

THE PALESTINE REFUGEE PROBLEM:
"ETHNIC CLEANSING", ISRAELI STYLE

By Dr. Ismail Zayid

Today, after 44 years since their expulsion from their homes, three million Palestinians live as refugees outside their country and nearly one million, in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, in terrible conditions under oppressive Israeli occupation. This inhuman and persistent denial of the Palestinians' inalienable right to return to their homes, continues to present the main obstacle to peace in the Middle East. Repeated U.N. resolutions calling for their repatriation remain totally disregarded by Israel. The question is often raised: how did the problem arise and who is responsible for it? Falsification by Zionist propagandists, blaming it on Arab leaders, has been repeatedly demolished by noted World historians, mainly Jewish and Israeli historians, writers and politicians. The historic record is quite clear.

On the 29th of November 1947, the U.N. General Assembly passed its Resolution #181, recommending the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state, in 56% of the land; an Arab state in 42% of the land; and an International Zone in Jerusalem. At the time, the Jews, a large proportion of them were recent or illegal immigrants, constituted one-third of the population of Palestine and owned 5.6 percent of its land. In the area that was apportioned to the Jewish state, half of the population was Arab (Muslims and Christians) and half was Jewish. Subsequently, fighting erupted between Arabs and Jews and by the end of the fighting in early 1949, approximately 750,000 Palestinians were driven out or fled in terror from their homes.

The genesis of this exodus emanates from the inherent concept of the Zionist ideology of creating a pure Jewish state in Palestine, free of Arabs. The current powerful political agenda that exists in Israel today, of the policy of "transfer of Palestinians from Israel and the occupied territories, is not a new one. Theodore Herzl wrote in his diaries in 1897:

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"We shall try to spirit the penniless (Arab) population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country".

Joseph Weitz, who was the Jewish Agency chief representative, reported in the September 29, 1940 issue of Davar, organ of the Histadrut, that he and other Zionist leaders concluded, in 1940, that there was "no room for both peoples together in this country". The achievement of Zionist objectives, he realized, required "a Palestine, or at least Western Palestine (west of the Jordan River) without Arabs". He wrote that it was necessary "to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries. To transfer all of them and only after such transfer would the country be able to absorb millions of our brethren". This, in essence, is the foundation for the policy of "ethnic cleansing" that the Zionist forces adopted in 1948 to remove by massacre, or the threat of massacre, and by psychological warfare, virtually the entire Arab population in the area of the Palestinian territory that they conquered by military means, 78% of Palestine.

The massacre of the village of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem, where 250 men, women and children were butchered and massacred in cold blood by the fighters of the Irgun Zwei Leumi with the approval of the Jerusalem commander of the official Zionist forces, Higanah, David Shaltiel, as recently documented by Yitzhak Levi, a veteran Israeli intelligence officer. Ironically, the village of Deir Yassin had made a peace agreement with their Jewish neighbours of Givat Shaul. This massacre was not unique and numerous similar massacres were carried out by Zionist forces and Israeli forces during that war. A recent article in the Tel Aviv newspaper, Hair, of May 6, 1992, by Guy Erlich, documents evidence collected by the American Jewish journalist Dan Kortzman, author of Genesis 1948, and the history researcher Ariyeh Yitzhaki, at least twenty large massacres of Arabs and about hundreds more massacres committed by Israeli forces. Yitzhaki states:

"For many Israelis it was easy to cling to the false claim that the Arabs left the country because that was what their leaders ordered. That is a total lie. The fundamental cause for the flight of the Arabs was their fear of Israelis' violence, and that fear had a basis in reality".

History researcher Uri Milstein, celebrated in Israel as the dispeller of myths, confirms Yitzhaki's evaluation regarding the volume of the massacres and even goes further:

"If Yitzhaki claims that there were murders in almost every village, then I say that up to the inception of Israel every event of fighting ended in a massacre of Arabs. There were massacres of Arabs in all of Israel's wars, but I have no doubt that the War of Independence was the dirtiest".

