How Palestine Became Israel

by Dr. Ashraf Ezzat

Palestine the land now occupied by the state of Israel was a multicultural society with Arabs comprising 96% of population in late 1800s

Jerusalem 1839 by David Roberts - With the mosque of Omar at the center, the Dome of the rock at the background this beautiful drawing gives a feeling of warmth, unique, & relaxed Arabic ambience of the holy city in the 19th century

The Catastrophe (Al Nakba)

“November 29th, commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.”

If Americans Knew

Over the coming decades Zionist leaders used various strategies to accomplish their goal of taking over Palestine:

1. **Encouraging Jewish immigration to Palestine**, partly through the invention of such deceptive slogans as “a land without a people for a people without a land,” when, in fact, the land was already inhabited. Since the majority of Jews were not Zionists until after WWII, Zionists used an array of misleading strategies, including secret collaboration with the Nazis, to push immigration.

2. **Convincing a “Great Power” to back this process.** By turn, Zionists approached the Ottomans, the British, and the U.S. to further their cause. While the Ottomans turned them down, the British (being promised that American Zionists would push the U.S. to enter World War I on the side of England) eventually acceded, as did the U.S. (due to concerns of politicians like Harry Truman that they would lose elections otherwise).

3. **Buying up the land** (sometimes through subterfuges), proclaiming it Jewish for all eternity, and refusing to allow non-Jews to live or work on the purchased land. This was called “redeeming” the land and was financed by a variety of means, including by such wealthy banking families as the Rothschilds.

4. **Violence**, if such financial dispossession should fail or prove too slow – as it did.

In the late 1800s a small, fanatic movement called “political Zionism” began in Europe. Its goal was to create a Jewish state somewhere in the world. Its leaders settled on the ancient and long-inhabited land of Palestine for the location of this state.

Palestine’s population at this time was approximately ninety-six percent non-Jewish (primarily Muslim and Christian).

Population of Palestine in Late 1800s

- 4% - Christians
- 10% - Muslims
- 86% - Palestinians

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In the 1930s, Jewish land ownership had increased from approximately 1% to just over 6% of the land, and...
violence had increased as well. With the emergence of several Zionist terrorist gangs (whose ranks included a number of future Prime Ministers of Israel), there was violent conflict. Numerous people of all ethnicities were killed – then, as now, the large majority of them Christian and Muslim Palestinians.7

The Catastrophe

This growing violence culminated in Israel’s ruthless 1947-49 “War of Independence,” in which at least 750,000 Palestinian men, women, and children were expelled from their homes by numerically superior Israeli forces – long before any Arab armies joined the war. This massive humanitarian disaster is known as ‘The Catastrophe,’ al Nakba in Arabic.

Zionist forces committed 33 massacres and destroyed 531 Palestinian towns. Author Norman Finkelstein states: “According to the former director of the Israeli army archives, ‘in almost every village occupied by us during the War… acts were committed which are defined as war crimes, such as murders, massacres, and rapes’…Uri Milstein, the authoritative Israeli military historian of the 1948 war, goes one step further, maintaining that ‘every skirmish ended in a massacre of Arabs.’”

Count Folke Bernadotte, a former official of the Swedish Red Cross who saved thousands of Jews during World War II and was appointed U.N. mediator in Palestine, said of the refugees: “It would be an offence against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes.” Bernadotte was assassinated by a Zionist organization led by future Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Injustice Continues

Over the 60 years since Israel’s founding on May 14, 1948, this profound injustice has continued. Palestinian refugees are the largest remaining refugee population in the world.

1.3 million Palestinians live in Israel as “Israeli citizens,” but despite their status as citizens, they are subject to systematic discrimination. Many are prohibited from living in the villages and homes from which they were violently expelled, and their property has been confiscated for Jewish-only uses. In Orwellian terminology, Israeli law designates these internal refugees as “present absentees.”

In 1967 Israel launched its third war and seized still more Palestinian (and other Arab) land. Israel also attacked a U.S. Navy ship, the USS Liberty, killing and injuring over 200 Americans, an event that remains largely covered-up today, despite efforts by an extraordinary array of high-level military officers and civilian officials to expose it.

Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip – the final 22% of mandatory Palestine – and began building settlements for Jewish Israelis on land confiscated from Palestinian Muslims and
Palestinian loss of land 1946 – 2005

Christians. It has demolished more than 18,000 Palestinian homes since 1967. In 2005 Israel returned Gazan land to its owners, but continues to control its borders, ports, and air space, turning Gaza into a large prison, where 1.5 million people are held under what a UN Human Rights Commissioner described as “catastrophic” conditions.

Over 11,000 Palestinian men, women, and children are imprisoned in Israeli jails under physically abusive conditions (many have not even been charged with a crime) and the basic human rights of all Palestinians under Israeli rule are routinely violated. Some prisoners tortured by Israel have been American citizens. In the violence that began in fall, 2000 through Jan 18, 2009, Israeli forces killed 6,288 Palestinians; Palestinian resistance groups killed 1,071 Israelis. Israel’s military, the fourth most powerful on earth possesses hundreds of nuclear weapons.

American Involvement

Because of Israel’s powerful US lobby, **American taxpayers give Israel approximately $7 million per day** – far more than we give to all of sub-Saharan Africa put together. In its 60 years of existence, Israel, the size of New Jersey, has received more of our tax money than any other nation on earth. While most Americans are unaware of these facts (studies have shown that media report on Israeli deaths at rates up to 13 times greater than they report on Palestinian deaths) our governmental actions are making us responsible for a continuing catastrophe of historic proportions – and which is, in addition, creating extremely damaging enmity to the US itself. Israel partisans have played a significant role in promoting U.S. attacks on Iraq and Iran.15

As more Americans learn the facts, there is a growing bipartisan, multi-ethnic movement to counter Israel’s US lobby, which has long has held a vicegrip on American Mideast policies.

“Confusion about the origins of the conflict all too often has obscured Americans’ understanding of its true dimension. It began as a conflict resulting from immigrants struggling to displace the local majority population. All else is derivative from this basic reality.”

– Donald Neff, former Senior Editor, *Time Magazine*, Fallen Pillars: U.S. Policy towards Palestine and Israel since 1945

“[T]he story of 1948... is the simple but horrific story of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine... Retrieving it from oblivion is incumbent upon us, not just as a greatly overdue act of historiographical reconstruction or professional duty; it is... the very first step we must take if we ever want reconciliation to have a chance, and peace to take root, in the torn lands of Palestine and Israel.”

– Ilan Pappe, Israeli Historian, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*

“The Palestinian Holocaust is unsurpassed in history. For a country to be occupied, emptied of its people, its physical and cultural landmarks obliterated, its destruction hailed as a miraculous act of God, all done according to a premeditated plan,
meticulously executed, internationally supported, and still maintained today…”

– Dr. Salman Abu-Sitta, *Palestine Right Of Return, Sacred, Legal, and Possible*