost. That is the only difference. However, there is an aspect of comparison with Germany that is politically and morally relevant.... A German government that would raise the issue of the right of return [for the millions of ethnic Germans expelled from the Sudetenland and elsewhere after the war] as a condition for peace with Eastern European countries would be perceived – justifiably, as neo-Nazi, and as trying to change the outcome of the Second World War. This is cruel and harsh – but the whole world, including the entire German political sphere, except for negligible margins, recognizes this.”

Suffice it to say, if Germany had demanded reimbursement for hosting those ethnic Germans and for its genuine suffering, such demands would have been met with fury.²⁰⁵

Israel was attacked by the Palestinians in 1948, incurred grievous loss of life and property, and was saddled with absorbing almost 650,000 Jewish refugees from the Arab world, and there is absolutely no moral or legal precedent for demanding that the victim society pay the aggressor society for its folly.²⁰⁶

Barrier 8: The global community is not powerful enough to provide the magnitude of resources necessary to ‘solve the refugee problem’ through massive investment in compensation and resettlement.

Statesmanship carries grave responsibilities. Until Palestinians recognize their own culpability and take moral responsibility for their own actions, it is questionable whether they possess the political maturity necessary to grant them the reins of independent government.

Even if responsibility for compensation or rehabilitation were accepted by the international community, scholars question if the sums could cover anything more than keeping apace with the Palestinians’ runaway birthrate. In that Palestinian estimates of fair compensation for those willing to give up their Right of Return are off the charts and proof of losses is objectively problematic, many observers believe the only way to set reparations would be to establish an equal lump sum on a per capita or per family basis, with a committee dealing with extraordinary circumstances of people of wealth. Ravid speaks of a standard lump sum in the vicinity of \$20,000. Even if one assumes the Palestinians would accept resettlement and such a solution, the funds needed for solving the problem are way beyond the ability of the world community to raise them.

Says Peter Hansen, the UNRWA director:

“The amount of \$100 billion, which is being mentioned as the amount that is needed to solve the refugee problem, is higher than all the foreign aid that is given in any one year to all countries in the world.... A very strong will and very strong motivation will be needed in order to finance the solution of the refugee problem. On the other hand, if it will be a solution that will lead to peace – and the world wants very much to see peace between Israel and the Palestinians – the effort might be made.”²⁰⁷

Ravid is far less optimistic:

“Unfortunately, with the growing number of refugees, the sum of money needed in order to make a significant effect increases, and is already far above the level of support that could be raised for that purpose.... Even the most optimistic estimates of the amount that can be raised for the Refugee Problem do not sum to more than \$2 million per year. That would certainly lag behind the natural growth rate of the population.”²⁰⁸

Whether the amount needed is \$20 billion – a sum bandied about at Camp David II in the summer of 2000, or \$150 billion - the sum Ravid arrived at based on modest investment of \$20,000 per family for resettlement in lieu of the Right of Return - Ravid maintains that funding of such magnitude is unattainable:²⁰⁹

“It doesn’t really matter [which is the needed sum] because there is no more than \$10 billion available to put up the money. You only have to look at the difficulties the United Nations and UNRWA have had in order to understand the problem.”

The only workable solution is resettlement of most refugees throughout the Middle East, and other countries with ‘Arab diaspora communities’.

The only other case where massive assistance was given to immigrants has been in Israel. The funding for such an ongoing endeavor has been provided almost entirely by Israeli government absorption budgets, long-term loans that Israel pays to back to American banks, modest grants from the United States, and donations raised by the Jewish people through the United Jewish Appeal and other Jewish organizations.

If the Arabs want to draw parallels, then resettlement – both in terms of sites and funding – rests squarely on the shoulders of the Arab world. Resettlement of Palestinians in the vast reaches of the Arab world and in countries where there are large Arab communities, as in certain South American countries, carries the potential of a unique peace dividend for the absorbing societies.

Cost-benefit studies show that in the long run, absorption of immigrants has benefited Israel. It is not only the case of Jews from the Soviet Union, who brought with them tremendous human capital with their incredible percentage of people who had earned higher education degrees. This also applies to Jews from Arab countries and Holocaust survivors who came during and after the 1948 war – for the most part penniless newcomers, but armed with tremendous human potential.

Palestinians are among the more-educated communities in the Middle East after Lebanese Christians, and have the potential to contribute to Arab countries that absorb them. They would be a welcome addition to any Middle Eastern country - if they all would stop using the refugee issue and Palestinian demographics as a weapon to destroy Israel and stop misusing their host countries to forward their own bellicose agenda.

Yet Palestinians remain riveted to the Right of Return because their entire ethos as a people is tied to destroying Israel (see the chapter “Palestinians”).

Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, speaking of East Jerusalem Arabs, told a Boston radio show (“The Connection”/ WBUR²¹⁰) in January 2000:

“There is no way in which any Palestinian population would prefer to live under Israeli occupation [in Israel’s pre-1967 borders] than freely in its own land.

There is no way in which any type of occupation, usurpation of rights – the whole enslavement of a people – is a desirable or benign situation.”

Following the collapse of the Camp David talks in July 2000, Abu Mazen, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) executive committee chairman, and the first prime minister of the Palestinian Authority (PA), clarified in a November 2000 article in the London Arabic-language daily *Al-Hayyat*:

“... we clarified to the Israelis, that the right of return means a return to Israel, not to a Palestinian state, because the territory of the Palestinian Authority, which will in the future be the State of Palestine, was not a [body] that expelled refugees, but [a body] that absorbed them. ... Up to 70 percent of Gaza residents are refugees, as are 40 percent of West Bank residents. Therefore, when we talk of the right of return, we are referring to the return of refugees to Israel, because it is [Israel] that expelled them and because their property is there.”²¹¹

What these two leaders reveal, between the lines, is that the international community should establish a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank for people who don't want to live there.