In the village of Duweima, an Arab village near Hebron, occupied without a battle by Battalion 89 of the 8th Brigade, some 80 - 100 civilians were murdered in cold blood by the occupiers. Later more civilians were murdered. In the village of Safsaf:

"52 men were tied with a rope. Lowered into a pit and shot. Ten were killed. Women begged for mercy. Three cases of rape. A fourteen year old raped and four others killed".

The policy of massacre was complemented by a campaign of psychological warfare, initiating terror to force the Palestinians to flee. Leo Heiman, Israeli Army Reserve officer who fought in 1948, wrote in Marine Corp Gazette in June 1964:

"As uncontrolled panic spread through all Arab quarters the Israelis brought up jeeps with loudspeakers which broadcast recorded 'horror sounds'. These included shrieks, wails and anguished moans of Arab women, the wail of sirens and the clang of fire alarm bells, interrupted by a sepulchral voice calling out in Arabic: 'Save your souls all ye faithful: the Jews are using poison gas and atomic weapons. Run for your lives in the name of Allah'".

More subtle methods of psychological warfare were used by Yigal Allon, who was the Commander of the PALMACH, an elite Haganah force, and who later became Israeli Foreign Minister. He wrote in Ha Sepher Ha Palmach in 1948:

"I gathered all of the Jewish mukhtars (headmen) who have contact with Arabs in different villages and asked them to whisper in the ears of some Arabs that a great Jewish reinforcement

has arrived in Galilee and that it is going to burn all of the villages of Huleh. They should suggest to these Arabs, as their friends, to escape while there is still time. The rumor spread in all the areas of the Huleh. The tactic reached its goal completely".

When the Arabs failed to flee, as required, a combination of terror and physical expulsion was used, as in the case of the cities of Lydda and Ramleh, which were occupied on July 10, 1948. Yitzhak Rabin, today's current Prime Minister of Israel, recorded in his memoirs, published in the New York Times of 23 October 1979:

"While the fighting was still in progress we had to grapple with the problem dealing with the fate of the civilian population, numbering some 50,000. We walked outside, Ben Gurion accompanying us. Allon repeated his question: 'What is to be done with the population?' B.G. waved his hand in a gesture which said, 'Drive them out!'"

Rabin and his officers proceeded to drive these 50 - 60,000 civilians away from their homes in terror, with low-flying airplanes over their heads shooting the occasional person and forcing them to run. The sight of the terror-stricken men, women and children fleeing in horror in the midday sun of the hot summer, having run approximately twenty-five kilometres to the village of Beit Nuba where I saw them with my own eyes, a sight not to be forgotten. In reference to this scene and countering the Zionist propaganda, that the Palestinians left their homes voluntarily and in response to broadcasts by their leaders, Sir John Glubb wrote:

"It must not be forgotten that the whole problem of embittered refugees was the result of the ruthless expulsion of all the Arabs by the Israelis in 1948. The story with Jewish publicity at first persuaded the world to accept that the Arab refugees left voluntarily is not true. Voluntary immigrants do not leave their homes with only their clothes they stand up in. People who have decided to move house do not do so in such a hurry

that they lose other members of their family -- husband losing sight of his wife or parents of their children. The fact is that the majority left in panic flight to escape massacre".

It is perhaps relevant to note that this piece of Zionist propaganda was first demolished by Dr. Erskine Childers who examined the American and British monitoring records of all Middle East broadcasts throughout 1948 and reported, the Spectator 1961:

"There was not a single order or appeal or suggestion about evacuation from Palestine from any Arab radio station, inside or outside Palestine, in 1948. There is repeated monitored record of Arab appeals even flat orders, to civilians of Palestine to stay put".

This piece of propaganda was finally shattered by the Israeli Jewish historian, Dr. Benny Morris, who found a secret Israeli Army Intelligence report dated June 30, 1948, which assessed that over seventy percent of the Great Arab Exodus in 1948 resulted from Jewish military action. Some 400,000 Palestinians had fled the country between November 29, 1947 and June 1, 1948 and a similar number left before the end of that year.

