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The Causes and Impacts of the 1948 Palestinian Exodus and Jewish Exodus from Arab Countries, and the Connections of the Two Exoduses to Each Other

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Professor Evri

NEJS 189B - Formative Moments in the Disputed Land of Israel-Palestine

What were the causes and impacts of the 1948 Palestinian exodus and Jewish exodus from Arab countries, and what are the connections of the two exoduses to each other?

Introduction

The 1948 Palestine and Arab-Israeli war completely changed the course of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict, and had long lasting consequences. The war would create the Palestinian refugee problem, an issue that has been unresolved to this day. This is because current Palestinian refugees hope to return to their or their ancestors' homes abandoned during the 1948 war, which Israel denies to them. The Palestinian refugee problem is exacerbated by the fact that Palestinians in most Arab countries are denied citizenship, making them stateless. By the end of the war in 1949, the United Nations (UN) estimated that more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs (out of 1,350,000 living in Palestine) would flee or be expelled from their homes, and as a result of this mass exodus, 400-600 villages would be depopulated (Goldstein, 2020, Almassri, 2023, Manna, 2013). The displacement of Palestinians, massacres perpetrated against Palestinians, depopulation of 400-600 Palestinian villages, and fracturing of Palestinian society during the 1948 war is often referred to as the Nakba (Almassri, 2023). This paper will focus on the causes and impacts of the expulsion and exodus of approximately 50,000-70,000 Palestinian Arabs from the cities of Lydda and Ramle, exploring whether the expulsion was pre-planned or the unfortunate outcome of the events during the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) military operation that captured the two cities - Operation Dani.

In response to the 1948 war and the UN Partition Plan to divide British-controlled Mandatory Palestine into two states, persecution against Jewish communities across the Arab world increased. Riots burning down Jewish neighborhoods and businesses broke out, massacres were committed, Jewish property was confiscated or frozen by Arab governments in several countries, and many Jews would be expelled or forced to flee from their home countries. Over the course of three decades after 1948, 850,000 Jews would leave the Arab world, with about

650,000 immigrating to Israel (Douer, 2015, Beker, 2005). The Palestinian exodus and the Jewish exodus from Arab countries are frequently compared to each other, sometimes being considered a population exchange. The Mizrahi exodus is sometimes used as an obstacle for the Palestinian right of return by the Israeli government. This paper will focus on the persecution of Jews in Iraq, showing how it escalated after the 1948 war broke out and was connected to the war, and ultimately led to a mass exodus of Jews out of Iraq. Additionally, this paper will further explore controversial proposals to initiate a population exchange between Iraqi Jews and Palestinian Arab refugees.

The war began after the passage of the United Nations Partition Plan. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted on a resolution to divide Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, which the Jewish leadership in Palestine accepted and the Arab Palestinian leadership rejected (Goldstein, 2020, Almassri, 2023). Following the partition plan, fighting broke out in Palestine, beginning a civil war - the first phase of the 1948 war. Palestinian forces initially went on the offensive, attacking mixed Arab-Jewish towns and cities, Jewish settlements, and roads - with the intent of preventing the formation of a Jewish state. Palestinian Arab fighters were not able to engage in direct combat and organized warfare with the Haganah, so they resorted to guerilla warfare, attacks on civilians, mass rioting, and property damage (Goldstein, 2020). After four months of fighting, the Haganah and other Jewish paramilitary groups began taking control of roads and Palestinian Arab neighborhoods in mixed cities, which would be made easier by 75,000 mostly upper and middle class Palestinians fleeing to other parts of Palestine and other Arab countries where they believed they would be safer and saw their displacement as temporary (Goldstein, 2020, Almassri, 2023). This would be the first of four flights of Palestinian refugees, but this first flight would already have a major impact on Palestinian Arab society, causing closures of businesses, schools, and hospitals, and leading to unemployment and poverty (Almassri, 2023). The soon-to-be Prime Minister of Israel David Ben-Gurion declared Israel's independence on May 14, 1948, the same day British forces formally departed Palestine (Goldstein, 2020, Almassri, 2023). The next day, Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon invaded Palestine, in an effort to destroy Israel, beginning the second stage of the war, the First Arab-Israeli war (Goldstein, 2020, Shavit, 2013).