IN A NUTSHELL

- The Palestinian demand for the Right of Return is not a matter of bad leadership. It is an article of faith that is monolithic among all Palestinians - from politicians to academics (in the Arab world and the West), down to rank-and-file refugees.
- Because of UNRWA's unprecedented definition that descendants of refugees are also refugees, and the Palestinians' unprecedented and astronomical birthrate, the refugee problem has grown to an insoluble magnitude.
- Even if Palestinians agree to compensation (and they show no signs of doing so), the world community cannot raise the funds required to resettle them and give them compensation.
- Visions of Gaza becoming a Hong Kong, Singapore or Bahrain are unrealistic. The West Bank does not have the absorptive power to take in large numbers of Palestinians because of internal weaknesses in Palestinian society.
- There is logic to the demand for a Palestinian state and the Right of Return if Palestinians merely want to destroy Israel from within and without, not live side-by-side with it.
- The only viable solution is to settle most Palestinians in the vast reaches of the Middle East – some where they reside, others elsewhere, including countries that welcome immigrants and already have a sizable expatriate Arab community.

¹ The number of original Palestinian refugees cited range from 550,000 to over a million persons – depending on the speaker, definitions, and data used. Thirty-five to forty thousand Arab refugees were repatriated to Israel in family reunification schemes in the early 1950s. For UNRWA data (914,000 registered refugees in 1950), see: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/p1.htm> For Arab claims (750,000 to 914,000), see:

<http://www.badil.org/Refugees/Statistics/GlobalPopulation-2001.pdf>.

² According to Professor Yoav Gelber, up until the last six weeks of the Mandate (April 1, 1948), 250,000-300,000 Palestinians and other Arabs ran away to Arab sectors of western Palestine and to neighboring countries, prior to any local actions to dislodge Arabs in anticipation of the invasion of the Arab armies on May 14. Gelber says this phenomenon surprised both Arabs and Jews. Local Arabs sought to stem the flow; the Jews assessed that the flight was a conspiracy, contrived to embroil Arab states in the conflict.

³ Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1934, pp. 22-23.

⁴ Palestine Royal Commission Report (July 1937). Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

⁵ For more on the social cleavages within Palestinian Arab society that may have contributed to its vulnerability and susceptibility to disintegration and flight, see Kenneth Stein, "One Hundred Years of Social Change: The Creation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem" in *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State*, edited by Laurence Silberstein (New York University Press, 1991) at: [http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/JewishStudies/stein/Book Chapters/Hundred Years Social Change.html](http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/JewishStudies/stein/Book%20Chapters/Hundred%20Years%20Social%20Change.html).

⁶ Arieh Avneri, *The Claim of Dispossession* (Transaction Publishers, 2003), quoted on Amazon.com review of the volume, at:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0878559647/002-2536598-6598406?vi=glance>.

⁷ Peasant in Arabic.

⁸ Quoted in Efraim Karsh, "The Palestinians and the 'Right of Return,'" *Commentary* (May 2001) at: <http://www.ajiac.org.au/updates/May-01/030501.html>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Yoav Gelber, "Why Did the Palestinians Run Away in 1948?" *History News Network*, at:

<http://hnn.us/articles/782.html>.

¹¹ Yoav Gelber, "Why Did the Palestinians Run Away in 1948?" *History News Network*, at:

<http://hnn.us/articles/782.html>.

¹² For a graphic narrative of the war from a personal perspective, see chapter 8 on the War of Independence in the personal book-length narrative by Ephraim Glaser, "The Necessity of Returning," *Delirium Journal*, February 5, 2003, at:

http://www.deliriumjournal.org/writings/glaser_e/chapter8.htm.

¹³ Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948*, p. 116.

¹⁴ See "What about Israeli atrocities against Arabs?" at:

http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_independence_war_atrocities_israeli.php.

¹⁵ For a recent German documentary that indicates that the child killed in crossfire in September 2000 at the outset of current hostilities was probably not killed by Israeli troops, see Ellis Shuman, "German TV: Mohammed al-Dura likely killed by Palestinian gunfire," March 20, 2002, at:

http://www.israelinsider.com/crhannels/diplomacy/articles/dip_0182.htm.

¹⁶ For an in-depth study written in 1998, including new primary sources that present a more complex and balanced picture, see "Deir Yassin: History of a Lie," at:

<http://www.zoa.org/pubs/DeirYassin.htm>.

¹⁷ For a full description of the Deir Yassin battle, see "What Happened at Deir Yassin," at:

http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_independence_war_diryassin.php.

¹⁸ "The Palestinian Refugees – Myths and Facts," see:

<http://www.cdn-friends-icej.ca/medigest/oct98/backgrnd.html>.