It is relevant at this stage to state that this historic evidence clearly dismantles the Zionist story that the Arab refugee problem was created as a result of Arab armies invading Israel and had these armies not done so, the refugee problem would not have existed. It is important to note that the Arab armies intervened on the 15th of May 1948, after the British troops left Palestine and after over 300,000 Palestinians had been made refugees and scores of cities and towns that were part of the U.N. allotted portion of Palestine. The expulsion of these refugees and the occupation of their towns and villages was in accordance with the Plan DALET which was formulated by the Haganah in March 1948, with the clear intent of occupying the portion allotted to the Arab state of Palestine. This brings me to the statement often made by Zionist apologists who state that it was the Arabs who rejected the partition plan and the Jewish leaders had accepted it. This is contrary to fact. A number of prominent Jewish leaders, including Menachem Begin

and Yitzhak Shamir, rejected the plan at the outset. Even Ben Gurion who accepted the plan, made it clear that this was a tactical step towards an ultimate goal. On the 14th of May 1948, when Ben Gurion declared Declaration of the State of Israel he refused to define its borders and stated that:

"The State has been resurrected in the western part of the land of Israel".

Later he said more explicitly:

"If it wasn't for the Arab invasion, there would have been no stop to the expansion of the forces of Haganah, who could have, with the same drive, reached the natural borders of Western Israel (The Jordan River)".

The historical record clearly demonstrates that the Palestine refugee problem was created in response to a clear Zionist policy of cleansing the land of Palestine from its own people. Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel, described this process with a great deal of satisfaction as the "miraculous clearing of the land". However, the U.N. mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden, stated in a report to the U.N:

"It would be an offense against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes while Jewish immigrants flow into Palestine, and, indeed, at least offer the threat of permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who have been rooted in the land for centuries.

Count Bernadotte paid heavily for stating this obvious principle and was assassinated by the Stern terrorist gang, on direct orders of Mr. Yitzhak Shamir, on September 17, 1948 in Jerusalem. The United Nations General Assembly proceeded, however, to resolve on December 11, 1948, in its Resolution #194:

"Refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date and those wishing not to return should be compensated for their property".

The implementation of this Resolution, together with Resolution #181 of 29th of November 1947, were reaffirmed and were made conditions for the admittance of Israel to the U.N. membership in Resolution #273 of the 11th of May 1949 which stated:

"Recalling its Resolution of 29th of November 1947 and 11th of December 1948, and taking note of the declaration and explanations made by the representative of the government of Israel before the ad hoc political committee in respect of the implementation of the said resolutions, the General Assembly decides that Israel is a peace-loving state which accepts the obligations contained in this charter and is able and willing to carry out those obligations".

Despite this and despite repeated U.N. General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions demanding the implementation of Resolution #194 for the return of the refugees, Israel continues to defy this international will and in essence, it can be argued that its membership in the United Nations is illegitimate, in view of its refusal to comply with the conditions that were imposed upon it. Not only that, Israel proceeded in 1967, after the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to expel over 300,000 more Palestinian refugees from their homes or refugee camps. Many of them were in essence expelled a second time. Security Council Resolution #237 of the 14th of June 1967, called upon the government of Israel to facilitate the return of these refugees and similar U.N. General Assembly resolutions to that effect remain unimplemented.

In Western countries, public opinion, through Zionist propaganda, has been habituated to thinking of the Arab refugees from Palestine as just another refugee problem to which a solution can be found by economic measures which will settle the refugees outside their own country. Zionist

propaganda also often claims that the Arab states use the Palestinians as pawns by preventing their permanent resettlement. It is clear, for anybody who has witnessed the history of that area, to see that the Palestinians remain determined to return to their homeland and their struggle continues despite repeated massacres and an orchestrated policy of genocide denying them their national existence. Their sacrifices have been documented and continue despite the Israeli policy of state terrorism and continuing bombardment of their refugee camps in Lebanon and the oppressive practices that are employed against them under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. The late Dr. Frank Epp, former President of Conrad Grebel College of the University of Waterloo, described the tragedy of the Palestinian people in these terms:

"Rarely has a people suffered so much injustice so passively for so long, waiting for the powers that be to redress the inflicted wrong".

