THE DOUBLE EXODUS

A STUDY OF ARAB AND JEWISH REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

by

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FOREWORD

The plight of the Arab refugees is depressing; but it is by no means unique. The most reliable estimate of the number of Arab men, women and children who left their homes in Palestine during 1948 is between 550,000 and 600,000.

Even if one excludes from one's calculations all refugees who left their homes temporarily to avoid local fighting, the Arab exodus from Palestine is only the twelfth largest movement of refugees to take place since the end of World War II.

Pride of place in this melancholy league table must be shared between Germany and the exchange of population that followed the partition of the Indian sub-continent. By the second week in October 1947 it had been reported in the *New York Times* that 2,388,000 Moslems had moved from India into Pakistan and 2,644,000 Hindus had fled from Pakistan into India. Before this mass flight stopped in April 1950, the most conservative estimates suggest that at least four million Moslems and more than four million Hindus left their homes. The estimates of the number of permanent refugees driven from their homes by the first partition of India range between eight and eleven million.

In Europe the post-war movements of population have been measured more precisely. Official West German statistics show that by September 1950 almost exactly three million Sudeten Germans had been expelled from Czechoslovakia. Of these three million 2,068,000 had settled in West Germany or Austria and 916,000 in East Germany. Between 1949 and the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 a further 2,739,000 refugees from East Germany registered at official reception centres in West Germany. The total number of refugees from East Germany is more than three and a half million. Even this figure is dwarfed by the six and three quarter million Germans who left their homes in the Provinces annexed by Poland.

In Africa the figures are less precise, but the largest movement of permanent refugees was clearly the return to Eastern Nigeria shortly before the civil war of the Ibos who had settled outside the tribal areas. Most estimates put the number of Ibo refugees at two million. The statistical support for the assertions that there were two million Ibo refugees is slender, but a figure well in excess of one million is certainly realistic. The number of Frenchmen and pro-French Arabs who fled from North Africa before and after Algerian Independence has also been put at rather more than one million.

When Vietnam was partitioned in 1956, 800,000 North Vietnamese, many of whom were Roman Catholic, moved to South Vietnam to escape from Ho Chi Minh's regime. During the major Communist offensives in the mid-1960's more than one million South Vietnamese also moved out of their homes into temporary refugee camps.

More than one million refugees from North Korea settled in South Korea after the fighting that moved up and down the Korean peninsula in the two years that followed the North Korean attack in June 1950.

Because of an understandable desire not to antagonise the Communist government in Peking, the authorities in Hong Kong have often been reluctant to draw attention to the number of refugees from the Chinese Mainland. A study of the census statistics, however, shows that the number of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong is well over one million.

In the Middle East itself the exodus of Jews from Arab lands has been even larger than the flight of Arabs from Israel. In 1948 there were almost 850,000 Jews in Arab lands ranging from Iraq to Morocco. By 1973 there were less than 50,000.

There is, however, one factor which distinguishes the bulk of the Arab refugees

from the millions of people who have left their homes and countries in the last 30 years because of political, ethnic, or religious pressures. Every one of the non-Arab countries that received a flood of refugees did their best to resettle the new arrivals. India, Pakistan, Western Germany, Biafra, South Vietnam, Hong Kong and Israel all launched successful programmes of absorption. On the other hand, in most of the Arab countries that the Palestinians moved into, strenuous efforts were made to prevent or to limit the resettlement of the refugees. The reason for this unprecedented callousness to their own brethren on the part of many Arab leaders was avowedly political. If the Arab refugees were to find new jobs and new homes in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, they might easily settle down and lose their sense of Palestinian identity and their yearning for their old homes. For twenty years or more Arab leaders have denounced and thwarted all international attempts to resettle the refugees in empty lands away from Israel's borders.

While the Arab policy towards their own refugees may have been inhuman, it would be idle to deny that it has been a brilliant success politically. The whole world knows about the sufferings of the Palestinian Arabs. Meanwhile almost everyone has forgotten Israel's valiant and largely successful efforts to integrate the Jewish refugees from Arab lands. Once again too many people, and too many governments, have been prepared to adopt a double standard instead of studying the facts. A lasting solution to the whole sad problem can only be found when all concerned recognise that there has been a double exodus, involving a lasting exchange of people. The Arab departure from Israeli territory must be balanced against the flight of an even larger number of Jewish refugees from Arab lands.

Soon after the Yom Kippur War, Mrs. Golda Meir, as the Prime Minister of Israel, welcomed Egyptian intentions to rebuild the shattered cities along the Suez Canal. The fact that the Egyptians were talking of rebuilding their shattered cities was hailed as a sign that the Egyptians did not plan to turn the Canal Zone into a war zone once again. Any concerted effort by the Arab Government to ease the harsh lot of the Arab refugees should also be hailed as a move of peace as well as a gesture of humanity. The means for such a gesture lie close at hand. A fortnight's surplus oil revenue from Saudi Arabia could provide compensation and resettlement funds for every refugee. It would be a happy and appropriate end to a long and sad story if the oil weapon were used to defuse the refugee weapon. But it will be an additional obscenity if the Arab refugees are left without a fair share of the enormous wealth now flowing into the whole Middle East.

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House of Commons.

PART I
MIDDLE EAST REFUGEES

A Historical Note

The starting point of the Palestinian refugee problem was the adoption of the U.N. Partition Resolution—providing for the setting up of Arab and Jewish States in Palestine—on November 29, 1947. The Resolution was fiercely rejected by the Arabs of Palestine, and accepted, with some hesitation and misgiving, by the Jewish community. On the very next day Arab riots and attacks on the Jewish community began.

The Arab attacks at the end of November 1947 were by no means the first that the Jewish community in Palestine had suffered. In 1920, when the British Mandate of Palestine had barely begun, a dozen Jews had been slaughtered by rioting Arabs in Jerusalem. In 1929 the Jewish communities in Hebron and Safed had been wiped out despite the intervention of British forces.

Ever since the start of Jewish agricultural settlements at the end of the nineteenth century, there had been intermittent raids on Jewish land, but in 1936 sporadic theft and assault was replaced by an organized campaign of violence which lasted for three years. In the face of numerous attacks the Jewish community in Palestine largely adhered to a policy of self-restraint. These Arab attacks were finally stemmed by resolute British military action on the one hand and on the other by the publication of a British White Paper which virtually stopped large scale Jewish immigration into Palestine at a time when hundreds of thousands of refugees were seeking to flee from persecution, or the threat of persecution, in Nazi-dominated Europe.

After World War II the British policy of curbing the entry of Jewish survivors from the holocaust in Europe produced a violent response from many sections of the Jewish community. The presence of up to 100,000 British troops in the immediate post war years did not stop the wave of violence —which was hardly ever directed against Arab targets. By the middle of 1947 the British Government was anxious to turn its back on the whole problem of Palestine, but even after the United Nations General Assembly passed its partition resolution it was not easy to extricate the sizable British forces in Palestine. As British soldiers prepared for evacuation serious fighting flared in every part of Palestine in which Jewish settlements had been established.

Arab attacks on the Jewish community were stimulated by the infiltration of guerillas from neighbouring Arab countries, and on January 25, 1948, formal command of them was assumed by Fawzi al Kaukji, a veteran of the 1936-38 fighting, who arrived from Syria to lead the main, mixed Palestinian-Syrian "Army of Liberation". Other Arab states gave help to the "Army of Liberation".

A number of other guerilla forces co-operated with Kaukji; and the Jewish community in Jerusalem—which had formed a majority of the city's inhabitants since 1872—was completely cut off from the rest of Jewish Palestine and subjected to a prolonged siege. A U.N. Commission reported

on April 10, 1948, that "armed Arab bands from neighbouring Arab States have infiltrated into the territory of Palestine and together with local Arab forces are defeating the purpose of the Partition by acts of violence". Five months earlier the Arab League had openly stated its plan "for the occupation of Palestine and the forcible prevention of the establishment of the Jewish State".

The fighting which began in November 1947 was plainly forced upon the Jewish community. The leaders of the Jewish community issued many appeals for peace. Thus on October 2, 1947, the Assembly of Palestinian Jewry (Vaad Leumi) declared that "The Jewish people extends the hand of sincere friendship and brotherhood to the Arab peoples and calls them to co-operate as free and equal allies for the sake of peace and progress".

Even as late as April 28, 1948, after months of fighting and the beginnings of a mass exodus of Arabs from their homes, a Jewish organisation like the Workers Council of Haifa—one of the three largest cities in Palestine with a mixed Arab-Jewish population—published this statement:

"For years we have lived together in our city, Haifa, in security and in mutual understanding and brotherhood. Thanks to this, our city flourished and developed for the good of both Jewish and Arab residents; thus did Haifa serve as an example to the other cities of Palestine . . . Do not destroy your homes with your own hands; and do not bring tragedy upon yourselves by unnecessary evacuation and self-imposed burdens. By moving out you will be overtaken by poverty and humiliation. But in this city, yours and ours, Haifa, the gates are open for work, for life and for peace, for you and your families".

Appeals of this kind had very little effect, and when the British occupation of Palestine ended on May 14, 1948, in accordance with the U.N. partition Resolution, Israel was attacked by the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq—and contingents were promised by three other Arab states. When the invasions of Israel were launched many military experts expected that Israel would soon be over-run. The Arab armies were larger and better equipped than the defence forces of Israel. Up until the end of the British Mandate the ban on the import of arms into Jewish areas had been enforced with some vigour, while the Jewish defence force, the Haganah, had to make what preparations it could in a semi-clandestine fashion.

At first the Israeli forces were primarily interested in preventing the Arab armies over-running Jewish settlements—it had been decided that an effort would be made to hold every settlement, however isolated they might be. It was only after the initial Arab assaults had been thrown back that the Israeli forces could concentrate on consolidating the lines of communication between the areas of Jewish settlement.

By the end of 1948 hundreds of thousands of people had become refugees. Only a few thousands of these were Jews. When the whole of the walled Old City of central Jerusalem fell into the hands of the invading Jordanian Arab Legion (commanded by an Englishman, General Sir John Glubb), the entire population of the Jewish Quarter had to leave their homes and seek

refuge in Jewish West Jerusalem. At Etzion, between Bethlehem and Hebron, four Jewish settlements had to be evacuated. But the Jewish exodus was relatively small, and for one main reason: Jewish settlers had nowhere else to go. They knew that they had to stand and fight or be driven into the sea.