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- ¹⁹ Derek White, "Myth: Israel Created the Arab Refugee Problem," quoting the October 2, 1948 London Economist, at:
http://www.hasbara.us/Myths_and_Facts_Online_03.html.
- ²⁰ Ephraim Karsh, "Rights and Wrongs – History of the Palestinian 'Right of Return,'" Commentary, May 2001, at:
<http://www.ajiac.org.au/review/2001/266/essay266.html>.
- ²¹ Ephraim Karsh, "Were the Palestinians expelled? The story of Haifa," Commentary, July-August 2000, at:
<http://www.ajiac.org.au/review/2000/258/essay258.html>.
- ²² Reported on ITV news, Israel Broadcasting Authority, August 17, 2003.
- ²³ Yoav Gelber, "Why Did the Palestinians Run Away in 1948?" History News Network, at:
<http://hnn.us/articles/782.html>.
- ²⁴ 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12 (4), at:
<http://www.law-enforcement-forum.dk/pdf/CCPRuk.pdf>.
- ²⁵ Stig Jagerskiold, "The Freedom of Movement," in *The International Bill of Rights*, edited by Louis Henkin, Stig Jagerskiold, New York, Columbia University Press, 1981.
- ²⁶ The so-called new historians represent a number of Israeli historians, including Professor Morris, who focused their research on Israeli misconduct that prompted Arabs to flee and led Israeli leaders to expel Arabs. Their critics claim the weight Morris and others assign to such events are often exaggerated, contrived or purposefully slanted to support a personal political agenda.
- ²⁷ Benny Morris, "The Rejection," *New Republic*, June 2003, at :
<http://www.ajiac.org.au/review/2003/286/books286.html>.
- ²⁸ Yoav Gelber, "Why Did the Palestinians Run Away in 1948?" History News Network, at:
<http://hnn.us/articles/782.html>.
- ²⁹ Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948*, Sussex Academic Press, 2001, p. 116.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 162.
- ³¹ Yigal Allon, *The Making of the Israeli Army*, Universe Books, 1970, p. 45.
- ³² Data from "Relative Strengths on the Day of the Invasion 15 May 1948," *Carta's Atlas of Israel, The First Years 1948-1961* (in Hebrew), p. 13.
- ³³ *Ibid.* Map 5 (Acquisitions of weaponry).
- ³⁴ Quoted in Ephraim Karsh, *The Palestine War 1948*, Osprey Publishers, 2002. at:
http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/1841763721/qid=1055709144/sr=1-3/ref=sr_1_3/002-2536598-6598406?v=glance&s=books-product-details.
- ³⁵ Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948*, p. 147.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114, citing a May 11, 1948 IDF intelligence report.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 115, quoting the British High Commission's report to London of May 8, 1948.
- ⁴⁰ Yoav Gelber, "Why Did the Palestinians Run Away in 1948?" at:
<http://hnn.us/articles/782.html>.
- ⁴¹ Nur Masalha, "Israel's Moral Responsibility towards the Palestinian Refugees," PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, Permanent Status Issues, at:
<http://www.nad-plo.org/permanent/refug7.html>.
- ⁴² Norma Masriyeh Hazboun, "Israeli Resettlement Schemes for Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1967," at:
<http://www.shaml.org/publications/monos/mono4.htm> - Introduction.
- ⁴³ Hussein Agha, "A way home for Palestinian refugees," *Washington Post*, April 28, 2002.
- ⁴⁴ Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948*, p. 302.
- ⁴⁵ "A Palestinian View – Recognizing the historic crime – interview with Rima Tarazi," edition 25, July 8, 2002, at:
<http://www.bitterlemons.org/previousb1080702ed25.html>.

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- ⁴⁶ Cited in “Justice for Jews from Arab Countries” mission statement, at: <http://www.jewishrefugees.org/JusticeForJews.htm>.
- ⁴⁷ Quote cited in “A Population and Property Transfer: The Forgotten Exodus of Jews from Arab Lands,” Policy Dispatch No. 88, World Jewish Congress, September 2002, at: http://www.wjc.org.il/publications/policy_dispatches/pub_dis88.html
While Jews tended to view the Right of Return as a ploy, Jiryis may have been aware that it was an enshrined principle that would come up if any accommodation was ever reached.
- ⁴⁸ Steven Edwards, “Jews forced from homes after 1947,” June 24, 2003.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ To listen to excerpts from Professor Cotler’s full remarks, see: “Jewish Refugees from Arab Lands: The Case for Rights and Redress,” at: <http://www.isracast.com/>
- ⁵¹ Al-Misri, October 11, 1949, quoted in: <http://world.std.com/~camera/docs/backg/rret.html>.
- ⁵² See: <http://www.clausewitz.com/CWZHOME/CWZBASE.htm>.
- ⁵³ Yoav Gelber, Palestine 1948, p. 293, quoting a September 27, 1948 memorandum.
- ⁵⁴ Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine submitted to the Secretary-General for Transmission to the Members of the United Nations, September 16, 1948, at: <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/85255a0a0010ae82852555340060479d/ab14d4aafc4e1bb985256204004f55fa!OpenDocument>.
- ⁵⁵ UNRWA figures at: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/p1.htm>.
- ⁵⁶ For Palestinian figures, see: <http://www.badil.org/Refugees/Statistics/GlobalPopulation-2001.pdf>.
- ⁵⁷ 756,000 permanent Arab residents plus 13,500 illegal immigrants from neighboring countries and 66,000 Negev Bedouin – statistics derived in large part from the work of Hebrew University demographer Professor Roberto Bachi, *The Population of Israel*. 1974, Hebrew University.
- ⁵⁸ “Palestinian Refugee Camps,” Carta’s Atlas of Israel – the Second Decade 1961-1971, p. 93. 1980.
- ⁵⁹ Yoram Ettinger, “Who Were the 1948 Refugees?” Ariel Center for Policy Research sets the number at 550,000, discounting such newcomers as Arab residents of Palestine who went back to their countries of origin. See: <http://www.acpr.org.il/cloakrm/clk98.html>.
- ⁶⁰ Interim Report of the Director of UNRWA for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, October 6, 1950, at: <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/ec8de7912121fce5052565b1006b5152?OpenDocument>.
- ⁶¹ “UNRWA: Caring for Refugees for Years and Still Counting,” Issues in the Palestinian-Israel Conflict, Jerusalem Post Special Supplement, at: <http://info.jpost.com/C003/Supplements/Refugees/6-7.html>.
- ⁶² Yitzhak Ravid, *The Palestinian Refugees* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: BESA Center – Bar Ilan University, January 2001), at: <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/publications/mideast45.pdf>
For UNRWA demographic data, see: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/pdf/figures.pdf>.
- ⁶³ For details and documentation, see the organization Justice for Jews from Arab Countries at: <http://www.jewishrefugees.org/JusticeForJews.htm>.
See also the short online monograph by Maurice M. Roumani, *The Case of the Jews from Arab Countries: A Neglected Issue* (1988) at: http://www.asfonline.org/portal/arablands/ASF_Arab_Jews.pdf published by the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC), at: http://www.asfonline.org/portal/arablands/ASF_Arab_Jews.pdf.
- ⁶⁴ Daniel Pipes, *Orbis* (Fall 1991) at: www.danielpipes.org/article/554.
- ⁶⁵ Kenneth Stein, “Israel: Reconciling Internal Disparities?” in *The Middle East in 2015*, edited by Judith Yaphe, Washington D.C., National Defense University Press, 2002), pp. 75-95.
- ⁶⁶ Yehuda Wallach, “Waves of Immigration,” *Not on a Silver Platter*, p. 67.