The second wave of flight in April-June of 1948, where 200,000 to 300,000 Palestinians would evacuate, was caused by attacks by Jewish paramilitary groups - and later the Israeli

Defense Forces (IDF) - or fear of their attacks happening on Palestinian communities. Flight from major cities caused fear and pessimism in surrounding villages, and the evacuation of one family created a domino effect where more Palestinians would start fleeing (Almassri, 2023). Additionally, the second wave was exacerbated by Arab reports of the Deir Yassin massacre and the fear it caused, as well as propaganda Hanagah agents spread to cause fear (Almassri, 2023). During the third and fourth waves of flight, approximately 300,000 to 400,000 fled in July and October-November 1948. There were numerous causes of the third and fourth waves of flight: military attacks and expulsions, extortion by Arab irregular fighters, collapse of law and order, withdrawal of the British, fear of living under Jewish rule, and being cut off from major Palestinian Arab population centers (Almassri, 2023). The Palestinian refugees displaced during the second, third, and fourth waves of the flight fled to Lebanon, Transjordan, Syria, and territories that became the West Bank and Gaza Strip. After the end of the war, only 150,000 Arabs in Israel, 400,000 Arabs in the West Bank, and 60,000 Arabs in the Gaza Strip remained in their original homes. In response to the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 194 in December 1948, which declared the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or receive fair compensation if they were peace seeking (Goldstein, 2020). Nevertheless, abandoned Palestinian villages would be confiscated by the Israeli government under full approval from Ben-Gurion. Lots of abandoned villages would be razed and settlements were built that would be repopulated with Jewish immigrants, with Ben-Gurion wanting to establish as many as Jewish settlements on abandoned Palestinian villages as possible (Almassri, 2023, Goldstein, 2020). The UN General Assembly set up the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in a resolution on December 8, 1949, providing development and humanitarian services for Palestinian refugees. UNRWA would define Palestinian refugees as “Persons whose customary place of abode was Palestine during the period of 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost their house and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.” (Almassri, 2023)

After the UN General Assembly passed the Palestine Partition Plan, attacks on Jewish communities and systematic persecution in several Arab countries broke out almost immediately and only escalated as the 1948 war went on. In fact, several Arab leaders were making threatening statements to Jewish communities in the Arab world before the Partition plan passed. The Egyptian delegate to the UN General Assembly, Heykal Pasha, warned on November 24,

1947 that creating a Jewish state in Palestine would result in the endangerment of 1 million Jews living in Muslim countries. The Syrian UN representative, Faris Al-Khuri, in February 1947 stated, "Unless the Palestinian problem is settled, we shall have difficulty in protecting the Jews in the Arab world." (Beker, 2005) In December 1947, right after the UN Partition Plan was passed, riots and massacres broke out against the Jewish community in Aleppo, with 50 shops, 18 synagogues, and 5 schools being burned. Jewish private property was confiscated, in addition to bank accounts in Aleppo being frozen. An unknown number of Jews were killed and 7,000 Jews fled Aleppo (Beker, 2005). After Israel's establishment, banks froze all Jewish accounts in Syria. Around the same time in Aden, Yemen, riots broke out and mobs attacked the city's Jewish community. Over the course of three days, 82 Jews were killed, 106 shops were looted, 220 houses destroyed, and the Jewish quarter was practically burned to the ground (Beker, 2005). In Iraq, antisemitism would dramatically increase after Israel declared its independence. The Iraqi government would criminalize Zionism, fire Jews from most government jobs, and heavily restrict Jewish emigration (Beker, 2005, Black, 2016, Shenhav, 1999, Bashkin, 2012, Gat, 2006). In 1950 and 1951, the Iraqi government passed two laws that would let Jews emigrate out of Iraq in exchange for them losing their citizenship and then having their property confiscated and assets frozen upon their departure from Iraq, respectively. As a result, in one year, more than 120,000 Iraqi Jews would immigrate to Israel (Black, 2016, Shenhav, 1999, Bashkin, 2012, Gat, 2006). In Egypt, Jews were declared "enemies of Egypt" and accused of being American spies after Israel declared its independence. The Egyptian secret police, Mukhabarat, imprisoned Jewish men between the ages of 16 and 60 in four waves of arrests, beginning in May 1948, being put in detention camps built specifically for them (Douer, 2015). In July 1948, a bomb exploded in the Jewish-owned Cicurel department store in Cairo, and several other businesses were burned and destroyed, killing 70 Jews. Jewish property was confiscated at random, Jewish bank accounts were frozen, and Jews were removed from all government positions (Douer, 2015, Beker, 2005). Although many Egyptian Jews wanted to stay in Egypt, despite the amount of violence and government persecution perpetrated against them, tens of thousands of Jews would leave Egypt (Douer, 2015). The causes of the persecution of Jews in the Middle East and North Africa were strongly connected to the founding of Israel, the rejection of the Jewish state by Arab governments, and the war the Arab states would launch against Israel. The persecution and violence against Jewish communities, both by the general public and the government, in turn

would trigger an exodus of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa, mostly towards Israel. For these reasons, **the Palestinian exodus and Jewish exodus from Arab countries are often compared to each other and can be seen as being intertwined with each other. The two exoduses occurred under different circumstances and for different reasons, with the Palestinian exodus occurring during a war and would mostly be caused by circumstances during the war, but would have long lasting consequences for Palestinians. The Jewish exodus, on the other hand, was clearly contributed to by push factors - to systemic persecution and violence in response to the 1948 war - despite there being pull factors from Israel and the Zionist movement as well. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly analyze each exodus and observe the similarities and differences between them in helping understand the similar experiences Palestinians and Mizrahi Jews would have due to the catalysts of exile relating to the 1948 war.**