By contrast, the Palestinian Arab population was often disorganised, and there were many alternatives to standing and fighting. The exodus of Palestinian Arabs from their homes took place in the following phases:

*In the weeks immediately after the announcement of the U.N. Partition Plan in November, 1947, an estimated 30,000 Arabs left their homes. They were mainly members of well-to-do families. They believed that war was imminent and that there would be a swift and sweeping Arab victory. Meanwhile the heads of these families were anxious to spare their relatives the temporary danger and discomfort that might have to be endured before the Jews were disposed of.

*Before the end of the British Mandate, after the early Jewish successes against guerilla attacks, 200,000 or more Arabs left their homes, or were driven from them during the fighting. Most of them came from mixed urban areas which fell under complete Jewish control—as many as 70,000 Arabs fled from Jaffa and another 60,000 left Haifa. Many of these Arabs also believed that they were leaving their homes temporarily to spare their families from the bloody battles that would inevitably take place when Israel's neighbours launched their eagerly-anticipated invasion.

*Another 300,000 or more Arabs were displaced after May 15, 1948, when the armies of the neighbouring Arab states invaded Palestine, and fighting flared up in areas which had been relatively quiet until then. This third phase of the Arab exodus ended by November 1948. There was no large-scale fighting after that date.

Why did the Palestinians leave?

Many contradictory statements have been made about the causes of the flight of more than half a million Palestinian Arabs from their homes in 1947-48. Israeli spokesmen have pointed out a number of contributory causes, but have on the whole laid most of the blame at the doors of Arab governments and Arab propagandists who proclaimed a war of annihiliation and encouraged a wave of attacks on Jews. The Arab case, by contrast, is deceptively simple—the Jews set out deliberately to drive hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes, and carried out their planned campaign with the utmost ruthlessness and brutality. Even the most moderate Arab spokesmen accept this explanation. Clearly the truth differs from area to area—and even from street to street.

One reasonably well-documented case history is that of Haifa, from whose port and environs about 60,000 Arabs fled. Haifa held the biggest mixed Arab-Jewish community in Palestine outside Jerusalem and it was clear that control of Haifa would be of vital importance. On April 21, 1948, the General commanding British forces in Haifa informed Jewish and Arab

representatives that his forces were about to evacuate their positions to concentrate in the Port of Haifa and a number of military camps to the south. He explained that this decision was inevitable to enable British forces to maintain effective control over the port which was vital to the orderly implementation of the evacuation plan and to avoid British involvement in fighting against "either the Jews or the Arabs over an issue of no great material importance". The commander of Arab forces in the city left the same night aboard a French steamer for Beirut, "in order to fetch reinforcements". After his departure, a sanitary inspector of the Haifa Municipality assumed command of the Arab fighting forces that remained in the city.

Although the number of fighting men available to both sides in Haifa was nearly equal the battle lasted a bare 24 hours and the Arabs were routed.

At the invitation of the British commander a meeting was called of leading citizens of the Arab and Jewish communities to arrange an end to the fighting. The Jewish Mayor, Shabetai Levi, implored the Arabs of Haifa to stay in their homes, and guaranteed their safety. In part this Jewish appeal was prompted by concern for the future of Arab-Jewish relations and in part by the fear that the port of Haifa and the main municipal services would break down if the Arab workers fled. The answer of the Arab National Committee in Haifa was a memorandum sent to the governments of Arab League states on April 27, 1948. The memorandum said:

"The signing of a truce would be a disgrace to the Arab population of Haifa . . . our delegation proudly refused to sign the truce and asked that the evacuation of the population and their transfer to the neighbouring Arab countries be facilitated . . . The (British) military and civil authorities and the Jewish representatives expressed their profound regret at this grave decision. The Mayor adjourned the meeting with a passionate appeal to the (Arab) population to reconsider its decision".

This statement speaks for itself. The Arabs of Haifa followed the instructions of their own National Committee, and left. Even the woman hijacker, Leila Khaled, who claimed that she had been "driven" from her home, admitted that she was in fact driven away in a taxi—ordered by her mother in direct disregard of the absent father's instructions to the family to stay where they were.

The attempt of the Jewish authorities to stop the Arabs fleeing was noted in a report on April 28 by the British Superintendent of Police in Haifa:

"There is no change in the situation in Haifa. The Jews are still making every effort to persuade the Arab populace to remain and settle back into their normal lives in the town".

Jewish efforts to stem the flow of refugees was also noted by British journalists on the spot—as in this account by a special correspondent of the *Economist:*

"During subsequent days the Jewish authorities, who were now in complete control of Haifa (save for limited districts still held by the British troops) urged all Arabs to remain in Haifa and guaranteed them protection and security. As far as I know, most of the British civilian residents whose advice

was asked by Arab friends told the latter that they would be wise to stay. However, of the 62,000 Arabs who formerly lived in Haifa, not more than 5,000 or 6,000 remained. Various factors influenced their decision to seek safety in flight. There is but little doubt that the most potent of these factors were the announcements made over the air by the Arab Higher Executive, urging all Arabs in Haifa to quit. The reason given was that upon the final withdrawal of the British, the combined armies of the Arab States would invade Palestine and drive the Jews into the sea, and it was clearly intimated that those Arabs who remained in Haifa and accepted Jewish protection would be regarded as renegades".

In other parts of Palestine the tide of battle uprooted many Arabs. Some of the fiercest fighting of the war took place in the Lydda, Ramle, Latrun area on the route to Jerusalem which was heavily populated by Arabs. The Israeli Government, which had so many poignant, personal connections with the problems of exile and eviction, never sanctioned or tolerated a policy of driving out the Arabs. But, in the middle of a battle for survival, warnings to the population of a hostile town might sound like threats. The Israeli Army made use of loud-speakers either to warn the population to keep off the streets or to induce them to leave their homes temporarily in a phase of house-to-house fighting. It has always been the Arab contention that the real purpose in using loud-speakers was to frighten Arabs out of their homes, for good.

At the other end of the scale to the story of Haifa was that of Deir Yassin. This village lay to the south-west of Jerusalem, near the main route to the coast, in an area where there was much hot fighting. On April 8, 1948, patrols of the extreme para-military organisation, the Irgun Zvi Leumi, attacked the village; in the course of the action 254 Palestinian men, women and children were killed. Irgun apologists have claimed that the villagers first put out white flags and then opened fire on the Israeli force, killing eight and wounding another 57. The loud-speaker truck that was supposed to warn the Arab civilians to evacuate their homes fell into a ditch and never reached the village. When the Irgun forces charged into the village and began to quell resistance by lobbing hand grenades through doors and windows, there were many Arab families still in their homes. There can be no doubt that the killing constituted a horror-story which induced many Arabs to flee from their homes in other parts of Palestine.

Deir Yassin was one of the first Arab villages to be occupied by Israeli forces and the story of the killing had a profound effect on Arab morale. Accounts of the ruthlessness of the Irgun had a particularly important effect on the battle for Jaffa where Irgun forces took a prominent part in the fighting, and the collapse of the Arab morale was particularly marked.

As the Jordanian paper *Al Urdun* wrote on April 9, 1953:

"By spreading rumours of Jewish atrocities, killings of women and children, etc., (our leaders) instilled fear and terror into the hearts of the Arabs of Palestine, until they fled, leaving their homes and property to the enemy".

In addition many Arabs left because, as the Commander of the British troops at that time, General Sir Hugh Stockwell, put it: "The Arab leaders

left first, and no-one did anything to stop the mass exodus, which became first a rush and then a panic".

When the problem of the Arab refugees was discussed in the U.N. Security Council on March 4, 1949, the Soviet delegate had no doubt at all that it was the invasion of Israel by her Arab neighbours that was primarily responsible for the problem:

"Statements have been made on the Arab refugee question, but why should the State of Israel be blamed for the existence of that problem? When seeking to determine responsibility for the existence of the problem of the Arab refugees, we cannot fail to mention the outside forces . . . They pursue their own selfish interests . . . which have nothing in common either with the cause of peace and international security or with the interests of the Arab and Jewish peoples, and which only correspond to the aggressive designs of the leading circles of some states".

How many Refugees?

The question of how many Palestinian Arabs left their homes in 1947-48 has aroused much controversy. In order to arrive at any reasonably accurate figure for the number of refugees, one must start with the number of Arabs living in Palestine before the fighting began.

Before the British Mandate and the beginning of large scale Jewish immigration the total population of Palestine was less than one million. By 1947, according to official British figures, the Arab population of Palestine was 1,200,000. Of these 1,200,000 about 450,000 lived in areas which were not in Israeli hands when the truce agreements were signed in 1949, and which did not therefore become part of the State of Israel. Some estimates put the population of the Arab areas of Palestine in 1947 as 550,000 or even more.

The maximum number of Arabs who could have been living in those areas which became the State of Israel was therefore 750,000.

About 160,000 Arabs remained in their homes in the State of Israel, or were allowed to return to them soon after the fighting ended. The Israeli policy in the early months after the armistice agreements was to allow refugees to rejoin families, most of whose members had remained in occupation of their homes.

By subtracting 160,000 from 750,000, it seems that the maximum number of Palestinian Arab refugees displaced in the 1947-48 fighting would be 590,000.

On the other hand, the most usual Arab claims are of 900,000 refugees by the end of 1949, at least a million and a half by the mid-1960's, and upwards of two million by 1974. One yardstick which has been much quoted —although the Arabs allege that it was a grave under-estimate—was the figure of 726,000 given by the U.N. Economic Survey Mission at the end of 1949. Of this number, the Mission recommended relief—in the form of food and housing in United Nations-administered camps—for 652,000, of whom 25,000 were living in their homes but had been deprived of their means of existence as they were cut off from their farmland by the armistice lines. Prior to January 1, 1950, the U.N. authorities were actually producing rations for

940,000, and voluntary agencies were feeding another 79,000, making a total of 1,019,000 in all. This figure suggests that many thousands of people who were not refugees at all were securing U.N. aid. By May 1, 1950, when all refugee administration was placed in the hands of UNWRA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees), it inherited a ration roll of 957,000. By 1967 the ration roll had grown to 1,344,576; for UNWRA accepted the principle that any child of a refugee could also be registered. By 1970, more than half the Palestinian Arabs with refugee status had been born in exile.