⁶⁷ Melissa Radler, "Justice for All," Jerusalem Post, February 15, 2001. Note: Jews were indigenous to many of these areas before they became Arab lands in the wake of the Arab conquest of the Middle East and North Africa.

⁶⁸ Maurice Roumani, "The Case of the Jews from Arab Countries: A Neglected Issue," at: http://www.asfonline.org/portal/ArabLandsDisplay.asp?article_id=8&.

⁶⁹ For a general overview of dhimmi status, see: "Past is Prologue," the testimony of scholar Bat Ya'or at the US Congressional Briefing – Human Rights Caucus, April 1997, at: <http://www.dhimmi.org/>

For seminal work on dhimmi status, see Bat Ya'or, *The Dhimmi: Jews & Christians Under Islam*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985.

⁷⁰ For details, see "Is there a connection between the Palestinian issue and the Jewish refugees from Arab states?" Organization of Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA), at: <http://www.jimena-justice.org/faq/faq.htm> - 6.

⁷¹ Seth Ward, "The Holocaust in North Africa," University of Denver, Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies, at: <http://www.orthohelp.com/geneal/holocaust.HTM>.

⁷² Melissa Radler, "Justice for All," Jerusalem Post, February 15, 2001.

⁷³ George E. Gruen, "The Other Refugees: Jews of the Arab World," Jerusalem Letters, June 1, 1988, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, at: <http://www.jcpa.org/jl/jl102.htm>.

⁷⁴ "Jews in Grave Danger in all Moslem Lands. Nine Hundred Thousand in Africa and Asia Face Wrath of Their Foes" *The New York Times*, May 16, 1948.

⁷⁵ "Jewish and Arab Refugees," World Jewish Congress, at: http://www.wjc.org.il/wojac/jewish_and_arab_refugees.html.

⁷⁶ For further details on coordination of a program of expulsion, see Ya'akov Meron "Why Jews Fled the Arab Countries," *Middle East Quarterly* (September 1995) at: <http://www.meforum.org/article/263>.

⁷⁷ Quoted in "Civil and Political Rights – Specific Groups and Individuals – Written statement submitted by World Union for Progressive Judaism to the UN Human Rights Commission, March 17, 2003, at: <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/b937628287f6269285256cf6006e065e?OpenDocument>.

⁷⁸ Al-Kifah, March 28, 1949, cited in Shlomo Hillel, *Operation Babylon* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), a narrative of the flight of Iraqi Jews.

⁷⁹ For an in-depth look at the case of Iraqi Jewry, see Philip Mendes, "The Forgotten Refugees: The Causes of the Post-1948 Jewish Exodus from Arab Countries – The Case of Iraq," Jewish Studies Conference, March 2002, at: http://www.ajds.org.au/mendes_refugees.htm.

⁸⁰ For a survey of the situation in individual countries, see the JJAC's study "Jews from Arab Countries: The case for Rights and Redress, see: <http://www.mefacts.com/cache/html/refugees-jewish/FINAL-REPORT-justice-fo-jews-from-arab-countries.htm>.

⁸¹ Eetta Prince-Gibson, "Right of return," Jerusalem Post, August 7, 2003, at: <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/A/JPArticle/PrinterFull&cid=1060230918503>.

⁸² Interim Report of the Director of UNRWA for Palestine Refugees in the Near East," at: <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/ec8de7912121f5052565b1006b5152?OpenDocument>.

⁸³ For a taped section of the press conference upon release of the report, see: <http://www.isracast.com/>. "Jewish Refugees from Arab Lands: The Case for Rights and Redress," See: <http://www.isracast.com/>.

⁸⁴ For more information on Jewish immigration (aliyah) during this period, see "Independent Israel - Aliyah and Absorption - The Mass Aliyah - 1948-1951," at:

<http://www.jafi.org.il/education/100/concepts/aliyah4.html>

and "Mass Aliyah Absorption and Settlement," at: <http://www.jafi.org.il/education/100/time/a7.html>

For a brief overview of absorption woes among Oriental Jews (i.e., Jews from Arab countries), see "The Second Israel" at: <http://www.lupinfo.com/country-guide-study/israel/israel55.html>

For a graphic personal narrative of conditions in the late 1940s and early 1950s, see chapter 9 of Ephraim Glaser, *The Necessity of Returning*. Glaser, who came in 1946, wrote and published his personal memoir on the Internet at: http://www.deliriumjournal.org/writings/glaser_e/chapter9.htm.

⁸⁵ Data in Mordechai Naor, *Immigrants and Transit Camps, 1948-1952 – Source Material, Summaries, Key Events and Supportive Material* (in Hebrew) (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1986).

⁸⁶ Ian J. Bickerton and Carla L. Klausner, *A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 4th ed. (New York: Prentice Hall, 2002), p. 107.

