

# CONFLICT IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

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## The Israeli War of Independence and Palestinian Nakba

**WHY DID HALF THE PALESTINIAN ARAB POPULATION ABANDON  
THEIR HOMES AND LAND IN PALESTINE IN 1948?**

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## Palestinians started the war

**Source 1:** Aftermath of attacks on the Jewish Commercial Quarter in Jerusalem on 2nd December 1947, a few days after the positive vote at the UN on the Partition Plan for Palestine





# Palestinians started the war

**Source 2:** Quotes from Arab leaders in response to the UN Partition Plan of 1947

“The blood will flow like rivers in the Middle East,” promised Jamal Husseini, [secretary to the Executive Committee of the Palestine Arab Congress (1921-1934) and to the Muslim Supreme Council]...Arab politicians had warned that “if a satisfactory solution of the Palestine case was not reached, severe measures should be taken against all Jews in Arab countries.”

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said: “We will smash the country (Israel) with our guns and obliterate every place the Jews seek shelter in.



# Zionists always planned for a Jewish State

**Source 3:** A future Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin giving a speech in Tel Aviv, 14th August 1948. Note the map of Greater Israel in front of him





# Zionists always planned for a Jewish State

**Source 4:** Joseph Weitz was a director of the Jewish National Fund. This is an extract from Norman Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 1995

Yet, even leaving the ideological mainsprings of the Zionist project aside, the massive immigration of Jews anticipated by the Zionist movement, too, presupposed the expulsion of the indigenous Arab population. As early as 20 December 1940, Weitz wrote in his diary:

it must be clear that there is no room in the country for both peoples. ... If the Arabs leave it, the country will become wide and spacious for us. ... The only solution is a Land of Israel ... without Arabs. There is no room here for compromises. ... There is no way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, and to transfer all of them, save perhaps for [the Arabs of] Bethlehem, Nazareth and old Jerusalem. Not one village must be left, not one [bedouin] tribe. The transfer must be directed at Iraq, Syria and even Transjordan. For this goal funds will be found. ... And only after this transfer will the country be able to absorb millions of our brothers and the Jewish problem will cease to exist. There is no other solution. (*Birth*, p. 27)





# The Arab leadership told Palestinians to leave

**Source 5: British police report on the Arab evacuation of Haifa**

District Police Headquarters  
(C.I.D.)  
P.O.B. 700.  
Haifa.  
26th April, 1948.

S E C R E T  
A/A.I.G., C.I.D.

Subject:- General Situation Haifa District.

Haifa remains quiet. Yesterday produced a noticeable change in the general atmosphere and businesses and shops in the lower town were open for the first time in many days. Traffic started to move normally around the town and people returning to the places of business filled the streets. In fact, Haifa presented a more normal appearance than it had done for a long while. Some Arabs were seen moving among the Jews in the lower town and German Colony area and these were allowed free and unmolested passage. An appeal has been made to the Arabs by the Jews to reopen their shops and businesses in order to relieve the difficulties of feeding the Arab population. Evacuation was still going on yesterday and several trips were made by 'Z' craft to Acre. Roads too, were crowded with people leaving Haifa with all their belongings. At a meeting yesterday afternoon Arab leaders reiterated their determination to evacuate the entire Arab population and they have been given the loan of ten 3-ton military trucks as from this morning to assist the evacuation.

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(A.J. Bidmead.)  
for SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE

Copy:- District Commissioner, Haifa  
Superintendent of Police, Haifa  
File



# The Arab leadership told Palestinians to leave

**Source 6:** Extract from *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* by B.Morris (2004). Cambridge University Press, pp.139

Only an extremely small, almost insignificant number of the refugees during this early period left because of Haganah or IZL or LHI expulsion orders or forceful 'advice' to that effect. Many more – especially women, children and old people – left as a result of orders or advice from Arab military commanders and officials. Fears for their safety rather than a grand strategy of evacuation underlay these steps. And few were ordered or advised to leave Palestine; generally, the orders or advice were merely to move to safer areas within the country, where Arabs were demographically predominant.