The reasons for the inflation of the ration roll—which was never verified by a census—were very human ones. The bulk of the refugees had fled into the Kingdom of Jordan, which was a very poor country. Many of the refugees had relatives in Jordan, and elsewhere in the Arab world. Nothing was more natural than to "include" friends and relatives, who were not refugees at all, among applicants for U.N. relief. U.N. officials found it next to impossible to distinguish between one applicant and another, chiefly because of similarity of names. Some Arab clerks employed by UNRWA may have connived at the malpractices which went on. All births in refugee families were instantly registered; but deaths were not. One investigator was told: "We hold our funerals quietly; it would be foolish for a family to give up a ration card, simply because one of its members dies". It was also easy for earlier emigrants from those parts of Palestine which became the State of Israel to register as refugees. The forging of ration cards was possible too. Henry Labouisse, an UNRWA Director, told a Palestine Refugee Conference in Jerusalem on July 20, 1955, that "there are refugees who hold as many as five hundred UNRWA ration cards, and there are dealers in clothing ration cards approved by UNRWA. A black-market in ration cards was particularly active in Gaza, where some refugees or local dealers made small fortunes out of them—generally emigrating with the proceeds".

A spot-check carried out in one refugee camp by U.S. Senators in November 1959 revealed that out of 145 names of recipients of UNRWA rations which were checked, 61 were of people who were ineligible or did not exist. The Israelis have also produced a cross-check of UNRWA rolls in the Gaza Strip. These purported to show that in 1967 there were 312,000 refugees and 118,000 indigenous Arabs in the Strip. The Israeli census conducted after the 1967 war showed that there were actually 222,000 refugees and 134,000 local Arabs. In fact 90,000 refugees, or nearly one-third of those on UNRWA rolls did not exist.

One Jewish estimate may be mentioned in passing. It is that of Dr. Walter Pinner, who wrote a book "How Many Arab Refugees" in 1959. He believed that the total number of Arabs who lost their homes in 1947-48 was 539,000. Of these about 40,000 emigrated to countries far off and never claimed refugee status or U.N. assistance; while 70,000 settled in the four Arab countries contiguous to Israel, were quickly integrated into their populations and similarly did not claim assistance. This left a balance of 430,000 "genuine" refugees—in the Lebanon 90,000, Syria 78,000, Jordan 156,000

and in the Gaza Strip (under Egyptian military rule) 106,000.

The 1967 war produced a new refugee problem. Here, again, estimates differ widely. UNRWA believed that about 175,000 "old" refugees fled for a second time. In addition, there were 250,000 "new" refugees, who fled for the first time (this figure did not include the 100,000 Syrians evacuated from the Golan Heights as a part of the Syrian Government's programme for turning that area into a fortified camp). The UNRWA figure, therefore, is 425,000, or 525,000 inclusive of the Syrians. The great bulk of the refugees, "new" and "old", were from the Israeli-occupied area of the West Bank of the Kingdom of Jordan.

The Israeli estimate is much lower, of about 250,000 in all, fairly evenly divided between "new" and "old" refugees. The International Red Cross helped to negotiate an agreement between Israel and Jordan under which displaced persons could return home to the West Bank. The Jordanian authorities claimed to have received 40,000 applications, covering about 170,000 people; the Israeli figure of 32,000 applications related to about 100,000 people. Israel set a deadline of August 31, 1967, for the programme, but by that date the number of refugees who had returned across the River Jordan totalled only just over 14,000. Israel, at the request of the U.N. Secretary-General, extended the deadline, enabling another 4,000 to return before Christmas 1967. Since then the programme of return has continued at a measured pace. By the beginning of 1974 about 50,000 of the 1967 refugees had returned.

Nobody can say with any certainty today just how many Palestinian Arabs can be classified as "old" and "new" refugees. The most reliable estimates suggest that between 550,000 and 600,000 left in 1947-49 with another 130,000 to 160,000 completely "new" refugees in 1967. It would be reasonable to take a round figure of three-quarters of a million Palestinian Arabs who were displaced from their homes.

While there is dispute over the actual number of Arab refugees, there is, naturally, an even wider area of disagreement about the value of the property left behind by the Arab refugees. Even during the fiercest fighting in 1947-48 the Israeli authorities took action to punish looting and to keep some record of abandoned Arab property taken over by the Israeli forces. When Jewish refugees poured into Israel after the proclamation of independence, they were often moved into empty Arab property.

In 1950 the question of the custodianship of Arab property was dealt with in Israel by the passage of the Absentees Property Law. Under that law:

a. A Custodianship Council and a Custodian was appointed by the Ministry of Finance.

b. All absentees' property was vested in the Custodian.

c. The Custodian was authorized to grant to dependants of an absentee allowances out of the property held.

d. The Custodian had discretion to release vested property.

No similar legislation or system of custodianship has ever been created

by any Arab state to register the rights of Jews who abandoned property in Arab lands. As an Israeli spokesman has said: "In view of the mutual compensation which a solution to this two-fold problem requires, the absence of custodianships for Jewish property abandoned in Arab lands is liable to create certain difficulties".

The Custodian and his department at the Ministry of Finance worked with the authors of the report prepared under the auspices of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine which valued the immovable Arab property in Israeli hands at about £100 million. The Arab Governments refused to accept any global sum as a basis for negotiations.

After the Suez War in 1956, Michael Comay, the Head of the Israeli Delegation at the U.N., summed up the Israeli attitude on the question of compensation:

"The Israel Government stands by its offer to pay compensation for abandoned Arab property, without waiting for a peace settlement. It has unfortunately not been possible to implement this offer in the context of systematic economic warfare carried on against Israel by the Arab Governments, in the form of a comprehensive boycott, sea blockades, blacklisting and pressure against foreign firms with business connections in Israel, and so forth. It could hardly be practicable for Israel to pump vast sums of money into the economies of neighbouring countries, while those countries were trying to bring about Israel's collapse through economic strangulation. It is the policies of the Arab Governments which are holding up compensation for the refugees in those countries.

"Nevertheless, nearly all the blocked bank accounts in Israel have been paid out in foreign exchange, amounting to over seven million dollars. A great number of safe deposit lockers have also been handed over under special arrangements".

In fact several hundred claims from Arab refugees have been settled over the years, but the families concerned are almost invariably resident in America or Europe, for any individual Arab who signed an agreement with the Israeli authorities would be a target for attack by terrorists.

The U.N. and the Palestinian Refugees

The responsibility of the United Nations for the refugees was heavily stressed by Arab members of the U.N., with the result that between November 1948 and the War of 1967 the U.N. General Assembly adopted 23 resolutions on the subject of the Palestinian refugees, urging either their resettlement in their old homes, or the payment of adequate compensation if they preferred to be resettled in Arab countries.

Virtually all of the resolutions approved by the U.N. General Assembly quoted Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948, and called for the implementation of paragraph 11 of that resolution. This paragraph reads:

"*Resolves* that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those

choosing not to return, and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Government or authorities responsible.

"Instructs the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement, and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees, and the payment of compensation".

Under this important Resolution:

*The Palestinian refugees were given complete freedom of choice between returning to their old homes or receiving compensation for them. The alternative of "resettlement" was, however, put forward—even at that early date; and it was made clear that this was not the same as repatriation. Resettlement was offered as an alternative because it was understood that many, if not most Palestinian Arabs would prefer to live in Arab states and Arab communities, rather than in the Jewish state of Israel.

*The question of the scale and nature of compensation of refugees not wishing to return to their old homes was left open for negotiation. Israel thereafter made it plain that she was prepared to negotiate over the terms of compensation, irrespective of whether a final and overall peace settlement were reached. Israel had, however, to point out that her own ability to pay large sums of money in compensation was bound to be limited and that she would need the help of the outside world. In particular, Israel's ability to pay was reduced by the hermetic sealing of all of her land frontiers by her Arab neighbours, and by the Arab economic boycott which sought to prevent normal trade between Israel and neutral countries outside the Middle East theatre of conflict. One should note that, although individual claims for compensation have been made by Palestinian Arabs, no coherent attempt has been undertaken to make an overall assessment of the losses suffered by the refugees. Even by 1974 only unofficial and approximate guesses had been made: one of about £100 million, one of £390 million, and one of about £500 million. The Arabs have, in any case, refused to accept any sort of "global" assessment.

*The Conciliation Commission set up by the U.N. (its three members were appointed by the French, U.S. and Turkish Governments) made it clear from the time of its earliest meetings in March 1949 that the refugee problem, or any part of the refugee problem, should not be divorced from an overall peace settlement. This was explicitly stated in its 1951 report, which stated that "The Conciliation Commission, while fully recognising the extreme urgency of the refugee question, both from the humanitarian and political points of view, did not consider it possible to separate any one problem from the rest of the peace negotiations or from the final peace settlement".

The difference between the Arab and Israeli views on the settlement of the refugee question, through the implementation of Resolution 194, can be summed up as follows:

1. The Arab view has been that all Palestinian refugees, their children and their children's children, have an absolute and inalienable right to return to their old homes. Indeed, according to the Palestine National Covenant,

approved by all the countries of the Arab League in 1964, the whole of Palestine including the State of Israel is Palestinian territory and the property of the Palestinian people. The State of Israel should cease to exist, and only those Jews should be allowed to remain in Palestine whose families had been settled there before 1917.

2. The Israeli view was that repatriation of the refugees was dependent on the establishment of peace. The first Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. David Ben Gurion, made this plain to the Conciliation Commission in April 1949, when he explained that "so long as the Arab States refused to make peace, Israel could not fully rely on the declarations that Arab refugees might make concerning their intention to live in peace with their neighbours". It would, in fact, only be possible for Palestinian Arab refugees to fulfill paragraph 11 of Resolution 194, if Arab States enabled and encouraged them to live at peace with Israelis by granting Israel a full and final peace settlement. Israel took a calculated risk with those Arabs who had remained within her borders since the 1947-48 fighting.

Over the years statements by leading Arabs have hardly encouraged the Israelis to believe that peaceful coexistence would follow any massive return of the refugees:

*Dr. Mohammed Salah-ed-Din, Egyptian Foreign Minister, October 11, 1949:

"In demanding the restoration of the refugees to Palestine, the Arabs intend that they should return as the masters of their homeland, not as slaves. More explicitly, they intend to annihilate the State of Israel".

*Resolution adopted by the Conference of Arab Refugees, at Homs in Syria, July 11-12, 1957:

"Any discussion aimed at a solution of the Palestine problem which will not be based on ensuring the refugees' right to annihilate Israel will be regarded as a desecration of the Arab people and an act of treason".

