

# Focus On Israel

By Kenny Gross

It is an indication of the success of the Arab propaganda machine that when we think of refugees in relation to Israel, we think only of thousands of homeless and suffering Arabs. We overlook the statistics. Responsible scientific estimates place the figures as follows:

Into Israel from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Aden, Lebanon: 750-800 thousand.

Out of Israel to surrounding Arab countries: 550-600 thousand, a surplus in Israel's favor of 200 thousand. These movements are comparatively small to others which took place after World War II. For example: between: India and Pakistan-11 million; Czechoslovakia and West and East Germany-3 million; East Germany and neighboring countries-3½ million; Poland and East Germany and other countries-6¼ million; Biafra and Nigeria-2 million; Algeria and France-1 million; North Korea and South Korea-1 million; China and Hong Kong-2 million.

There is one outstanding difference, however, every

one of the *non-Arab* countries that received a flood of refugees did their best to resettle the new arrivals. All organized absorption programs, on the other hand in most of the Arab countries where the Palestinians moved, strenuous efforts were made to prevent or limit the resettlement of refugees.

The reason for this callous attitude to their brethren was avowedly political. If these Arab refugees were to find jobs and establish homes, they might lose their sense of identity as Palestinians and their yearning for their old homes. This would upset the political advantage of declaiming the right (morally) of Israel's existence and her claims to the land.

This political aim becomes very clear when it is realized that "A fortnight's (two weeks) surplus oil revenue from Saudi Arabia could provide compensation and resettlement funds for every refugee" (Philip Goodhart-member of British Parliament).

When thinking of Arab refugees therefore, we must balance the flight of an even larger number of Jewish

refugees from Arab lands.

In order to get a more complete picture of the "Refugee" problem as it relates to Israel and this understanding is today important, in the light of the problems in Samaria, Judea and Gaza (West Bank) let us examine the underlying causes of the double Exodus.

The Jewish refugees left their homes in Arab countries because a reasonable life style became impossible. They had suffered for centuries as second class citizens with no rights, or very few in some countries, but with the United Nations vote in November 1947 for the recognition of a Jewish state, the position deteriorated very rapidly. Jews were hounded as free game and their extinction was clearly the Arab policy. It was only because of the extraordinary measures taken by world Jewry in financing and organizing hurried transport that the Jewish refugees were able to flee, leaving behind all their possessions and capital, to their new land.

Why did the Arab refugees leave their homes in Palestine (to become Israel

## Refugees: The Double Exodus

in May 1948)? I have no better way of answering this than by quotations from Arab sources.

Our leaders told us "Get out so that we can get in..." (Emil Ghory-Secretary General of the Palestine Arab Higher Committee, September 6, 1948).

"We left our land on the strength of false promises by crooked leaders in the Arab states. They promised us that our absence would not last more than 2 weeks, a kind of promenade, at the end of which we would return" ("Falastin", Jordan Daily, May 30, 1955).

Iraq's Prime Minister had thundered, "We shall smash the country with our guns, and destroy and obliterate every place the Jews will seek shelter. The Arabs should conduct their wives and children to safer areas till the fighting has died down" (Niwar Al Hawari, Commander of Paramilitary Arab Youth Organization in Palestine).

What is the significance of these sad episodes at this belated hour? Because in the general buildup of Arab and Jewish claims and grievances, one hears of compensation. The attitude of past Israeli governments has been to discourage Jewish claims perhaps due to a simplistic interpretation of Zionism, which refuses to allow Jews to see any diaspora as being "theirs" even if they lived there for over 2000 years. Perhaps they have failed to realize

the tremendous wealth that was stolen from Jews by Arab government.

Initial studies have indicated that Jewish property, both communal and private, confiscated by Arab governments, totals as much as 5 times the maximal claims of Palestinian Arabs against Israel.

More recently, a new thesis has been submitted, whereby Jews from Arab countries, are entitled to a share in the resources including land, water and oil of the countries which were theirs before being driven out. This has been modestly estimated as 3 percent. The value of this claim would be astonishing. The size of present day Israel is far less than 3 percent of these Arab territories. The area of the Arab proposed self-determined, Independent state, to be established in the West Bank, would be a small fraction of this 3 percent.

I feel it is time to take these claims seriously and to be pressed in international forums now, before they would appear to be raised merely as a defense against Arab claims, when the Camp David discussions are resumed. The mundane political world would understand these realities. In the hard bargaining which lies ahead, there is no place, unfortunately, for the claims of history nor of equity. What may be understood is property rights, for this affects everyone and is in our materialistic times, sacred.

## American Aid To Israel - The Bargain Behind The Bluster

In a recent study, Rudy Boschwitz of Minnesota has put the issue of American aid to Israel in perspective. How much is Israel really costing America? Is it worth it? Is Israel a burden or a bargain? Senator Boschwitz has unscrambled the statistics and penetrated the bureaucratic jargon to reveal the following:

The United States lays out in "foreign aid" to Israel a sum which amounts to about 4% of what the United States lays out to Great Britain, France, Italy and West Germany. This year, when Israel will get about \$3 billion, NATO countries will get \$50 to \$80 billion - but you never hear about it. This is because in the wonderful world of bureaucracy the money sent to Israel is called "foreign aid." It is quietly stored away in the defense budget.

A few more facts: Israel pays back upwards of one-half of the American aid it gets, while NATO pays back nothing. This year, for example, Israel will be paying out \$900 million in accumulated principle and interest on previous American loans, which means that the actual cash outlay to Israel from America this year will not be \$3 billion, but about \$2 billion, all of its defense-related portion will be spent in the United States, thereby creating jobs not for Israelis but for Americans. By contrast, the money which the United States spends on NATO creates jobs for both American soldiers and for one million Europeans.

What is America getting for the money it sends to Israel? It gets the latest intelligence information on the latest, most advanced Soviet weaponry. Israel, not NATO, is supplying the United States with this information. Israel, not NATO is keeping the Soviet Union out of the Middle East - as convincingly demonstrated last June by the Israel Air Force's utter rout of Soviet-armed Syrian attempts to overtake Lebanon. And Israel is doing this with just a few percentage points of the aid which America ships overseas.

What is more, Israel is no drain on American trade. While Japan has an \$18 to \$20 billion positive trade balance with the United States, Israel has a consistently negative trade balance with the U.S. This means that the money which America ships to Israel for economic assistance eventually finds its way back to America in the form of Israeli imports of American goods.

You hear a lot about Israel having received around \$20 billion in aid from America in the last 10 years. The figure is accurate. What you do not hear is that NATO will receive about six times that amount for the next (1983) fiscal year alone. And NATO does not pay back, while Israel pays back about 50% of the aid it receives.

Furthermore, Israel is basically paying its own way, using American aid simply to supplement what is the highest per capita defense budget in the world,

while Japan, Italy, France, and West Germany consistently underspend America not only in absolute terms but also in the degree of GNP devoted to defense. NATO countries are asking America to do a job which NATO should be doing a lot more of itself, while Israel is simply asking for supplementary help.

Consider this, too: Israel receives only American money, while NATO receives American money and men. When Israel fights Soviet proxies (such as Syria) in the Middle East, it is Israeli soldiers who die, while for NATO it is American soldiers who defend Europe.

Take it all around, American aid to Israel is a bargain: Israel doesn't take much; what it does take it either spends in America or pays back to America in trade; and in return for its aid to Israel, America gets an ally which not only talks but acts to keep the Soviets out of the Middle East, and also keeps democracy alive in the Middle East. Take it all around, American aid to Israel is a bargain.

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