⁸⁷ For a brief description of conditions in Jewish refugee camps where families with seven, eight, and even ten children were huddled together under cramped conditions and with little to eat, see Maurice Roumani, "The Transfer to Israel: Hardships of Displacement," in *The Case of the Jews from Arab Countries: A Neglected Issue*, pp. 9-11.

⁸⁸ Fred Lazin, "Israel's Efforts to Absorb Jewish Immigrants from the Soviet Union and Ethiopia, 1989-1993" (section on Historical Background), at: [http://www.displacement.net/Professional_profiles/Lazin/8 mar draft.doc](http://www.displacement.net/Professional_profiles/Lazin/8%20mar%20draft.doc) quoting Y. Aharoni, *The Israeli Economy: Dreams and Realities*, Publisher: London ; New York: Routledge, 1991 , p. 216.

⁸⁹ For a vintage photo, see: <http://www.multied.com/Israel/1949Maabarot.html>; for a general description of conditions in the transit camps, see Jonathan Kaplan, "Absorbing the Exiles," at: http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history_community/Modern/Overview_The_Story_19481980/IsraelBorn/StateofIsrael/ImmigrantAbsorb.htm.

⁹⁰ Data on the Web site of the St. Cloud museum, at: http://www.quest.stearns-museum.org/pages/Quest_II/chapters2/5.html

⁹¹ Some immigrants later related how they were literally dumped in a pile, when truck drivers raised the back of their dump trucks when passengers refused to get off 'in the middle of no place'.

⁹² Refugee Camp Profiles, see: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees.me.html>.

⁹³ UNRWA Refugee Camp Profiles at: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/me.html>.

⁹⁴ Cited in "A Population and Property Transfer: The Forgotten Exodus of Jews from Arab Lands," Policy Dispatch No. 88, World Jewish Congress, September 2002, at: <http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/publications/dispatches/dispatch88.cfm>.

⁹⁵ An equal number were forcibly resettled between 1967 and 1989 following demolition of dwellings carried out in the course of clearing war-damaged structures, widening streets as a counterinsurgency measure, improving town planning and other requirements. Data was derived from UNRWA Accommodation Office records – July 1991, quoted in Norma Masriyeh Hazboun, at: <http://www.shaml.org/publications/monos/mono4.htm>.

⁹⁶ See: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/40/a40r165.htm>.

⁹⁷ Ingrid Gassner Jaradat, director of Badil – a Palestinian Right of Return advocacy group in a December 2002 interview, quoted in Pearl Herman, *UNRWA – A Report*, Center for Near East Policy Research, March 2003.

⁹⁸ Abbas Shiblak, "Residency Status and Civil Rights of Palestinian Refugees in Arab Countries," at: <http://www.shaml.org/publications/monos/mono1.htm> - Conclusion.

⁹⁹ Scott Wilson, "Iraqis Reclaim Homes Given to Palestinians," *Washington Post*, May 6, 2003, at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A17785-2003May5?language=printer>

¹⁰⁰ "West Bank and Gaza in Brief, World Bank, August 2000, at: <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/mna/mena.nsf/All/F192A5DA7D266F048525694700278825?OpenDocument>.

¹⁰¹ Disruption of work due to closures and self-imposed strikes, coupled by knifings and murders of Israeli farmer led to the agricultural sector employing volunteers from abroad, then Thai fieldhands; the same phenomena in the building trade led contractors to the import skilled workers from Romania.

¹⁰² Cited in Oroub Al Abed, "Palestinians in Jordan and Egypt: Holders of Travel Documents: Their Legal Rights," at: <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academic/fmrs/Research/PalestiniansinJordan.pdf/>.

¹⁰³ Joseph Nevo, "The Jordanian, Palestinian and the Jordanian-Palestinian Identities," *The Fourth Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies: The Middle East in Globalizing World*, Oslo, 13-16 August 1998, at: <http://www.hf.uib.no/smi/pao/nevo.html>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2001, see: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/english/abs_pal/_3/tab01.htm.