*President Nasser of Egypt, in interview with the Swiss newspaper, *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, September 1, 1960, said:

"If the refugees return to Israel, Israel will cease to exist".

*Even the moderate Abdullah al-Yafi, when Prime Minister of the Lebanon, said to the newspaper *Al-Hayat*, April 29, 1966:

"The day for the realisation of the Arab hope for the return of the refugees to Palestine means the liquidation of Israel".

In 1967 the states of the Arab League decided at the Khartoum Conference that there should be no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no peace treaty with Israel.

Despite the Khartoum resolution, a remarkable degree of peaceful coexistence was achieved by the Israeli authorities and the Arab inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The border disappeared and thousands of Arabs entered Israel every day to work. Even after Egypt and Syria struck at Israel on Yom Kippur in 1973 it was still possible to drive without any check from the Arab territories into Israel. The bridge across the Jordan remained open even when a Jordanian brigade took part in the fighting along

the Golan Heights. But the sudden assault at Yom Kippur and subsequent terrorist attacks, such as the massacre at Kiryat Shimona, continue to cast doubt on the will for coexistence. Every terrorist attack, ostensibly designed to call attention to the plight of the refugees, raises fresh doubts about the possibility of resettlement within Israel.

The Sufferings of the Palestinian Refugees

No study of the refugee problems of the Middle East would be complete without something being said about the present conditions of the Palestinian Arabs, whose sufferings have been poignant, prolonged and unnecessary.

Roughly two-fifths of the refugees have settled in the Kingdom of Jordan where only a minority still live in camps. The Kingdom of Jordan, it should be recalled, was an integral part of the whole area of Palestine taken over by Britain after the First World War. It was detached from the remainder of Palestine, lying to the west of the River Jordan—in order to give a domain to the Emir Abdullah, the brother of King Feisal of Iraq. Although displaced from their own homes, the Palestinian refugees in Jordan are still living in Palestine.

Rather more than one-fifth of the refugees settled in Syria and the Lebanon among fellow-Arabs in areas immediately contiguous to Palestine. Roughly half of these refugees are still living in camps. A great many were very quickly integrated into the economy of the Lebanon; integration was a much slower process in Syria. In the latter country, it should be noted, Palestinian refugees were recruited by the State into a para-military force, the "El Saiqa", for guerilla activities along Israel's borders. This was not the case in the Lebanon (or Jordan, for that matter), where Palestinian activists built up a "state within the State".

About one-fifth of the refugees have since 1967 lived under temporary Israeli administration. They are, in fact, living in "Palestine proper" and had been doing so ever since the 1947-48 war. The number living in camps has been steadily reduced since 1967, partly as a result of the Israeli policy of resettling a proportion in new homes. The tendency to move out of camps, in the Israeli-occupied territories, owes much to the fact that unemployment, previously over 70%, was completely eliminated by 1972.

Well under one-fifth of the refugees were, by the beginning of 1974, scattered far and wide, mainly in more distant parts of the Arab world, but with some of them in Europe and America. A great many of these refugees had settled for good outside their former homeland, although retaining at least a sentimental affection for it. A considerable proportion of them were earning a fair livelihood and sent regular remittances to relatives in Palestine.

In most cases, although not in all, the worst-off refugees today are those still living in camps. The refugee camps have been described very often. Among a multiplicity of descriptions, one of the most recent is that of Peter Niesewand, of the *Guardian*, published on December 20, 1973. It is of the Baqa'a camp, six miles from the Jordanian capital of Amman:

"Inside Baqa'a camp is a sprawling square mile of tightly packed asbestos

and tin huts, with the occasional brick wall. The roads are dirty at this time of year, with heavy rains, the area becomes a bog, the mud is slippery, sticky and two to three inches deep. It pulls at shoes with sucking sounds as it parts, and it stinks. There is no running water in the houses and no electricity.

"Even so there are nastier places in the world—worse slums, with more disease and hunger, and less hope. Baqa'a camp is at least well-managed by UNRWA. Emergency rations provide the necessities for existence, and there is medical treatment.

"But the refugees won't settle down and give up their demands to return to Palestine. Their sense of identity and injustice is strong and they are ambitious.

"There are nine schools in Baqa'a, running twice daily shifts to cope with more than 11,000 children. The thirst for education is barely met on UNRWA's mean budget and only a tiny fraction of the refugee children are able to go to the university or to the vocational training centres which prepare the young Palestinians to get reasonably well-paid jobs and fend for themselves.

"Children in plastic macs and gumboots, or jerseys and coats, throng the cold, muddy streets of Baqa'a, talking cheerfully on their way to school. Every day they are given a glass of hot milk, a vitamin pill, and four hours education. Thousands also receive a hot meal six days a week to supplement the meagre monthly rations of flour, rice, sugar and oil supplied to their parents by UNRWA".

Unfortunately Palestinian refugee children have also been systematically taught in their schools to hate Israel and its people; UNRWA officials have reluctantly admitted that there is much virulent anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish propaganda in their school text-books. Five and six year-olds have been taught in their drawing-classes to depict Israelis as monsters of cruelty and ugliness. UNRWA has been powerless to prevent the perverse political indoctrination of the very young refugees, which has made a powerful contribution to the bitter and frustrated state of mind of much of the hard core of the refugee community.

Baqa'a is doubtless fairly typical of most refugee camps, which invariably have two features in common: they are grossly overcrowded and, at least in winter, wretchedly uncomfortable. One should, however, note the considerable change which takes place when a refugee camp has been integrated in the economy of the surrounding, economically viable area. This happened between 1967 and 1974 in the Gaza Strip, where the refugee camps had previously been the most desolate and depressing in the whole of the Middle East. The need of the Gaza refugees for employment dovetailed with Israel's own labour shortage. In addition, the Israelis developed the harbour at Gaza, modernised the packing of the all-important citrus crop, and set up local light industries. A state of full employment led to the very marked improvement of refugee living standards, especially where clothing, food and small domestic comforts were concerned. The same was true of the refugee

camps of the Israeli-occupied West Bank; here, too, the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees were alleviated.

The Arab States and the Palestinian Refugees

"Since 1948 Arab leaders have approached the Palestine problem in an irresponsible manner. They have not looked into the future. They have no plan or approach. They have used the Palestine people for selfish political purposes. This is ridiculous and, I could say, criminal".

One might imagine that this was an Israeli judgement. It was, in fact, part of a statement made by King Hussein of Jordan to an Associated Press correspondent in January 1960. Even more outspoken was the statement of Mr. Ralph Galloway, a former head of UNRWA, in Jordan in August 1958:

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

There is much evidence to support the remarks of King Hussein and Mr. Galloway. The attitude of most Arab states towards the refugee question has been based on the following precepts:

1. The maximum number of Palestinian refugees should be encouraged to retain "refugee status". This would enable all concerned to assert an enduring and inalienable right to return to former homes in Israel.

2. Palestinian refugees should not be encouraged to integrate themselves into the life of the Arab countries in which they found themselves. Should they do so, they ran the risk of losing any desire to return to their old homes —thus improving the State of Israel's chances of survival.

3. The welfare of the Palestinian refugees was primarily a matter for outside agencies, such as UNRWA, and not for the Arab states which had been forced to act as host countries. The whole Arab world, it was felt, had suffered an injustice; outside powers who had countenanced that injustice should therefore feed, clothe and educate the Arab refugees.

4. Periodic attempts to improve the lot of the refugees in a material sense, by rehabilitation or resettlement in Arab countries, should be treated with the gravest suspicion. For this could weaken their desire to retain "refugee status" and, by inference, of their desire to return to their old homes in Israel. Constructive plans, therefore, were generally blocked.

In general, one can say that Arab governments regarded the destruction of the State of Israel as a more pressing matter than the welfare of the Palestinian refugees. Palestinian bitterness and anger had to be kept alive. It was clear that this could best be done by ensuring that a great many Palestinians continued to live under sub-normal conditions, the victims of hunger and poverty. No Arab Government preached this as a defined policy; most Arab Governments tacitly put it into practice.

With the exception of Jordan, no Arab country automatically offered citizenship and a full place in the community to the Palestinian refugees;

and there was an element of self-interest in the attitude of the Jordanian rulers. King Hussein has never ceased to believe that Palestinian nationalism should find its home within the Kingdom of Jordan. A completely independent Palestinian state—even if it were to consist only of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—could become a threat to the existence of Jordan. For a Palestinian state could become a focus for the Palestinians of Jordan, who today form a majority of the Kingdom's population.

Arab countries have made wretchedly inadequate contributions towards the financing of UNRWA, the principal guardian of the refugees and the main provider for those living in camps. UNRWA's annual expenditure has varied between $26·8 million and $37·5 million. In many years there have been deficits, which have then been covered by special contributions. A deficit of $2·5 million was expected for the financial year 1973-74, and a deficit of at least $7 million for 1974-75—unless there should be radical changes in the scale of contributions. So far the U.S.A. has contributed nearly 70% of the funds for UNRWA's regular budgets. The second most important contributor has been Britain which has contributed $128,574,254 to UNRWA between 1950 and 1973, with an additional official contribution of £1,100,000 to refugee relief before 1950. France and Canada have also made substantial contributions, while Sweden has made some noteworthy special contributions to help to cover budgetary deficits. Israel's contributions have been on a higher scale than those of the Arab countries—since the 1967 war Israeli services and direct contributions to UNRWA have between them totalled around $3 million a year. The Soviet Union and Soviet Bloc as a whole have contributed nothing whatever.

The total contribution of the five richest Arab oil states up to 1972 was $8½ million. The nineteen Arab states managed $23 million, or under five per cent of UNRWA's regular expenditure. By contrast, six Western Powers —chief among them the U.S.A.—contributed $735 million. It is an unfortunate, even painful truth that these Western Powers have never received a word of recognition, let alone of thanks. Instead, they have been conventionally depicted in the Arab world as ruthless and extortionate "imperialists" and the enemies of the Arab people.

In August 1949 Israel offered to put the refugee problem at the top of any agenda for peace talks and also offered to take back 100,000 Arab refugees. It was, admittedly, specified that they should be resettled only "in areas where they would not come into contact with possible enemies of Israel", and "in specific places that would fit into the general plan of the economic development of Israel". This offer was rejected by the Arabs, after they had toyed with the possibility of specifying that all the 100,000 should return to areas allocated to Israel by the U.N. Partition Plan, and not to areas captured by Israel in the 1947-49 fighting. The U.N. Conciliation Commission tried to revive the question in 1951, by proposing that a limited number of Palestinians should be readmitted into Israel but, in effect, as new immigrants. The proposal was denounced by the Arabs as a flagrant contravention of U.N. Resolution 194. Israel, for her part, pointed out that her national security

would be prejudiced, in view of the fact that her Arab neighbours were maintaining a state of war and an economic blockade against her.