Case Study 1 - Expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from Lydda and Ramle

Operation Dani marked an important turning point during the 1948 war and exodus of Palestinian refugees, where the IDF would go on the offensive to capture cities located outside the area designated to be a Jewish state in the UN Partition Plan, but belated planning would complicate the operation, ultimately negatively impacting the civilian populations of Lydda and Ramle. After the first truce of the Arab-Israeli war ended on July 8-9, 1948, Ben-Gurion and the IDF General Staff prioritized securing the entirety of the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway to relieve the pressure on Jerusalem, which had partially been besieged. The securitization of the highway required the capture of Lydda, Ramle, and Latrun, between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, although they were not located in the area designated to be a Jewish state in the UN Partition Plan (Morris, 1986). From the beginning of the 1948 war, Lydda and Ramle served as bases for Arab irregular units, which would often attack Jewish convoys and settlements, disrupting and blocking Jewish traffic between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (Morris, 1986). Ben-Gurion and the IDF General Staff were not simply looking to capture more territory and expel Palestinians from conquered cities. Nonetheless, many Israeli leaders had seen the large Arab populations in Lydda and Ramle as a threat to the “heartland of the Jewish state,” even politicians who were opposed to the expulsion of Palestinians (Morris, 1986). There was already a strong desire among Israeli leaders for a Palestinian Arab exodus from Lydda and Ramle before the IDF entered the two cities. Lydda and

Ramle had been a priority for the Haganah after the May 15 invasion by surrounding Arab countries, but the paramilitary group had to focus on defenses until the first truce (Morris, 1986). After the end of the first truce, Ben-Gurion and the IDF General Staff could prioritize offensive operations, but there was little discussion about Operation Dani within Ben Gurion's Cabinet meeting, on top of last minute changes about who was leading the military operation. On July 7, Ben Gurion's Cabinet met without Ben-Gurion to discuss proposals from UN mediator Count Bernadotte and a crisis between Ben-Gurion and the IDF General Staff, but not about Operation Dani, which was set to begin 30 hours later (Morris, 1986). On the same day, General Yigal Allon was appointed as the Operation Dani OC, leaving little time to plan his campaign in Lydda and Ramle, possibly contributing to the lack of IDF planning or discussions about what would happen to Lydda and Ramle's civilian population (Morris, 1986, Kadish & Sela, 2005). It is possible the generals planning Operation Dani believed the Arabs in Lydda and Ramle would flee once fighting entered their cities, like in other cities, such as Jaffa, Haifa, and Tiberius (Morris, 1986). If that was the case, they would have felt it unnecessary to make a plan for the civilian population of Lydda and Ramle.

Despite there not being a plan for the civilian population of Lydda and Ramle, the IDF actions from the beginning of Operation Dani were meant to cause civilian panic and flight, even though there had not yet been an order to expel the residents of Lydda and Ramle. The goal at the beginning of the military operation was to breach the defenses of the two cities and get their leadership to surrender. On July 10, both the Operation Dani headquarters and Yiftah Brigade's intelligence officer had reported that IDF bombardments of Lydda and Ramle had caused significant number of civilians to flee (mostly) Ramle, with the Operation Dani headquarters repeatedly asking IDF General Staff/Operations for more bombings of Lydda and Ramle (Morris, 1986). On July 11, the Israeli Air Force dropped formidable leaflets stating, "You have no chance of receiving help. We intend to conquer the towns. We have no intention of harming persons or property. [But] whoever attempts to oppose us - will die. He who prefers to live must surrender." It is unclear how many Palestinian Arabs fled Ramle and Lydda on July 10-11, before the towns would get captured, but the number of civilians would increase after the retreat of the Arab Legion company based in Ramle on the night of July 11-12 (Morris, 1986). Some residents of Ramle would try to flee that night, but would be detained by the IDF at a checkpoint near Al-Barriya, and were brought to the Yiftah Brigade headquarters at Kibbutz Na'an to sign a