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- ¹⁰⁶ David Lamb, "Arab countries reluctant to receive expelled Palestinians," LA Times, September 12, 1995, at: <http://www-tech.mit.edu/V115/N40/arab.40w.html> ; and "Libya To Expel More Palestinians," Migration News, June 1996, at: http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/archive_mn/jun_1996-25mn.html.
- ¹⁰⁷ Abas Shiblak, "Residency Status and Civil Rights of Palestinian Refugees in Arab Countries," SHAML Palestinian diaspora and Refugee Center, 1997 at: <http://www.shaml.org/publications/monos/mono1.htm>.
- ¹⁰⁸ 1,679,623 according to UNRWA statistics, minus some 100,000-150,000 who originate from Gaza and are not eligible for Jordanian citizenship extended only to residents of the West Bank.
- ¹⁰⁹ "Worldwide Refugee Information – Country Report: Jordan," U.S. Committee for Refugees, at: <http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/mideast/1997/jordan.htm>.
- ¹¹⁰ Steven Edwards "Jews Forced from Homes in 1947," CanWest News Service, June 24, 2003, at: <http://canada.com/national/story.asp?id=3E670B79-993A-4537-BA34-A688872554FF>.
- ¹¹¹ UNRWA was established on December 9, 1949; the UN Resolution 428 (v) passed on December 14, 1949 established a UN High Commissioner for Refugees, exempted the Palestinians from its jurisdiction.
- ¹¹² Those living beyond the borders of western Palestine (i.e., Israel, the West Bank and Gaza).
- ¹¹³ The lower number is cited by Arieh Avneri, Claim of Dispossession, New- Brunswick, [N.J.] USA, 1984; the higher by Joan Peters in From Time Immemorial, Jonathan David Publishers, 2003, p. 257.
- ¹¹⁴ Cited in "Jordan," CAMERA, at http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=11&x_subject=21.
- ¹¹⁵ See 2001 PA constitution, article 32: "The right of the Palestinian refugee to return to his home and the original home of his ancestors is a natural right." Cited in Pearl Herman, UNRWA – A Report, Center for Near East Policy Research, March 2003, Appendix A, pp. 33-34 at: <http://israelbehindthenews.com/Reports/UNWRAReport.pdf>.
- ¹¹⁶ "Refugees – A Global Issue," in Issues in the Palestinian-Israel Conflict, Jerusalem Post Special Supplement, at: <http://info.jpost.com/C003/Supplements/Refugees/3.html>.
- ¹¹⁷ For a more balanced picture of the host of problems the world faces besides the Palestinians, browse the archives of the Journal of Refugee Studies, at: <http://www3.oup.co.uk/refuge/contents/>.
- ¹¹⁸ "Understanding Refugee Numbers: Where Do Refugees Come From and Where Do They Go?" USCR, see: http://www.refugees.org/news/fact_sheets/refugee_numbers_00/refugee_numbers00.htm.
- ¹¹⁹ Pearl Herman, UNRWA – A Report, Center for Near East Policy Research, March 2003, Appendix A, pp. 33-34, at: <http://israelbehindthenews.com/Reports/UNWRAReport.pdf>. See also Avi Beker, Unrwa, Terror and the Refugee Conundrum: Peperuating the Misery, at: <http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/publications/articles/pubforum26.pdf>.
- ¹²⁰ "Africa: New Displacement of Nearly 3 Million Africans Largely Unnoticed by Rest of the World," U.S. Committee for Refugees, at: http://www.refugees.org/news/press_releases/2003/wrs03_PRAfrica1.cfm.
- ¹²¹ Worldwide Refugee Information: Burundi, USCR, at: <http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/africa/2003/burundi.cfm>.
- ¹²² "UNRWA: Caring for Refugees for Years and Still Counting," in Issues in the Palestinian-Israel Conflict, Jerusalem Post Special Supplement, at: <http://info.jpost.com/C003/Supplements/Refugees/6-7.html>.
- ¹²³ Ruth Lapidoth, "Legal Aspects of the Palestinian Refugee Question," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, September 2002, at: <http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp485.htm>.
- ¹²⁴ There are no official statistics, and Arab estimates vary from "the majority" to "the overwhelming majority" to "98 percent."
- ¹²⁵ Itzhak Ravid, The Palestinian Refugees (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: BESA Center – Bar Ilan University, January 2001), at: <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/publications/mideast45.pdf>.
- ¹²⁶ "Israel's Serious Breaches of Its Obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," Badil, November 2000, p. 17, at: <http://www.badil.org/Protection/Documents/CESCR.pdf>.
- ¹²⁷ Michael Rubin, "The UN's Refugees," Wall Street Journal, April 18, 2002.
- ¹²⁸ According to a camp resident informant interviewed in a post-battle media report, quoted in Yigal Halkin, "Urban Warfare and the Lesson of Jenin," Azure (Summer 2003) at: <http://www.azure.org.il/15-henkin.htm>.

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- ¹²⁹ “Who is a Palestine Refugee?” UNRWA, at: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/pl.html>.
- ¹³⁰ Ali Abunimah, Financial Times, January 10, 2001, Vice-president of the Arab-American Action Network, at: <http://www.abunimah.org/features/010110ftoped.html>.
- ¹³¹ Yasser Arafat: “The womb of the Arab woman is my strongest weapon.” Newsweek, August 13, 2001. See: <http://www.fareedzakaria.com/articles/newsweek/081301.html>.
- ¹³² Yitzhak Ravid, “The Demographic Revolution: Palestinian Refugees,” Interdisciplinary Center – Institute for Policy and Strategy at: <http://www1.idc.ac.il/ips/content/pprrvd1.asp>.
- ¹³³ Hirsh Goodman, “Boom Baby Boom,” Jerusalem Report, July 15, 2003, at: <http://www.jrep.com/Columnists/Article-2.html>
The resurgence of polygamy among all levels of Bedouin society (illegal but not enforced) coupled with abuse of Israel’s ‘welfare safety net’ – monthly child allowances, are responsible for 8 percent (!) annual growth in population among Negev Bedouin – a separate demographic peril for Israel that is beyond the scope of this book.
- ¹³⁴ United States census data. “The United States in International Context: 2000,” February 2002, at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-11.pdf>.
- ¹³⁵ For a partial list since the 1920s, see Pearl Herman, UNRWA – A Report, Center for Near East Policy Research, March 2003, Appendix B, pp. 35-35, at: <http://israelbehindthenews.com/Reports/UNWRAReport.pdf>.
- ¹³⁶ “Refugees – A Global Issue,” Issues in the Palestinian-Israel Conflict, Jerusalem Post Special Supplement, at: <http://info.jpost.com/C003/Supplements/Refugees/3.html>.
- ¹³⁷ Arthur Goldberg, “Resolution 242: After 20 Years,” American Foreign Policy Interests, National Committee on American Foreign Policy, 1988 reprinted in April 2002 in Security Interests, at: <http://www.ncafp.org/legacy/projects/UNres242.htm#res242after20>.
- ¹³⁸ See Benny Morris, “The Rejection,” AIJAC, June 2003, at: <http://www.aijac.org.au/review/2003/286/books286.html>
- ¹³⁹ See for instance the table at: <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Acre/Palestine-Remembered/cepalfig2.htm> that concludes: “92 percent of Israel’s area today is Palestinian land.”
- ¹⁴⁰ For more on the breakdown of society in the 10th century under the pressure of Arab nomads and civil chaos, see the second part of the chapters on “Territories.”
- ¹⁴¹ Kenneth Stein, “History Questions the ‘Right of Return,’” Jewish News of Greater Phoenix, February 20, 2001, see: <http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/JewishStudies/stein/Articles/Right of Return.html>.
- ¹⁴² A title of respect for educated or high-ranking men. See: <http://dictionary.reference.com/>.
- ¹⁴³ For the gradual process that led to landlessness among rural Palestinians, see Kenneth Stein, “One Hundred Years of Social Change: The Creation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem,” in *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State*, edited by Laurence Silberstein (New York: New York University Press, 1991), at: <http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/JewishStudies/stein/Book Chapters/Hundred Years Social Change.html>.
- ¹⁴⁴ According to Kenneth Stein, records show that between 1933-1942, 90 percent of all Arab land sale transactions to Jewish purchasers were made by Arab small property owners, not absentee landlords of large tracts, while in one subsection in the hill regions of Palestine an estimated 30 percent of the land was transferred from Arab small property owners to Arab capitalists who sold the land to Jewish buyers at a huge profit.
- ¹⁴⁵ Kenneth Stein, “One Hundred Years of Social Change:” at: <http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/JewishStudies/stein/Book Chapters/Hundred Years Social Change.html>.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁷ “Refugees – A Global Issue,” Issues in the Palestinian-Israel Conflict, Jerusalem Post Special Supplement, at: <http://info.jpost.com/C003/Supplements/Refugees/3.html>.
- ¹⁴⁸ Peter Hirschberg, “Private Property Keep Out!” Jerusalem Report (1999).