In 1950 UNRWA put forward a plan for moving refugees from the Gaza Strip where Egypt had created a huge refugee ghetto by denying them citizenship and freedom of movement. The aim was to resettle 150,000 of the Gaza refugees in Libya. The proposal was blocked by Egypt.

In 1951 UNRWA tabled a plan to move 50,000 to 60,000 Palestinian refugees, mainly from the Gaza Strip, to the El Arish area of Northern Sinai. The plan was still under serious consideration in 1953. Construction costs for the whole project would total $30 million. Egypt finally rejected the project on the grounds that it needed the waters of the Nile for its own citizens and that there would not in any case be sufficient water until the Aswan High Dam was completed. In reality, Egypt had no desire "to be seen" to be co-operating in the resettlement of Arab refugees anywhere except Palestine.

From 1952 onwards Israel released the blocked bank balances held by some Arab refugees worth more than $10 million. This was done "without strings". Had Arab governments responded by releasing some bank balances of Jews who had left Arab countries, this could have been the starting point for a process of restitution on a very much broader scale. But there was no "quid pro quo".

In 1952-54 UNRWA sought to negotiate with Syria, for the resettlement of up to 85,000 refugees living in that country or in the Lebanon. Syria, however, refused to co-operate.

In 1953, and again in 1955, proposals were made for utilising the waters of the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers. It was estimated in 1953 that development could produce 167 kilowatt hours of electricity and irrigate 126,000 acres, at a total cost of about $160 million. Construction would have given employment to 12,000 workers for at least four years, and the project when completed would have supported 140,000 to 150,000 people. In 1955 the special envoy of President Eisenhower of the U.S.A., Mr. Eric Johnston, obtained the preliminary agreement to the scheme of technical experts of Israel, Jordan and Syria. He planned to enlarge the scheme by constructing canals both to the east and west of the lower Jordan, thus opening up resettlement prospects for 250,000 refugees. In October 1955 the Arab League rejected these plans, which were technically feasible and would have been given American financial backing.

By 1959 UNRWA was obliged to report that its rehabilitation fund had been boycotted by the Arabs. The fund was created in 1950 to provide homes and jobs for Palestinian refugees outside the camps. A target of $250 million had been set; but after three years only $7 million had been spent—a further $28 million was lying unused in the fund. Thereafter, only a little money was spent on agricultural development out of the fund; the rest of the money was used to augment the general reserves of UNRWA.

In 1959 the U.N. Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjoeld, carried out a personal investigation into the possibilities of an overall resettlement scheme in the Middle East. Such a scheme would, like the earlier recommendations

of the U.N. Conciliation Commission, have been based on the general principle of resettling Arab refugees in Arab countries; as a result, it encountered Arab opposition and had to be dropped.

It is fair to say that, with a reasonable degree of Arab co-operation, up to 400,000 of the 1947-48 Palestinian refugees could have been resettled by the mid or late 1950's. By refusing co-operation, Arab governments accentuated the sombre fact of exile.

The Palestinians and the Right to Return to Israel

If the old hatreds were swept aside, could the refugees find a viable place in Israel society? The old homes of the Palestinian refugees no longer, in most cases, exist. Their simple dwellings have vanished, the very contours of the land which they farmed have disappeared. Palestinian smallholders and tenant farmers generally operated on a near-subsistence basis; they grew fruit, olives and vegetables, kept a few livestock. The intensive farming methods of the Israeli collectives and co-operatives which have taken over former Arab land are more akin to those used in Denmark or Holland; the Israelis have modernised and mechanised their agriculture and the marketing of its products. Were Palestinians to return to Israel in substantial numbers, they would almost certainly drift to the towns and into jobs least wanted by the Israelis themselves. They would become, automatically, an underprivileged as well as alien section of the community.

How much of a threat could the Arab refugees pose if they returned to Israel? It is understandable that Israeli leaders have not been able to take a more charitable view of Arab intentions than indicated in the Arabs' public pronouncements. These have generally denied Israel's actual right to exist. Even when more favourable, they have not gone beyond the granting of some sort of peaceful "arrangement", conditional on a resolution of the refugee question which would enable all refugees to return who wished to do so.

Friends of the Arabs have often pointed out that Arab pronouncements may be no more than an expression of "Arab hyperbole", that they are not necessarily "serious" and can be discounted, or that they are outdated by changes of mood and have been left on the record solely for "effect". To this the Israeli answer is plain; there is no real indication as to which Arab statement is hyperbole and which is not—Arab policy statements which are left on the record have to be assumed to be serious. Most Israelis tend to believe that majority Palestinian Arab opinion is against the survival of an Israeli State and the most that would be conceded would be the right of a minority of the present population of Israel to go on living in their homes.

The situation, then, of the Palestinian Arab refugees can be briefly summarized at the time of writing in the middle of 1974. Something over a million and a half Palestinian Arabs claim "refugee status". About 800,000 draw UNRWA food rations. Something over 400,000 are still living in camps, often under miserable conditions. A very small minority—estimates vary between 12,000 and 25,000—are organised into para-military activist "commandos". Probably not more than a few hundred have been playing

a direct part in terrorist activities, which have included the hijacking of aircraft, the dispatching of letter-bombs, the mass murder of civilians of friendly or neutral countries who have nothing to do with the Middle East dispute, and attacks on individuals—usually Israelis or members of Jewish communities in the western world. Whereas refugee questions in other parts of the world have been settled in a relatively short time, the Palestinian refugee problem has been kept alive for more than a quarter of a century—partly because of its special characteristics, and partly because this has been in the interest of Arab states which have been determined not to grant Israel real peace. Human needs have been generally subordinated to political considerations. This, more than anything else, has so far prevented progress towards a solution of a problem which has caused an unnecessary amount of human suffering.

TERENCE PRITTIE.

PART II

Israel's Oriental Refugees

The Jews of the Arab world lived in settlements from the Atlantic seaboard to the mountains of Kurdistan. In 1948 there were approximately 837,000 Jews living in Arab countries. By 1973 there were less than 50,000. As they poured into Israel they changed the face of the new State. In 1948 only one Israeli in ten was Oriental; today one in two. A nation created by Russian, Polish and other European Jews was suddenly flooded by Jews from Arab lands.

For the first three years after the independence of Israel the balance of immigrants was even—300,000 Europeans and 300,000 Orientals—but in the next years the balance shifted to the Orientals.

In 1948 there were 300,000 Jews in Morocco and in 1973 there were 30,000. In 1948 there were 23,000 Jews in Tunisia and in 1973 9,000. In 1948 there were 150,000 Jews in Algeria and in 1973 900. In 1948 there were 40,000 Jews in Libya and in 1973 40. In 1948 there were 75,000 Jews in Egypt and in 1973 500. In 1948 there were 45,000 Jews in Syria and in 1973 4,500. In 1948 there were 125,000 Jews in Iraq, and in 1973 300. In 1948 there were 54,000 Jews in the Yemen and in 1973 none. In 1948 there were 20,000 Jews living in the Lebanon and in 1973 2,000. In 1948 there were 5,000 Jews living in Aden and in 1973 none.

The Dwindling Communities

1. *Morocco*

The first Jews in North Africa had settled there at the time of the destruction of the Temple in 586 BC or even before. The size and fortunes of the Jewish community in Morocco fluctuated over the centuries but by 1948 the Moroccan community was the largest in North Africa.

French rule came in 1912 and was followed by a massacre in Fez in which 60 Jews were killed and 10,000 rendered homeless. The French presence helped the Jews in many respects, though they were not taken under French

protection in the same way as Algerian and Tunisian Jewry. The Sultan remained the nominal ruler and Moroccan Jews could not opt for French nationality. They were caught between the Europeans and the Muslims, not fully accepted by either.

When Israel was established, the Sultan appealed to his subjects to avoid violence against the Jews but, despite this, riots broke out in northern Morocco. Mobs in Oujda sacked the Jewish quarter on June 7, 1948, killing four Jews and severely injuring 30. On the same night in the nearby town of Djerada, mobs attacked the small Jewish community, killing 39. That year saw the beginning of mass emigration to Israel by Moroccan Jews. Between 1948 and 1953, 30,000 went. In the next two years the figure rose to 37,000.

The fight for Moroccan independence brought more problems for the Jewish community and there were attacks on Jews in Oujda, Casablanca and Rabat. Their status improved after the Sultan had returned from exile and independence had been granted in March, 1956. Some Jews were appointed to important government posts. But within weeks emigration to Israel was forbidden, though more than 40,000 managed to leave between 1956 and 1960. In 1959 all Zionist activity was banned and many Jewish organisations were closed down.

The new king made emigration legal when he came to the throne in 1961 and tried to restore a feeling of security among the Jewish community. But agitation by Muslim extremists had its effect, particularly after the Six-Day War in 1961; mass emigration to Israel went on, as did emigration to France and America by the more well-to-do Jews. By 1973 the Jewish community in Morocco was one tenth the size that it had been 25 years before. The 30,000 Jews who remain have a reasonably stable existence and the king makes every effort to persuade them to stay in Morocco. Occasional outbursts of anti-Israel feelings, however, cause some nervousness.

2. *Algeria*

Most of Algeria's 150,000 Jews left with the French exodus in 1962. They came from some of the oldest centres in North African Jewish history, such as Tlemcen, Oran and Algiers itself. Throughout the centuries their fortunes fluctuated. Their moment of emancipation came with French rule in 1830: at that time there were only 25,000 but their numbers steadily increased. French Jewish organisations took the lead in establishing schools. From 1870, when they were given French citizenship, Jews were educated in French state schools. The proportion of Jewish students in the universities was high: in 1941 there were 37 per cent in the Faculty of Medicine and 26 per cent in the Faculty of Law.

The naturalisation of Algerian Jews was followed by anti-Jewish riots: there were attacks on Jews in Tlemcen in 1881; in Algiers in 1882, 1897 and 1898; and in Oran in 1883. Synagogues were looted and scrolls destroyed. During the 1930's there were more anti-Semitic campaigns, culminating in the Constantine massacre of 1934.