# A Jewish terror campaign forced concessions from international powers

**Source 7:** Description of Jewish intimidation and the use of radio broadcasts during the Battle of Haifa. From Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (2004) p.191

A British intelligence officer provided a description of the scene at the harbour entrance a few hours later:

During the morning [the Jews], were continually shooting down on all Arabs who moved both in Wadi Nisnas and the Old City. This included completely indiscriminate and revolting machinegun fire, mortar fire and sniping on women and children sheltering in churches and attempting to get out . . . through the gates into the docks. . . . The 40 RM. CDO. [i.e., Royal Marine Commando] who control the docks . . . sent the Arabs through in batches but there was considerable congestion outside the East Gate of hysterical and terrified Arab women and children and old people on whom the Jews opened up mercilessly with fire. Two [Royal Marine] officers were seriously wounded . . .<sup>201</sup>

By late afternoon, 22 April, Carmeli Brigade was reporting:

The Arab HQ is empty. They do not answer the telephones . . . The Arab hospitals are full of dead and wounded. Corpses and wounded lie in the streets and are not collected for lack of organisation and sanitary means; panic in the Arab street is great . . .<sup>202</sup>

The Haganah command issued orders to the troops to treat places of worship with respect, especially mosques, and to refrain from looting.<sup>203</sup>

Throughout, the Haganah made effective use of Arabic language broadcasts and loudspeaker vans. Haganah Radio announced that 'the day of judgement had arrived' and called on the inhabitants to 'kick out the foreign criminals' and to 'move away from every house and street, from every neighbourhood, occupied by the foreign criminals'. The Haganah broadcasts called on the populace to 'evacuate the women, the children and the old immediately, and send them to a safe haven'.<sup>204</sup> The vans announced that the Haganah had gained control of all approaches to the city and no reinforcements could reach the embattled militiamen, and called on the Arabs to lay down their arms, urging the irregulars 'from Syria, Transjordan and Iraq' to 'return to [their] families'.<sup>205</sup>





# A Jewish terror campaign forced concessions from international powers

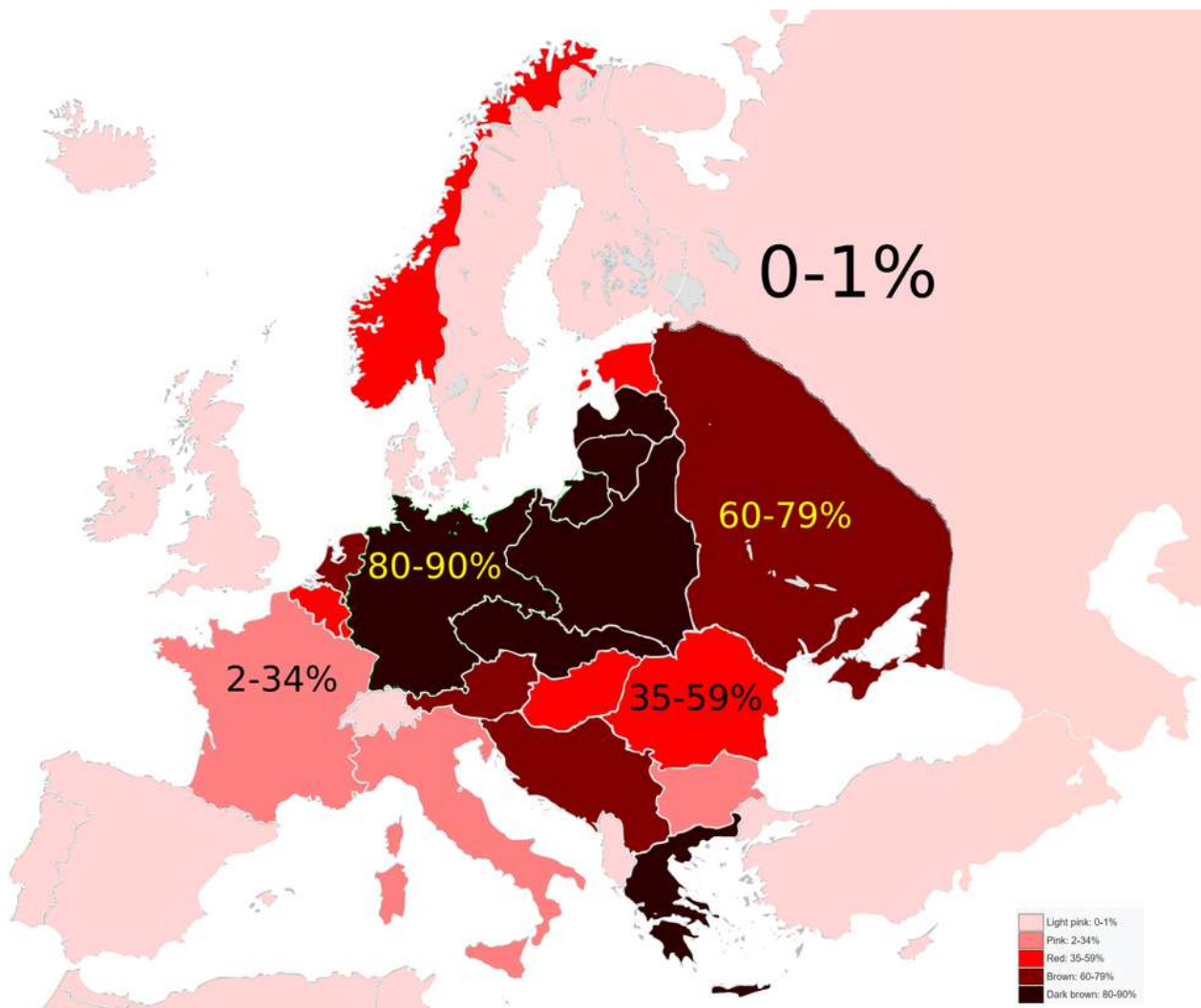
**Source 8:** British Army HQ after it was bombed by the Irgun, a Jewish terrorist group in 1946