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- ¹⁴⁹ Isabel Kershner, "The Refugee Price Tag," Jerusalem Report (2000), at: <http://www.jrep.com/INfo/10thAnniversary/2000/Article-10.html>.
- ¹⁵⁰ Disaster, catastrophe – the Palestinian term for events in 1948 that brought about so many Palestinians becoming refugees.
- ¹⁵¹ Quoted in Kenneth Stein, "History Questions the Right of Return," February 20, 2001, at: <http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/JewishStudies/stein/Articles/Right of Return.html>.
- ¹⁵² Ari Shavit and Jalal Bana, "Everything You Wanted to Know About the Right of Return But Were Afraid to Ask," Haaretz, July 6, 2001, at: <http://www.vopj.org/issues4.htm>.
- ¹⁵³ Ari Shavit and Jalal Bana, "Everything You Wanted to Know About the Right of Return But Were Afraid to Ask," Haaretz, July 6, 2001, at: <http://www.vopj.org/issues4.htm>.
- ¹⁵⁴ "Palestinian thoughts on the Right of Return," MEMRI, March 30, 2001, at: <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archivfes&Area=sr&ID=SR00501>.
- ¹⁵⁵ Salman Abu Sitta, "Is the Right of Return Feasible?" August 7, 2001, at: <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Acre/Right-Of-Return/Story440.html>.
- ¹⁵⁶ For a discussion of other factors that encouraged Israeli Arabs to consider a 'binational' or 'secular' (e.g., non-Jewish) state feasible, see Gerald Steinberg, "The Sources of Israeli Arab Radicalism – Misleading Perceptions," Jerusalem Post, May 23, 2003, at: <http://faculty.biu.ac.il/~steing/conflict/oped/thesources.html>.
- ¹⁵⁷ For two articles on trends in the Arab sector, see Eric Rozenman, "Israeli Arabs and the Future of the Jewish state," Middle East Quarterly, September 1999, at: <http://www.meforum.org/article/478> and Eric Rozenman, "Today's Arab Israelis, Tomorrow's Israel," Policy Review Online, Review 106, April-May 2001, at: <http://www.policyreview.org/APR01/rozenman.html> For a seminal article from 1989, noting the trend toward a Palestinian identity, see Rafi Israeli, "The Arabs in Israel: A Surging New Identity," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, see: <http://www.jcpa.org/fl/hit05.htm>.
- ¹⁵⁸ Cited by demographic geographer Professor Arnon Sofer, quoted in David Ratner, "Demographer: Save Negev and Galilee Now," Haaretz, February 26, 2003.
- ¹⁵⁹ See for instance, the profile of Israeli Arab lawyer Mohammed Dahla in "Travels with Mohammed," Haaretz, January 3, 2003, at: <http://www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=247576>. Dahla, a successful lawyer for whom all doors to Israeli society were open – who studied law at the Hebrew University and served as the first Arab law clerk at the Supreme Court – would be expected to be a moderate, but his antipathy toward Israel and rejection of Israel as a Jewish state is deep and profound, and indicative of the inability of Arabs to accept the very idea of minority status anywhere in the Middle East.
- ¹⁶⁰ The intention is to strip Israel of its Jewish nature both in terms of state symbols, which irritate the Arab minority, and abolish policy that supports the Jewish agenda of the state (abolishment of the Law of Return, or a parallel Right of Return for Palestinians), eroding and ultimately surpassing the current Jewish demographic majority.
- ¹⁶¹ An Arab-dominated area that straddles the Green Line in the north and north-eastern corner of Samaria.
- ¹⁶² Ari Shavit and Jalal Bana, "Everything You Wanted to Know About the Right of Return But Were Afraid to Ask," Haaretz, July 6, 2001, at: <http://www.vopj.org/issue4.htm>.
- ¹⁶³ "2001: Attitudes of the Arabs to the State of Israel, at: <http://www.dialogate.org.il/peace/publications.asp - survey>.
- ¹⁶⁴ Cited by Eric Rozenman, "Today's Arab Israelis, Tomorrow's Israel," Policy Review Online, Review 106, April-May 2001, at: <http://www.policyreview.org/APR01/rozenman.html>.
- ¹⁶⁵ "Palestinians in Jordan and Egypt: Holders of Travel Documents: Their Legal Rights," at: <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academic/fmrs/Research/PalestiniansinJordan.pdf>.
- ¹⁶⁶ Mazal Mualem, "140,000 Palestinians entered Israel under family unification since Oslo." Haaretz, February 6, 2002, at: http://www.israelactivism.com/factsheets/140000_Pal_in_Israel.asp.
- ¹⁶⁷ See, for instance, "Israeli Arab tied to Hamas attack," Jerusalem Post, May 30, 2003, at: <http://www.israelemb.org/chicago/Israel Update/2003/05/IU 05-30-03.htm>.
- ¹⁶⁸ Both Hebrew and Arabic are recognized as national language.
- ¹⁶⁹ For a discussion of the meaning of being a Jewish and democratic state, see the President of the Israeli Supreme Court Aharon Barak: "Some people say a state that is both Jewish and Democratic is an oxymoron,