In 1940 the Vichy regime withdrew French citizenship from Algerian Jews. Their children were banned from state schools. The Jews fought back through the Algerian Resistance, but when the struggle for Algerian independence began after the war, Jews were caught between the French and the nationalists. Their efforts to remain neutral failed: in at least one Jewish family the father was killed by the French OAS and the son by the Algerian FLN. In 1960 the FLN desecrated the Great Synagogue at Algiers and the Jewish cemetery at Oran. Jewish Agency officials were kidnapped and assassinated.

In December 1961 the FLN attacked Algeria's larger cities, in which the bulk of Jews lived. Within months, virtually the entire Jewish community had fled: more than 100,000 poured into France. Eventually one-tenth of Algerian Jewry opted for Israel.

The Ben-Bella regime tried to calm the fears of these Jews who remained after independence, but Boumedienne's rise to power in 1965 was followed by anti-Jewish discrimination and a hard line against Israel. All Algerian synagogues except one were taken over and converted into mosques.

3. *Tunisia*

Jewish communities had existed from Roman times and Tunisian Jews played a prominent role in world trade. There were many eminent scholars and rabbis throughout the centuries. They flourished under the rule of two progressive Beys during the mid-19th century but there was a reaction which led to attacks, particularly during the revolution of 1864.

The French Protectorate was established in 1881, changing the way of life for many Tunisian Jews, and from 1910 they were allowed to adopt French citizenship. But they remained on the edge of European and Muslim societies. Their problems increased during the Vichy regime and German wartime occupation. In Tunis the Great Synagogue was turned into a Nazi stable. Yet the number of Tunisian Jews rose from 48,000 in 1921 to 100,000 in 1951.

Tunisia was granted independence in 1956 and Bourguiba included a Jew in his first Cabinet. But despite the efforts to restrain extremism, 70,000 Jews left Tunisia within a few years of independence, more than 40,000 of them to Israel. By 1968 there were only 7,000 Jews in Tunisia. The nationalist policy of "Arabization" was probably the main factor: Jews felt a growing sense of insecurity despite official assurances. In 1958 the Jewish Community Council was abolished and during the 1960's Jews were made the scapegoat during a prolonged economic crisis; many were arrested.

4. *Libya*

Jews first settled in Libya at least 2,000 years ago and the Tripoli Community in particular flourished under Arab and Ottoman rule. In 1911 the Italians took control and for a quarter of a century Jews prospered; in 1931 the population was 21,000. But the Jewish community came under pressure in the mid-1930's. In 1941 young Arabs attacked the Benghazi community.

In 1942 Benghazi was reoccupied by Fascist forces after a brief occupation by the British: Jewish property was plundered and 2,600 Jews were sent to do forced labour in the desert, where more than 500 of them died. In Tripoli many Jews, too, were condemned to forced labour.

At the end of the war, when Libya was under British control, there were anti-Jewish outbreaks in Tripoli and other towns. In November 1945 there was a sudden attack on the Tripoli community in which 120 Jews were killed, 500 wounded and 2,000 made homeless. Synagogues were desecrated and there were disturbances in other towns. It took the British three days to restore order. The riots spurred Jews to emigrate and by 1951, 30,000 had gone, leaving only 8,000 behind.

After Libyan independence in 1952 there was little discrimination, but unrest developed again after the Six-Day War: 17 Jews were murdered and many arrested. Jewish emigration continued and the community dwindled away so that today only a handful remain.

5. *Egypt*

Egyptian Jewry dates back to the time of Jeremiah, but the first large-scale settlement came after Alexander the Great had conquered the land. The Jews flourished as traders, farmers and administrators. Under the Romans their fortunes varied and they found themselves in conflict with the Greek communities. Repression eventually led to a Jewish revolt in 115 AD in which they were virtually annihilated.

Under Arab rule they alternately prospered and languished: in the 14th century, for example, there was large-scale persecution. Then came the Ottoman conquest in 1517, after which the Jews shared in some generations of prosperity. With the Ottoman decline and the establishment of an independent kingdom, their troubles returned. By the 20th century there was a community of 60,000, of whom 30,000 lived in Cairo and 25,000 in Alexandria. More than half were merchants and the community was relatively well-off: it included several multi-millionaires.

Nazi wartime propaganda had some effect in Egypt and the riot led by the Young Egypt group in November 1945, in which many Jews were killed and injured, was a harbinger of more trouble to come. In 1947 a new company law put pressure on Jewish businesses and the establishment of Israel was a signal for a wave of persecution. Bombs were thrown, Jewish shops were looted and assets frozen. On one day of rioting—January 26th, 1952—£10 million worth of Jewish property was lost.

In July 1952, King Farouk was overthrown and the leader of the new government, General Neguib, acted more tolerantly. But he was replaced in 1954 by Nasser, who arrested many Jews and confiscated their property. After the 1956 Suez campaign, 3,000 were interned without trial. Thousands of others were served with deportation orders and ordered to leave Egypt within a few days: they were not allowed to sell their property or take capital with them. The community dwindled to 8,000 in 1957 and 3,000 in 1967.

When the Six-Day War broke out, some 200 Jews were again arrested and held prisoner. At one police headquarters Jews were kept without water for 48 hours. In the Abou-Zaabal prison outside Cairo, officers kicked and whipped prisoners and forced them to chant anti-Israel slogans. The 1,000 Jews remaining in Egypt were eventually allowed to leave in 1970. Of Egypt's 65,000 Jews, 35,000 now live in Israel.

6. *Syria*

The Jewish community in Syria dates back to Biblical times. The Jews survived the Mongol invasion and were strengthened by the arrival of Sephardi refugees who had been expelled from Spain and soon assumed the leadership of the Syrian community.

Under the Ottoman empire Jews prospered and the merchants of Aleppo forged trade links with East and West. Later this trade centre declined and the emphasis shifted to Damascus, where a new class of Jewish banker emerged. During the 18th century, Jews more than once held the post of finance minister, but towards the end of the 19th century the Damascus Jews suffered in the general economic decline.

The Palestinian dispute soon affected Syrian Jews. In 1947 there was an outburst of violence against the 10,000-strong community in Aleppo: all the synagogues were destroyed and 6,000 Jews fled to Turkey and Lebanon. Those who remained were a target for further violence. Anti-Jewish legislation included the freezing of bank accounts and confiscation of property.

After the establishment of Israel their condition grew worse. In 1947 there were 15,000 Jews in Syria; by 1957 only 5,000 remained. Palestinian Arab refugees were housed in former Jewish houses. New laws deprived Jews of the right to sell their property or move more than three miles from their homes; they had to carry special identity cards; they were prohibited from employment in government offices; soldiers and government officials were forbidden to patronise Jewish shops. Many organisations have raised the matter of Syrian treatment of Jews at the UN Commission on Human Rights.

7. *Iraq*

The Jews of Babylonia formed one of the oldest and most distinguished communities. After suffering from persecution towards the end of Persian rule, they welcomed the Arab conquerors: under Arab rule, Jewish academics blossomed and great teachers, such as Saadia Gaon, became dominant figures in Judaism.

As in most Arab states, Jewish fortunes in Iraq varied according to the mood of their rulers. During the reigns of tolerant Caliphs they were granted a good deal of freedom in their affairs: under intolerant Caliphs they suffered. The same was true under the Mameluke and Turkish Pashas; some protected, some persecuted the Jews. But as traders, writers, physicians and government officials, Jews reached prominent positions. During the 19th century they controlled much of Iraq's commerce and several were elected to the Turkish Parliament after 1908.

Under the British Mandate they remained prominent in commerce and banking. But when Iraq achieved independence in 1932 the new government acted against the Jews. Severe laws were introduced and many Jews were dismissed from official posts. From 1935 they had to leave a deposit of money behind when they visited Palestine. During the Second World War, Nazi propaganda was rife and in an outburst of brutality during 1941 hundreds of Jews were murdered by mobs.

Of the 150,000 Jews in 1947, 100,000 lived in or near Baghdad. After 1948 emigration was forbidden and hundreds of Jews were arrested. Then in 1950 the ban was lifted for a period. Between 1948 and 1951 more than 120,000 Iraqi Jews settled in Israel. By 1952 only 6,000 remained: by 1968, there were 2,500, living in squalid conditions. During 1968 chanting mobs in the streets of Baghdad acclaimed the stringing-up in public of the bodies of nine Jews accused of espionage.

There were almost 20,000 Kurdish Jews living in northern Iraq, most of whom moved to Israel. They were farmers, peddlers and labourers and had lived in amity with their Muslim neighbours in small towns and villages.

8. *Yemen*

Jewish settlements in the Yemen date back to the destruction of the First Temple. After a few centuries of relative prosperity they entered a period of decline. They were employed in a variety of occupations—tailors, potters, goldsmiths, silversmiths and armourers among others. They were also called upon to do certain jobs which were held to contaminate Muslims, such as cleaning the public latrines and sweeping the streets. They were expected to preserve an air of poverty, and stoning Jews was a popular habit in some parts of the Yemen.

Emigration to Palestine began as early as 1882, and 16,000 arrived between 1919 and 1948. The great surge came between June 1949 and June 1950: nearly 50,000 fled to Aden and were flown from there to Israel in "Operation Magic Carpet". In Israel they acquired a reputation for hard work and quick assimilation.

9. *Aden*

Under British rule the Jews of Aden increased from 2,000 in 1872 to 5,000 in 1947, mostly working in small businesses. There was a sudden outburst of violence in December 1947, when an Arab mob attacked the Jewish quarter, killed several people and burned down buildings. Between 1948 and 1967 most Aden Jews went to Israel. The remaining 130 left after further riots in June 1967, in which an aged Jew was beaten to death.

10. *Lebanon*

Minorities in the Lebanon have fared better than in any other Middle Eastern countries but psychological and economic pressures led most Jews to leave. Of the 1948 total of 20,000 more than 90 per cent have left.

Arab "Tolerance" and the Jewish Exodus

The history of Jews in the Arab world varied by country and century, but one thing was usually true: there was no real equality between Jew and Muslim, in theory or in practice. If the Arab ruler was tolerant, the laws governing minorities were interpreted lightly; if the ruler was tyrannical, the Jew was reduced to the status of a slave.

Jews were expected to recognise their inferiority. When trouble occurred it was usually because the Arab thought the Jew had failed to keep his place. At times throughout history tyrannical Arab rulers invented ways to stigmatise the Jew. One Sultan ordered them to dress in black cloaks and pointed hats; an Egyptian ruler forced Jews to wear wooden blocks around their necks; in some countries they had to walk with head downcast, or squat when they talked to a Muslim. The oath of a Muslim automatically nullified the oath of a Jew, so he was always at the mercy of hostile Muslim neighbours.

