

The Big Lie (II)

What about those Arab “refugees”?

In a previous installment of this series of *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages, we discussed The Big Lie (I), namely that Judea/Samaria (the “West Bank”) are occupied territories. This has been repeated so long and so often that most of the world has come to believe it. The Big Lie (II) is that of the Arab refugees. They deserve a closer look.

What are the facts?

The legitimacy of Israel. The state of Israel was legally created out of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. The area was desolate – desert and swamp – with some small towns and a few inhabitants, many of them nomads. The inhabitants, if they thought about it at all, considered themselves Syrians. The legitimacy of Israel arises from the Balfour Declaration

issued by the British, who were given the mandate over the area by the League of Nations. Jews have lived in the country since Biblical times. The Arabs from the surrounding areas were lured

to “Palestine” by the industry and prosperity that the Jews brought to the region. Envy, hatred, and religious fanaticism turned the Arabs against the Jews. In bloody outrages, horrible massacres, killings and rapes, the Arabs tried to dislodge the Jews, but were unable to do so.

In 1947, the British, having tired of the trouble and the bloodshed, resigned their mandate. That same year, the United Nations mandated partitioning of the territory. The Jews, though disappointed, accepted the partition. The Arabs rejected it out of hand and launched war against Israel. The armies of five Arab countries invaded the nascent state. Following the exhortations of the invaders, the Arab residents got out of the way hoping to return after victory was attained. They could then reclaim their property and that of the Jews, all of whom would have been killed or would have fled. That and that alone is the source of the Arab “refugee problem.”

Had the Arabs accepted the UN partition plan, there would now have been a state of “Palestine” for the last 58 years. They might have attained a similar level of prosperity, advancement, and development as Israel, which, small though it is, is today in almost every regard one of the world’s most advanced countries.

Not the only refugees. There is dispute about the number of those refugees. Best estimates are that about 650,000 people fled. But those Arabs are not the only

refugees of the 1948 war of Israel’s independence. About 800,000 Jews from Arab countries – from Morocco and Algeria to Iraq and Yemen – fled or were driven out of their home countries, where they had lived for centuries. Most of them left with just the clothes on their backs, leaving land, property, businesses, and wealth created over generations. Most fled to the newly-born Jewish state. They were received with open arms, immediately and fully integrated

into Israeli society. They now form about 50 per cent of the population of Israel.

Not so with the Arab refugees. Their Arab brethren refused to integrate them into their countries and into their

societies, but confined them in so-called “refugee camps,” essentially extended slums, where they or rather their descendants – now the fourth generation – have been living ever since. The reason for the refusal to integrate them into their Arab host countries has been the design to keep them as a festering sore and to make solution of the Arab/Israeli conflict impossible. These “refugees” are seething with hatred toward Israel and provide the cadres of suicide bombers.

The Palestinian refugees occupy a unique place in the annals of warfare and migration of people. Such migrations are common and unavoidable in the long history of human conflict. Following WW II, millions of Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia and the eastern regions of Germany that were turned over to Poland. In the upheavals that followed the withdrawal of the British from the Indian subcontinent, millions fled or were driven from their homes. Following France’s loss of its Algerian possessions, hundreds of thousands fled that North African country. These millions of refugees and others were absorbed into their new countries and were no longer the concern of the world. It is only the Palestinians who, for almost sixty years, have been considered “refugees.” In fact, a special branch of the United Nations (UNWRA) exists only for the maintenance of these “refugees,” at a cost of billions of dollars

The problem of the “Palestinian refugees” is a red herring, fostered for almost sixty years in order to maintain the fiction that these “refugees” have the right to return to their “homeland.” The original 650,000 have now miraculously swelled to 4 or 5 million. It is clear that, were they allowed to “return” to Israel, the country would cease to exist as a Jewish state. Since the “return of the refugees” is one of several non-negotiable Arab demands, and since Israel is obviously unwilling to accept them, the Arab/Israeli conflict would seem to be beyond resolution. Israel is not likely to succumb to Big Lie (II) and will not commit demographic suicide by letting the Arab “refugees” into their country.

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