but the values can work together,” Forward, August 23, 2002, at:
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history_community/Israel/Israeli_Politics/IsraeliSupremeCourt/DemocraticJewish.htm

and Supreme Court Justice Menachem Elon: “We are bound to anchor decisions in the values of a Jewish and democratic state,” in Justice, the periodical of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, June 1998, pp. 10-15, at: <http://www.intjewishlawyers.org/pdf/Justice-17.pdf>.

¹⁷⁰ For a look at the circumstances of one group of Jews in the era prior to the establishment of a Jewish state with its Law of Return – the fate of 937 Jewish passengers on the German liner St. Louis who vainly sought refuge in Havana, then Miami, see “Voyage of the Damned,” Jerusalem Post, July 27, 1998, at: <http://www.jpost.com/Archive/27.Jul.1998/Features/Article-5.html> or rent the 1978 film version “Voyage of the Damned,” see: <http://www.blockbuster.com/bb/movie/details/0,7286,VID-V++++53032,00.html>.

¹⁷¹ For further discussion of Zionism, see David Matas, “Zionism is not a Crime,” July 30, 2001, B'nai Brith Canada, at: <http://www.bnaibrith.ca/institute/articles/dm010730a.html>.

¹⁷² Kenneth Stein, “History Questions the ‘Right of Return,’” Jewish News of Greater Phoenix, February 20, 2001, see: [http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/JewishStudies/stein/Articles/Right of Return.html](http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/JewishStudies/stein/Articles/Right%20of%20Return.html).

¹⁷³ This is one of the other two models for the Law of Return found by MEMRI (see footnote above); the logic is indicative of the Palestinians’ all-or-nothing’ mindset: “... if there is a partition, everybody will feel humiliated ... and if there is one state, confederated or federated, no one will feel that a rib has been amputated from his national body.”

¹⁷⁴ See “Palestinian Thoughts on the Right of Return,” March 30, 2001, Special Report No. 5, at: <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&ARea=sr&ID=SR00501>.

¹⁷⁵ Isabel Kershner, “The Refugee Price Tag,” Jerusalem Report, 2000, at: <http://www.jrep.com/INfo/10thAnniversary/2000/Article-10.html>.

¹⁷⁶ Others believe there is no change – that Israeli and American negotiators had fooled themselves into thinking the Right of Return was mere posturing, not a matter of principle.

¹⁷⁷ Yitzhak Ravid, “The Demographic Revolution: Palestinian Refugees,” Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center, Institute for Policy and Strategy, December 2000, at: <http://www.idc.ac.il>.

¹⁷⁸ “How the Arabs Compare,” Arab Human Development Report 2002, Middle East Quarterly (Fall 2002), at: <http://www.meforum.org/article/513>.

For the full 2003 report see: http://www.mefacts.com/cached.asp?x_id=10450.

¹⁷⁹ Yitzhak Ravid, “The Demographic Revolution:” in Hebrew at: <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/publications/mideast45.pdf>

¹⁸⁰ Ari Shavit and Jalal Bana, “Everything You Wanted to Know About the Right of Return But Were Afraid to Ask,” Haaretz, July 6, 2001, at: <http://www.vopj.org/issues4.htm>.

¹⁸¹ Ari Shavit and Jalal Bana, “Everything You Wanted to Know About the Right of Return But Were Afraid to Ask,” Haaretz, July 6, 2001, at: <http://www.vopj.org/issues4.htm>.

¹⁸² Yitzhak Ravid, “The Demographic Revolution:” in Hebrew at: <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/publications/mideast45.pdf>.

¹⁸³ Shlomo Avineri, “It’s not the economy, stupid,” Jerusalem Post, December 15, 2000, at: http://www.ceip.org/files/publications/avineri_jpost1215.asp.

¹⁸⁴ Gai Bachor, “It’s not just the economy, stupid,” Yediot Aharonot, August 14, 2003.

¹⁸⁵ See Yitzhak Ravid, “The Palestinian Refugees” in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: BESA Center – Bar Ilan University, January 2001), at: <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/publications/mideast45.pdf>.

¹⁸⁶ Ravid, “The Palestinian Refugees,” at: <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/publications/mideast45.pdf>.

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¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Pinchas Inbari, Al Ha-Mishmar, May 7, 1994, cited in Pearl Herman footnote 36 to hid report on “UNRWA” March 2003. See: <http://israelbehindthenews.com/Reports/UNWRAReport.pdf>.

¹⁹⁰ For some figures, see the section on post-1967 socioeconomics in the chapters on “Territories.”

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- ¹⁹³ “Right of Return doesn’t equal want to return,” BBC, July 14, 2003, at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3065299.stm.
- ¹⁹⁴ In opposition to a ‘plan’ hammered out between former Israeli Shin-Bet security chief Ami Ayalon and Professor Sari Nusseibeh, former holder of the Jerusalem portfolio in the PA – deposed by Arafat in December 2002 for his dovish stand. A petition the pair circulated, which called for refugees to build their homes in the West Bank as a Right of Return – as of August 2003 failed to attract any significant number of Palestinian supporters.
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