A distinguished North African historian wrote: "Humiliation was accepted by the Jew as part of life. He learnt to endure the slap in the face with which he was rewarded when he paid his tax, the blow administered as he walked down the street, the deliberate jostling, the insult. He was an outcast of inferior status".

There were other complex reasons, apart from Arab intolerance, for the Jewish exodus after 1948. In the Yemen there was a surge of messianic fervour among people who had previously had little contact with their fellow Jews. In Iraq there was a mixture of insecurity, traditional messianic feelings and Zionism. In North Africa, the departure of the French, the political chaos and the uncertainty of their future under the new nationalist regimes made many Jews look towards Israel or France.

Oriental Jews came to realise that there was no future for them in Arab countries, either as individuals or as part of a Jewish community. Under the new nationalist regimes they found themselves robbed of legal status, stripped of whatever rights they had possessed, and potential future victims of Arab political extremists.

Before the State of Israel was established, Jews in Arab countries were victims of occasional anger, but after 1948 they became hostages. Whenever Arab fortunes suffered a reverse Jews under Arab rule paid a price.

Israel's Task of Absorption

Absorbing the Oriental immigrants has been one of Israel's greatest achievements. The Jewish Agency was given the responsibility for immigration and the absorption of all immigrants in August 1948, three months after Israel became independent. At first the immigrants were housed in housing abandoned by the Arabs, and in immigrant camps. In 1950 it was decided to open settlements called *ma'abarot* after the Hebrew word meaning "transition". These were intended to provide temporary housing for an immigrant, who had to support himself and his family with aid from the Jewish Agency and the Government.

Inhabitants of the *ma'abarot* were housed at first in tents. Wooden huts were used as clinics, schools and offices. In northern Israel, tin shacks were built. During the first months of mass immigration, the immigrants also flocked into former Arab towns; North Africans concentrated in Jaffa, the Wadi Salib district of Haifa, Lod and Ramle.

Those who arrived early were lucky enough to move into habitable buildings, but from the winter of 1949 they often had to take over ramshackle houses which were on the verge of collapse. The absorption authorities were not yet geared for immigration on a vast scale and were unable to look after many of the immigrants. There were great mistakes as well as great achievements.

The North Africans who arrived in Israel were often desperately poor. Their elite—the intellectuals and the wealthy businessmen—had usually moved to France. The new immigrants were used to harsh conditions. In Casablanca Jews had been crowded together in their quarters at 870 to an acre; in parts of Tunis, 1,000 per acre. Some had lived in hovels where there was barely room to stretch one's legs. The health of these Jews reflected their living conditions, presenting the Israeli medical authorities with a heavy burden. The primitive conditions in immigrant camps meant that there was grave danger of epidemics.

Eye disease was the most common illness. In certain parts of southern Tunisia, 80 per cent of the Jews had trachoma; in southern Algeria the figure was even higher. Skin diseases such as ringworm, impetigo and excema, were prevalent.

Morocco had possibly the worst record of all. In Casablanca nearly half of the 1,100 Jewish children who died in 1947 were under two years. Nearly a third of those who died in their first year were victims of diarrhoea or gastroenteritis.

Tuberculosis was widespread. In one town in southern Tunisia one child in three had the disease and one adult in five. Moroccan Jews had a mortality rate caused by tuberculosis of 14 per 10,000 inhabitants. Syphilis, too, was a grave problem among North African Jews.

Volunteer medical teams (many from abroad) in the Israeli immigrant camps worked wonders with makeshift facilities. Within ten years the infant mortality rate among Oriental Jews was the same as for the nation as a whole.

Today most of the TB sanatoria and eye clinics have been closed. The rehabilitation of the Oriental refugees has been one of the most remarkable feats in medical history.

The ship-to-village scheme was introduced during the 1950's so that many immigrants could by-pass the transit camps. They were taken direct from their ships to the agricultural settlements or to the development towns. The development towns had been planned as part of the government policy of population dispersal to prevent the immigrants from flocking to the big cities. The *ma'abarot* in the Negev and Galilee served as nuclei for the new development towns like Yeruham, Dimona, Kiryat Shmonah, and Sderot.

The rate of construction could not, however, keep pace with the influx of immigrants and the *ma'abarot* became fixtures—the Hatserim Ma'abara at Beersheba, for instance, one of the worst slums in the country, was still there when the Six-Day War broke out in 1967. It was small wonder that the *ma'abarot* created social problems. Worst of all for the Oriental immigrant was the disintegration of the family. In the old country the father was king: his wife and his children looked on him with awe. Now the father lost status: he could not speak Hebrew; his children learned it quickly. He probably could not get a job; his wife was more likely to get a job first and she became the breadwinner. He stopped being a patriarch and became a problem.

Housing the Homeless

There were 54,000 Israeli families living in grossly overcrowded conditions at the beginning of 1971—three or more people per room. About 30,000 more families were living in substandard houses. Some 8,000 families were living in huts and other temporary houses; 5,000 young couples had no housing of their own. A high proportion of the badly housed were Orientals. But these figures must be set against the achievements in providing accommodation.

Most of the Oriental immigrants arrived in the early years of the State, when money was short and resources were few. They were given the only accommodation which Israel could afford at the time—usually cramped apartments with a couple of rooms. At the time they accepted it gratefully: now, when they see more spacious and better-equipped housing being provided for new immigrants, they naturally feel discontented. There have been cases of Oriental Jews, who arrived in the early 1950's and still live in sub-standard housing, seeing relatives arriving 20 years later who have moved straight into modern apartments.

The accommodation that the Orientals received when they arrived 20 years ago was the same as that given to Europeans, but the larger size of the Oriental families led to severe over-crowding in accommodation which was adequate for the smaller European families. Catching up with arrears of slum clearance has been hampered by the need to provide housing for new immigrants, but the pace has been stepped up: 9,500 apartments were built during 1972, exceeding the total built during the whole of the previous 12 years for slum clearance.

During the five years 1973-77 the Israeli government had planned to build 9,500 apartments each year for slum clearance; 60 per cent were to be for rent. More money was to be spent on improving existing housing estates. The Yom Kippur War led to a postponement of these plans.

The scale of achievement so far is considerable:

*Of the Oriental families who arrived in Israel before 1948, 37 per cent were living in overcrowded conditions in 1960; by 1970 the figure was reduced to 12 per cent. Of the Oriental families who came after 1948, 49 per cent were overcrowded in 1960; by 1970 the figure was 17 per cent.

*The Ministry of Housing built 390,000 apartments between 1949 and 1970, of which more than half were intended for young married families and slum clearance.

*In agricultural settlements there were 19,000 families in 1965 living in unfit houses; by 1972 more than 9,000 had been brought up to standard or rehoused, and 3,000 more had rehabilitated their homes by their own efforts.

*The number of children sleeping three or more per room has declined from 231,000 (26 per cent) to 190,000 (20 per cent) between the years 1969 and 1972.

There are other ways in which the gap is closing:

*The increase in Oriental ownership of household appliances. In 1960 only 17 per cent of Oriental families had refrigerators; within ten years the figure had risen to 92 per cent. In 1960, 8 per cent had washing machines, in 1970, 46 per cent.

*The gap between the incomes of Oriental and European families is narrowing. Between 1963 and 1970 the income of European families rose by 34 per cent; that of Oriental families by 46 per cent.

*One Israeli marriage in five is between Europeans and Orientals; the rate of mixed marriage is growing at 1 per cent every year.

Educating the Underprivileged

As in most other countries, Israel's underprivileged have difficulty in getting a good education. Children who live in overcrowded homes, often with illiterate parents, are most likely to be school drop-outs. They have no facilities for studying at home, no books to read, no help with homework.

Schools in remote development towns or in slum areas have greater difficulty in attracting teachers than those in old-established neighbourhoods. A survey of 280 new towns and immigrant settlements in 1965 showed that more than half of the teachers there had not received full teaching diplomas. Many were on their first teaching assignments and their encounter with the realities of the classroom was a shock, causing many to quit. Constant staff changes had a bad effect on school performance.

The consequences were inevitable. Eighty per cent of children under 14 who do not attend any school are Oriental, as are 80 per cent of youths who neither attend school nor work. These figures dovetail with the fact that 90 per cent of all children who live in substandard housing are Oriental.

By the ninth year of schooling, only 24 per cent of the Oriental children have stayed the course, compared with 55 per cent of the Europeans; at matriculation stage, only 6 per cent of Orientals are still in school, compared with 35 per cent of the Europeans. The gap between the mass of Oriental and European children is noticeable at the first year in primary school and the problem becomes more pronounced as each school year passes unless it is tackled.

The Israeli Government has taken many steps to try to solve the problem of the underprivileged child. These include:

**Long school-day*. The child stays at school, for two or three hours after the formal classes have finished. He does his homework under supervision and engages in art, handiwork and games. During 1971-72, 71,600 children benefited from this scheme.

**Extended school year*. The living conditions of many Oriental families mean that the child's educational progress is harmed during the long summer vacation. To keep such children off the streets their school year is lengthened: the lessons are held in an informal atmosphere, with no examinations or homework. During 1971-72 there were 843 such classes with 45,000 pupils taking part.

**Graded tuition fees*. Secondary education is fee-paying in Israel but in practice most Oriental families are exempted: 65,000 secondary school pupils enjoyed full exemption during the 1970-71 school year and of these 65 per cent were Oriental. Plans to end all school fees have had to be postponed because of the Yom Kippur War.

**Higher education*. Special pre-academic courses lasting nine months are given to Oriental soldiers in the Hebrew University and the Haifa Technion to bring them up to university entrance level. Of those who completed the scheme during the first six years, 40 per cent went on to do university work.

**Teaching the parents*. Efforts are being made to educate illiterate mothers so that they can help with the education of their children.

The overall results have been impressive. In the 14-17 age group only 130 of every 1,000 Oriental children were enrolled in school in 1956. By 1970 the number had risen to 442 per thousand.

In this vital task of education the Army has played a vital role. Half of the soldiers on section commander courses are of Oriental origin.

The Army is the great leveller. Too great a preponderance of the ethnic group in a unit is avoided: different communities and social classes are deliberately mixed. A squad is the meeting place for young men from the Kibbutz and those from the town; Moroccans and Europeans; poor and rich.

