



**THE CATASTROPHE AL NAKBA
HOW PALESTINE BECAME ISRAEL**

AMERICAN MUSLIMS FOR PALESTINE

EMPOWERMENT through
EDUCATION and **ACTION**

POLITICAL ZIONISM

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 96 percent non-Jewish (primarily Muslim and Christian).

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 deceptive slogans, such as “A land without a people for a people without a land.” In fact, the land already was inhabited. Since the majority of Jews were not Zionists until after World War II, 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 United States to further their cause. While the Ottomans turned them down, the British acceded after the Zionists promised that American Zionists would push the U.S. to enter World War I on the side of England. The United States, whose major politicians like Harry Truman feared they’d lose elections if they didn’t back the Zionists, also acceded.



3. **Buying up the land**, proclaiming it Jewish for all eternity, and refusing to allow non-Jews to live or work there. This was called “redeeming” the land and was financed by a variety of means, including being funded by wealthy banking families such as the Rothschilds. Historic Palestine, the land now occupied by the state of Israel, was a multicultural society. The creation of Israel involved the expulsion of 750,000 men, women, and children from their homes.
4. **Resorting to violence**, if such financial dispossession should fail or prove too slow – as it did.

In the 1930s, Jewish land ownership had increased from approximately 1 percent to just over 6 percent 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 were Christian and Muslim Palestinians.

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 – half of them even before any Arab armies joined the war. At every point in this war, Zionist forces outnumbered Arab forces. This massive humanitarian disaster is known among Palestinians and others as ‘The Catastrophe,’ or al Nakba in Arabic.

REFUGEES

Zionist forces committed at least 33 massacres and destroyed 531 Palestinian villages and 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 of Independence, 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 vice chairman 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 offense against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes.”

INJUSTICE CONTINUES

During more than six decades since Israel’s founding on May 14, 1948, this profound injustice has continued. Palestinian refugees are the largest remaining refugee population in the world.

Palestinian refugee Mohamad Mahmoud Al-Arja, 80, still has the key from his house in Beer Al-saba, which is now inside Israel. At least 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 more than 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 militarily occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip — the final 22 percent of mandatory Palestine — and began building settlements for Jewish Israelis on land confiscated from Palestinian Muslims and 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 open-air prison, where 1.5 million people are held under what a United Nations Human Rights commissioner described as “catastrophic” conditions.

Approximately 11,000 Palestinian men, women, and children are imprisoned in Israeli jails under physically abusive conditions, though many have not been charged with a crime. The basic human rights of all Palestinians under Israeli rule are routinely violated. A number of prisoners tortured by Israel have been American citizens.

AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT

American taxpayers give Israel approximately \$7 million per day — far more than it gives to all of sub-Saharan Africa combined. In its more than six decades of existence, Israel, the size of New Jersey, has received more U.S. tax money than any other nation on earth. While most Americans are



unaware of these facts, U.S. actions are making Americans responsible for a continuing catastrophe of historic proportions. And this is, in addition, creating extremely damaging enmity to the U.S. itself.

Israel partisans have played a significant role in promoting U.S. attacks on Iraq and Iran.

As more and more U.S. citizens across the political spectrum and of all ethnicities become informed on this issue, they are demanding that their elected representatives change current policies. In recent history, the Berlin Wall has fallen, Northern Ireland has achieved peace, and South African apartheid has ended. Change is possible and justice attainable — when people become informed.

PALESTINIAN LOSS OF LAND 1946-2005

“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 toward 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 Pappé, 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

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

George W. Ball & Douglas B. Ball, The Passionate Attachment
Mazin Qumsiyeh, Sharing the Land of Canaan
Greg Philo and Mike Berry, Israel and Palestine: Competing Histories
Paul Findley, They Dare to Speak Out
Ali Abunimah, One Country
Jonathon Cook, Blood and Religion
Ilan Pappé, The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine
Israel Shahak, Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel
Donald Neff, Fallen Pillars
Salman Abu-Sitta, Palestine Right of Return, Sacred, Legal, and Possible
Robert John & Sami Hadawi, Palestine Diary 1914-1945
Kathleen Christison, Perceptions of Palestine
John W. Mulhall, CSP, America and the founding of Israel
Charles D. Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict
Nur Masalha, Expulsion of the Palestinians
Stephen Green, Taking Sides
Noam Chomsky, Fateful Triangle
Sami Hadawi, Bitter Harvest
Virginia Tilley, The One State Solution
Norman Finkelstein, Beyond Chutzpah
John Mearsheimer & Stephen Walt, The Israel Lobby

SELECTED WEBSITES:

ampalestine.org
IfAmericansKnew.org
PalestineRemembered.com

AMP MISSION STATEMENT

The American Muslims for Palestine's mission is to educate the public about the just cause of Palestine and the rights of self-determination, liberty and justice. Through providing factual information, training and networking with like-minded, peace-loving organizations and individuals, AMP will raise awareness of the issues pertaining to Palestine and its rich cultural heritage.

AMP'S OBJECTIVES

1. Articulate a unique American perspective on all issues pertaining to Palestine.
2. Reconnect the American Muslim community with Palestine's rich heritage.
3. Provide regular educational and training programs to promote the Palestinian narrative.
4. Develop a media center where data, articles and other materials will be archived so AMP can pro-actively disseminate information about Palestine.



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