Similarly, it was the distinguished philosopher, Lord Bertran Russell who stated, addressing an international conference in 1970, the following:

"The tragedy of the people of Palestine is that their country was 'given' by a foreign power to another people for the creation of a new state. The result was that many hundreds of thousands of innocent people were made permanently homeless. With every new conflict their numbers increased. How much longer is the world willing to endure this spectacle of wanton cruelty? It is abundantly clear that the refugees have every right to the homeland from which they were driven, and the denial of this right is at the heart of the continuing conflict. No people anywhere in the world would accept being expelled en masse from their country; how can anyone require the people of Palestine to accept a punishment which nobody else would tolerate? A permanent just settlement of the refugees in their homeland is an essential ingredient of any genuine settlement in the Middle East".

Another digressionary tactic, used by Zionist apologists to divert attention from the crimes they committed against the Palestinians, is to talk of the Jewish 'refugees' from Arab countries, who emigrated to Israel. Those, largely, came voluntarily in response to the Zionist call for ingathering. David Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, told the first Knesset:

"It is for mass immigration that the State was established, and it is by virtue of this alone that it will stand".

He instructed his Cabinet:

"It is the duty of the present generation to redeem the Jews in the Arab and European countries".

When the Zionist call failed to attract the "immigrants", Israel's secret agents produced the "encouragement", by creating antisemitism, through Zionist terrorism. Iraqi Jews who lived happily in Iraq for over 2000 years were terrorized to leave their country, by none other than Israeli secret agents sent by the Israeli government to 'rescue' them from their secure existence. In 1966, Mordechai Ben Porat and Yehuda Tajar, an official in the Israeli Foreign Ministry, boasted of their role in 'encouraging' Iraqi Jews to 'emigrate' to Israel by tossing in 1951, hand grenades in Masauda Shemtov synagogue, amongst others in Baghdad, Basra and Kirkuk, murdering and injuring many worshippers. This action was clearly the implementation of a policy endorsed boldly in an article by Sharun, the editor of Davar, the official organ of Mapai, Israel's governing party at the time, who wrote:

"I shall not be ashamed to confess that, if I had the power, as I have the will, I would select a score of efficient young men, intelligent, decent, devoted to our ideal and burning with the desire to help redeem Jews, and I would send them to the countries where Jews are absorbed in sinful self-satisfaction. The task of these young men would be to disguise themselves as non-Jews, and plague these Jews with antisemitic slogans, such as

'Bloody Jews, Jews go to Palestine' and similar intimacies. I can vouch that the results in terms of a considerable immigration to Israel from these countries would be ten thousand times larger than the results brought by thousands of emissaries who have been preaching for decades to deaf ears".

(Reported by Kemper,
a Yiddish paper published in
New York, 11 July 1952).

This is the price of Zionism. Yet, its spokesmen have the audacity to accuse Arab countries of expulsion of their Jewish citizens and of Jewish hatred and antisemitism. The historic record, however, contradicts that. Until the introduction of Zionism in the Middle East, at the beginning of this century, Jews throughout history enjoyed the peak of their prosperity under Islamic rule. When pogroms were committed against Jews in Europe, they sought and found refuge in North Africa and the Middle East. The best testimony to that is that of Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel, who testified in 1946, before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine, stating:

"I would not like to do any injustice; the Muslim world has treated the Jews with considerable tolerance. The Ottoman Empire (of which the Arabs were a part) received the Jews with open arms when they were driven out of Spain, and the Jews should never forget that".

Unfortunately, many Jews, who claim to speak for Israel and Zionism, have apparently forgotten that ...