It would be wrong to suggest that this enormous effort to integrate the Oriental refugees had been carried through without some tears and some failures. Many problems remain and in the early 1970's there was a wave of protest, particularly among young Oriental Jews, at the fact of continued inequality. But much of this protest has been channelled into normal political activity which has been particularly effective at a local level. In 1950 only 13 per cent of local government councillors were Orientals; by 1969 the figure had grown to 44 per cent. In the Labour Party 51 per cent of the local councillors are Orientals.

As Mordechai Bar-On, a former chief education officer of the Israel Defence Forces, has written: "The Jew who comes to Israel expects in advance full freedom and social equality. From the moment he arrives he is not ready to suffer any unjustified limitation of his freedom. His sensitivity to social inequality is currently high. A Jew who only yesterday stood at the foot of the civic ladder in Baghdad or Casablanca, and would not have

dreamed of protesting against that situation, becomes overnight in Israel a fighter for his democratic rights".

Conclusions

1. The arrival of three-quarters of a million refugees from Arab countries saddled Israel with a massive burden. Most arrived when the new state was least able to cope with them; since much of the immigration was of the "rescue" type, it could not, by its very nature, be planned ahead. Israel is still paying the price of the years which these immigrant masses spent in tent-towns and ma'abarot.

2. The standard of life for Oriental families has improved dramatically: higher incomes, better housing, greater ownership of consumer goods, and better education. Despite the progress towards economic and political equality, however, a gap between Europeans and Orientals still remains; it has produced social problems which will not be totally solved for many years to come.

3. The Jews left behind property worth hundreds of millions of pounds. In Baghdad alone the Iraq Government in 1951 confiscated £35 million in cash from Jewish accounts in banks plus vast quantities of other assets and property. In Egypt an estimated £350 million of property was left behind. In Algeria the sums involved were even larger.

4. Return to Arab countries and resettlement there is obviously unthinkable. The Oriental Jews are now fully-fledged Israelis; and there is no indication that the Arab regimes would restore the money and property which they took from the Jews. Persecution, discrimination and brutality in such countries as Syria and Iraq have poisoned any productive relationships which might have existed.

5. The solution of the Middle East refugee question has to be based on a recognition that an exchange of population has taken place. Though the circumstances varied, the exchange was irrevocable.

BERNARD DINEEN.

PART III

Summing-up the Overall Refugee Problem in the Middle East

The problems of the Palestinian Arab refugees who lost their homes in Israeli-occupied territory, and of the Jewish immigrants into Israel from Arab countries, are two sides of the same coin. They are not identical and it would be wrong to seek to equate them exactly. But they represent between them an immense sum of human suffering and a major displacement of population in the Middle East. The outcome has been the creation of an actual majority in the State of Israel of Jews who were displaced from their homes in other parts of the Arab world, and of large Arab refugee minorities in neighbouring Arab states.

With their children, the Jews of oriental origin now account for half the population of Israel. They constitute the "under-privileged" half of the community, whose social problems will probably not be entirely solved for another half-century—and then only if there is real peace in the Middle East.

It is unthinkable that these Jews will ever wish to return to former Arab "home-countries", where they suffered intermittent persecution and were usually regarded as second-class citizens. In this 20th century of world-wide nationalism, it is entirely natural for these Jews of oriental origin to regard themselves as fully-fledged Israeli citizens, with a total sense of loyalty to the Israeli State. In course of time, moreover, they will become less distinctively apart. Intermarriage, education and national service will help to ensure this.

For the present, these Israeli citizens are less inclined than those of European origin to think in terms of co-operation and comradeship with Arab neighbours. Against their Arab neighbours many of them still harbour resentment—which is not the sole prerogative of the dispossessed Palestinians. But there is no reason why this should not change; the climate and terrain of Israel are immediately acceptable to people from all parts of the Arab world. It is these Israelis who are most likely, in the course of time, to make Arabic their second language. If peace does come they should play the main part in the future in ensuring that Israel has strong links with her Middle Eastern neighbours.

Unlike the Jewish immigrants into Israel, the Palestinians are not living in countries of their own choice, whereas the Jewish immigrants into Israel are. There is another big difference: efforts to solve the problems facing the Jewish immigrants are already under way, whereas the Palestinian Arab refugees have been encouraged to believe that the only logical answer to their problems is a mass return to a land in which other people are now living. All too seldom have the relative advantages been spelled out to them of making their homes in Arab communities, under Arab flags and with a predominantly Arab way of life, rather than returning to non-existent homes (which most of them have never seen) in order to live under alien rule. The Palestinian dream, and the realities of the Middle East situation after decades of strife and division, have been poles apart.

Under existing circumstances, the outside world does not have to concern itself with the Jews of oriental origin in Israel. Their outstanding problems will be dealt with, and with the same expertise and inspiration with which the Israelis have tackled more problems than have confronted any small state in the history of the world. By contrast, the outside world continues to be confronted with the sufferings and emotions of the exiled Palestinian Arabs. What, therefore, can be done to help them?

A four point proposal which was put forward recently by a British spokesman of the Palestinian cause, Mr. John Reddaway, had this to offer:

*The Palestinian Arabs displaced in 1967 should return, as soon as Israeli forces are withdrawn from territories occupied by Israel in the Six-Day War. The Golan Heights and Sharm-el-Sheikh might be excluded from this proposal.

*A compensation fund for the Palestinian Arabs should be created, and the bulk of the money for it should be paid in, or raised, by Israel. Payments to individual refugees should begin as soon as possible, and the first charge on the fund should be for the disruption of the lives of the refugees (loss of

earnings, loss of earning capacity, social and educational disadvantages, etc.). The second charge should be for loss of property, for which the payment of compensation could be spread over a series of phases.

*The right of the individual refugee to return to the State of Israel should be recognised, even though the refugee's old home might no longer be available.

*Repatriation of refugees should be spread over a period of at least ten years, with not more than 20,000 refugees being repatriated in any single year. Repatriation would have to be restricted to whole families, and to areas designated by the Israeli Government. In the event of a threat to Israel's security, the repatriation programme could be suspended, but only with the approval of a U.N. "referee".

Mr. Reddaway made the interesting additional proposal that some sort of informal agreement on the scale of repatriation could be reached. It would be for the Israelis to accept the principles of the individual Palestinian's right of return—a principle on which all Palestinians set great store—and for the Palestinians themselves to establish that a mass-return would not, in fact, take place. Only in this way could it be accepted that the best prospect, on the whole, for Palestinian Arab refugees was to be re-settled, on a permanent basis, in Arab countries and not under the alien rule of the Israelis. Only in this way, Mr. Reddaway argues, would it become apparent that there could be effective coexistence between an Israeli State and its Arab neighbours.

Mr. Reddaway's proposals are constructive, although not all of them would be immediately or even eventually acceptable to an Israeli Government.

We can add some of our own:

1. There should be a Refugee Claims Conference to examine the whole question of the losses of land and property, of both Jews and Arabs, and of the nature and extent of sufferings for which compensation might be paid. Where land and property were concerned, a balance sheet could be drawn up; values at the time that losses were incurred, and present-day values, would be taken into account. Israel and her Arab neighbours should undertake to reach an "equalisation agreement" for compensation of all classes of refugee. If a residual sum were left over, owing either to the Palestinian Arabs who left their old homes or to Jews who left Arab countries, this should be covered by some form of an international loan. The outside world should, in any case, be prepared to shoulder some part of the overall burden; this would be a small price to pay for peace and stability in the Middle East.

2. There should be a massive aid programme, to which the outside world would be asked to contribute, to help resettle Middle East refugees—wherever they might find themselves—and give them a more civilised and materially better existence. This programme would concern itself essentially with refugees still living in camps and lacking jobs, and it should indicate very clearly what are the constructive alternatives to repatriation. The oil-rich Arab states could well make a contribution; there would be a case for the Jewish communities of the world also contributing.

3. A regional plan for such resettlement could be drawn up, indicating suitable areas of settlement, and economic programmes could be co-ordinated. Thus the "Johnston Plan" for the utilisation of the waters of the Jordan and Yarmuk could be revived, enabling perhaps 200,000 Palestinians to be settled in the Jordan Valley. A similar plan could be worked out for the utilisation of the much greater flow of the Litani river in the Lebanon. The El-Arish project, in northern Sinai, has already been mentioned, while the construction of the Euphrates Dam will offer possibilities of mass resettlement in Syria.

4. Since relief measures must go on, even during a period of constructive planning, UNRWA budgets—at present showing large and increasing deficits —should be supplemented by the outside world. Here, too, the oil-rich Arab states have the chance of making a massive contribution; they will be accumulating surpluses estimated at 72 billion dollars in 1974 alone as a result of the raising of the oil price by around 400 per cent during the period October 1973—January 1974. Nor is there any reason why the Communist countries should not contribute to the welfare of Palestinian Arabs for whom they have shed so many crocodile tears. One should recall that these countries, chief among them the Soviet Union, have contributed not one penny to UNRWA.

5. Pending a full and final peace settlement, the Israelis should be encouraged to go on doing everything possible to improve the material lot of the refugees in Arab territories which are at present under Israeli occupation. They have already done much, by virtually eliminating unemployment, raising living standards and building some new homes. A supplementary programme could be launched under U.N. or other international aegis, in which priority would be given to the creation of new industries in areas which will revert to Arab sovereignty.

6. Jews still living in Arab countries, and wishing to leave them, should be granted this elementary human right. Many of these people are living in perpetual apprehension, or even in a state of terror. Most of them are denied a normal means of existence, and a considerable proportion are old and infirm. The Arab countries which have continued to put insurmountable obstacles in the way of emigration of these Jews are Syria and Iraq.

There are other positive steps which could be taken, when there is a final Middle East peace settlement—and it must be remembered that U.N. resolutions have always envisaged a regulation of the refugee question as an integral part of such a settlement. But much can be done in the meantime. Countries like Britain and France, with laudable past records of aiding communities in need, have a duty to point this out and suggest practical steps. In the past there has been a terrible, even criminal, failure to promote constructive action. Today the basic consideration must be the need to solve the whole Middle East refugee question, with imagination, commonsense and wholehearted effort. An irreversible exchange of populations has taken place, involving a huge sum of suffering and bitterness. Recognition of this fact by both Arabs and Israelis may help them to live together, and work together for a fairer future for the whole of the Middle East.

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HON. TERENCE PRITTIE

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