

# JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS

If diplomatic skill and a knack for scholastic application were the only requirements, Israel would already have solved the complex task of establishing peaceful relations with the Arab countries. Unfortunately, the Jewish-Arab relations are still very far from being solved. This unresolved problem is sucking the new state of its meager economic resources, is converting the largest part of every dollar given generously by the Jews from abroad into guns and is overshadowing every aspect of life and politics in Israel. The awareness of this gloomy state of affairs is slowly spreading even among the rank and file of ardent Zionists. But the clash between two extreme nationalist ideologies has offered no way out. It has particularly manifested itself in handling the problem of the Arab refugees.

The significance of removing this obstacle, the generally acknowledged major area of conflict, cannot be overemphasized. *The New York Times*, which is favorably inclined toward Israel, wrote on January 22, 1952: "Of all the problems plaguing the relations between Israel and her neighbors, the problem of the Arab refugees is the most explosive. Estimated at anywhere from 600,000 to 1,000,000—depending on the point of view—the refugees are a living, heaving mass of humanity, crowded into squalid camps along Israel's borders, unable to return to their homes, forbidden to go to any others, a prey to the demagogues that swarm around them thick as flies; a teeming group of men and women and children, sometimes cold, sometimes hungry and always miserable. They constitute a political as well as a humanitarian problem that must be settled; and until it is settled there can be no real peace between Israel and the Arab states."

The existence of many hundreds of thousands of Arab exiles, along with the fact that new Jewish settlers now occupy Arab buildings and till former Arab soil, is a bleeding wound that smarts and irritates the whole Arab world, constantly reminding of the military defeat and the wrongs inflicted on their unfortunate brethren. But the concern is not limited to Arabs. The conscience of the democratic world is deeply perturbed by the injustice inflicted on these refugees.

We have lately been deluged with all kinds of plans and schemes to solve this problem by means of financing an elaborate resettlement project, inspired by the Israelis and proposed by their supporters. The United States, together with other countries, groups of private citizens in the U. S. and elsewhere, have presented such plans to the UN. A characteristic of these plans is the acceptance of the *status quo* and consequently the

endeavor to solve the problem of the Arab refugees by means of integrating them into those neighboring Arab states that lend them shelter. These plans unquestioningly accept Israel's refusal to permit the refugees to return to their homes, and they extol the benefits the Arab refugees are apt to gain by "integration."

What is the trouble with these plans, why is this propaganda to no avail and why does it constantly meet stubborn resistance among the Arabs?

Doubtless the leaders of the Arab world are no less nationalist-minded than the Zionist leaders. The refusal of the Arab League and its representatives in the UN to consider plans for integration of the refugees is not intended to alleviate the suffering of their exiled brethren. But this is not the whole story.

Even poverty-stricken people reject vigorously efforts to treat them like cattle. Every human being undeniably has the right of pursuit of his own happiness by providing for himself and deciding what is best for himself. Human beings should not be forcibly removed and resettled elsewhere for the sake even of benevolent planners. In addition to the natural longing for their old homes and the fields of their forefathers, the resentment against being shunted around like cattle manifests itself in the Arabs' hostile attitude.

Even if such integration of the bulk of the Arab refugees into the neighboring states would be by far the best solution of their miserable plight, it cannot be done without their consent. But both the Arab and Jewish nationalist leaders act as if human beings and their desires were no more than pawns on a chessboard. Only truly democratic and liberal Jews and Jewish Socialists, untainted by Zionism, can come to terms with truly democratic-minded Arab leaders on this explosive issue of the Arab refugees. Thus would be removed the main obstacle to solving the problem of peaceful Jewish-Arab relations.

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(Continued from Page 1)

of his person and the sentiment he well deserves to swell the coming Republican tide. Let us grant there is a difference between the typical "old soldier," knight-on-a-white-horse of the MacArthur brand and "Ike," who somehow seems a bit of a civilian, though in uniform. Nevertheless, General Eisenhower in the White House would constitute a severe set-back for those who look ahead to the implementation of a Fair Deal and the advancement of the American people toward the goals of economic equality and social justice.