# All wars create refugees

**Source 9:** Map of the Jewish Holocaust death toll as a % of the total pre-war Jewish population by country/region





# All wars create refugees

**Source 10:** Extract from a report submitted to the European Parliament in 2006 by Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC), a political advocacy organisation founded in New York in 2002

When the issue of refugees is raised within the context of the Middle East, people invariably refer to Palestinian refugees, not former Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Yet, there were two major population movements that occurred during years of turmoil in the Middle East. In fact, there were more former Jewish refugees uprooted from Arab countries (over 850,000)<sup>1</sup> than there were Palestinians who became refugees in 1948. (UN estimate: 726,000)

<sup>1</sup> [Estimates based on UN document "Trends and Characteristics of International Migration since 1950 – Refugee Movements and Population Transfers" (UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, Demographic Study No. 64 ST/ESA/Ser. A/64)]



# The Jewish Army was well-prepared for war



**Source 11:** Zionist Military Operations outside the UN-proposed Jewish State, 1 April 1948 - 15 May 1948





# The Jewish Army was well-prepared for war

**Source 12:** Graph of Jewish immigration to Palestine versus Palestine Arab population

In private, however, Ben-Gurion was not averse to making his real views clear. Thus, on 19 December 1947, he demanded that “we adopt the system of aggressive defense; with every Arab attack we must respond with a decisive blow: the destruction of the place or the expulsion of the residents along with the seizure of the place.”<sup>23</sup> He declared: “When in action we . . . must fight strongly and cruelly, letting nothing stop us.”<sup>24</sup> Even without direct orders, the goal and spirit of real policy were understood and accepted by the army.



# Jewish troops acted to preserve their people

**Source 13:** Adolf Hitler talking to Palestinian leader Grand Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, 28th November 1941





# Jewish troops acted to preserve their people

**Source 14:** An extract from the New York Times by Dana Adams Schmidt

## *AIM TO OUST JEWS PLEDGED BY SHEIKH; Head of Moslem Brotherhood Says U.S., British 'Politics' Has Hurt Palestine Solution*



Give this article



**Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.**By Dana Adams Schmidt

Aug. 2, 1948

CAIRO, Egypt, Aug. 1 -- Sheikh Hassan el-Bana, head of the Moslem Brotherhood, largest of the extremist Arab nationalist organizations, declared in an interview today: "If the Jewish state becomes a fact, and this is realized by the Arab peoples, they will drive the Jews who live in their midst into the sea."



## ‘Plan Dalet’ included expelling Palestinians

**Source 15:** Translation from Arabic of a leaflet dropped from an aircraft on Arab villages in the Galilee on the orders of the Haganah Command (the Jewish armed force) in 1948

We have no wish to fight ordinary people who want to live in peace, but only the army and forces which are preparing to invade Palestine. Therefore . . . all people who do not want this war must leave together with their women and children in order to be safe. This is going to be a cruel war, with no mercy or compassion. There is no reason why you should endanger yourselves.<sup>33</sup>





## ‘Plan Dalet’ included expelling Palestinians

**Source 16:** Extract from a letter Dec. 2. 1948, published in the New York Times from a group of leading Jews based in the US, including Albert Einstein, complaining about a massacre of Arab villagers at Deir Yassin and comparing a new political party, led by future Israeli PM, Menachem Begin, with the Nazis

### New Palestine Party

#### Visit of Menachen Begin and Aims of Political Movement Discussed

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

Among the most disturbing political phenomena of our time is the emergence in the newly created state of Israel of the "Freedom Party" (Tnuat HaHerut), a political party closely akin in its organization, methods, political philosophy and social appeal to the Nazi and Fascist parties. It was formed out of the membership and following of the former Irgun Zvai Leumi, a terrorist, right-wing, chauvinist organization in Palestine.



# Jewish troops only expelled Palestinians who resisted them

**Source 17 :** Extract from Fast Facts on the Middle East Conflicts by Randall Price (2003), Harvest House Pub., pp.166. Randall Price (Th.M. Old Testament and Semitic Languages, and Ph.D. Middle Eastern Studies) has lived in Jerusalem and done graduate studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. As president of World of the Bible Ministries, he lectures worldwide on Bible prophecy and directs tours in the Bible lands

As noted previously, some Arabs certainly were expelled by Jewish troops, as would be expected in a war. However, in most cases, the Jewish forces acted in order to *avoid* being accused of confiscation. For instance, when Jewish forces seized Tiberias on April 19, 1948, and the entire Arab population of 6,000 was evacuated under British military supervision, the Jewish Community Council issued a statement of clarification: "We did not dispossess them; they themselves chose this course....Let no citizen touch their property." Likewise, in both Tiberias and Haifa, the Haganah issued orders that none of the Arabs' possessions should be touched, and warned that anyone violating these orders would be severely punished.



# Jewish troops only expelled Palestinians who resisted them

**Source 18:** Extract from the New York Times, 1st December 1947, on the decision in the General Assembly of the United Nations to partition Palestine

The Assembly has now made its choice, and its decision should command the acquiescence, the respect, and the loyal support of all nations and all peoples. The award does not go so far, in territorial terms, as most Zionists had hoped. It will grievously disappoint the Arabs. But it is the decision of the United Nations; it is the best decision which that great agency of world opinion was able to discover, and we trust that it will have the willing compliance of the two peoples whose future it involves. Failing that, the Security Council must be courageous enough and resolute enough to supply the necessary means of enforcement.



# Israel refused peace if it meant Palestinian refugees could return

**Source 19:** UN Press Release on Arabs displaced by Israeli troops

UNITED NATIONS  
Department of Public Information  
Press and Publications Bureau  
Lake Success, New York

Press Release PAL/537  
4 November 1949

## **200 DISPLACED ARABS RETURN TO THEIR VILLAGE UNDER UN AUSPICES**

The return of some 200 Arabs to the native village of Wadi Fukin near Bethlehem yesterday crowned a settlement under United Nations auspices of a three-month dispute between Arabs and Jews.

The dispute arose on 15 July when the Israeli Army expelled the population of Wadi Fukin after the village had been transferred to the Israeli-occupied area under the terms of the Armistice Agreement concluded between Israel and the Jordan Kingdom....

The Mixed Armistice Commission decided on 31 August, by a majority vote, that Israel had violated the Armistice Agreement by expelling villagers across the demarcation line and decided that they should be allowed to return to their homes.

However, when the villagers returned to Wadi Fukin under the supervision of the United Nations observers on September 6, they found most of their houses destroyed and were again compelled by the Israeli Army to return to Arab territory...





# Israel refused peace if it meant Palestinian refugees could return

**Source 20:** Jaramana Refugee Camp for Palestinians, Damascus, Syria, 1948