document of surrender. The Kiryati Brigade mortarted Ramle during the surrender negotiations at Na'an and entered the city at 6:30 in the morning on July 12, imposing a curfew (Morris, 1986). Meanwhile, Lydda's eastern defenses were breached by the 89th Battalion and at 16:00 on July 11, they left Ben Shemen for Lydda led by an armored car stolen from the Arab Legion. The 89th Battalion's column fired its guns at windows, sandbag positions, and stone fences (Kadish & Sela, 2005). Once the Third Battalion entered the center of Lydda, it established a headquarters in the house of the leader of the largest Christian community in the town, the Greek Orthodox Archimandrite Simon (Kadish & Sela, 2005). The Archimandrite would assemble Lydda's dignitaries with permission of the Third Battalion commander Moshe Kelman, and they agreed to surrender. A delegation of Lydda's dignitaries, including the Mayor of Lydda, headed towards the police station to ask the Arab Legion force stationed there to surrender, but the Arab Legion refused and open fire, killing the Mayor and wounding several other dignitaries, but Kelman would still decide to accept Lydda's surrender (Kadish & Sela, 2005). The next morning, Israeli troops implemented a curfew, and began rounding up able-bodied men who were put into churches and mosques throughout Lydda, mainly in Lydda's Great Mosque. There they were held in crowded conditions, without food, water, fresh air, or room to sit down (Morris, 1986, Shavit, 2013).

Operation Dani would take a turn for the worse after an unexpected battle in Lydda would break out on July 12, considered by some to be a massacre perpetrated by the IDF, and as a result, Ben-Gurion would make a decision about what to ultimately do with the civilian populations of Lydda and Ramle. On the morning of July 12, three Arab Legion armored vehicles reached Lydda's northern boundary in order to assess the situation at the police station. At 11:30, two Arab Legion cars entered Lydda and fired on the IDF's Palmach soldiers, who did not have any anti-tank missiles on them, causing confusion about the purpose of the Arab Legion cars (Kadish & Sela, 2005). The local militia, after noticing the Arab Legion cars, came outside and started firing upon the soldiers. A rioting mob would attack a small patrol of IDF soldiers near the Dahmash Mosque in the marketplace of Lydda. With all the chaos and lack of reinforcement, Kelman ordered his troops to open fire on every target, and even after the Arab Legion cars withdrew, the shooting continued and attempts to get the local militia to stop firing were unsuccessful (Kadish & Sela, 2005, Morris, 1986). Many Lydda residents who were inside their houses because of the curfew, were frightened by the sudden shooting happening outside,

possibly believing a massacre was taking place. Some residents rushed into the streets and were shot by Israeli troops (Morris, 1986). The IDF's gunfire stopped at 2 PM, with different estimates on the number of Arabs killed, ranging from 100 to 3000, and varying between IDF and Arab estimates (Kadish & Sela, 2005). Following the battle/massacre in Lydda, the Operation Dani headquarters concluded that the residents of Lydda should be pressured to leave, but this would require the authorization of the Israeli Defense Minister, David Ben-Gurion (he was both Prime Minister and Defense Minister), who would meet at Operation Dani headquarters during the afternoon of July 12 (Kadish & Sela, 2005). There are different accounts about what happened at this meeting. According to Benny Morris, Ben-Gurion met at Operation Dani HQ with several IDF officers, including Allon and Operation Dani OC Yitzhak Rabin; no decision was made about a potential expulsion of the residents of Lydda and Ramle. After Ben-Gurion, Allon, and Rabin left the meeting, Allon asked "What should we do with the Arabs?" and Ben-Gurion said "Expel them." (Morris, 1986). According to Alon Kadish and Avraham Sela, Ben-Gurion would approve Rabin and Allon's request encouraging Lydda's inhabitants to leave with a hand gesture that was interpreted as "expel them." Allon would later dispute that Ben-Gurion ordered an expulsion, "but rather a provoked exodus." (Kadish & Sela, 2005) At 1:30 PM, Operation Dani HQ issued orders to the Yiftah and Kiryati Brigades to expel Lydda's inhabitants and direct them to Beit Nabala (Morris, 1986, Shavit, 2013). Lydda and Ramle were the only localities where the IDF commanders requested and received approval from the Israeli Defense Minister to expel the local Arab population (Kadish & Sela, 2005). From a military standpoint, the decision to expel Lydda and Ramle's inhabitants was made based upon the reemergence of the two Arab Legion armored cars on July 12, which could be considered an insurrection and therefore a threat of continued hostilities. It was more convenient to just expel the residents rather than try to get more IDF combat forces to try to keep Lydda under control (Kadish & Sela, 2005). Additionally, expelling Lydda's residents and forcing them to head East would block likely attack routes of the Arab Legion, while the IDF was preparing for the second stage of Operation Dani, to conquer Latrun and Ramallah, in addition to putting a heavy economic burden on the Transjordanian government (Kadish & Sela, 2005, Morris, 1986).

The fact that Ben-Gurion's Cabinet was not informed about the expulsion of Arabs from Lydda and Ramle shocked its members when they found out, but members of his Cabinet would have difficulty in outright denouncing the expulsion order, further compounded by the changes in

Israeli policy towards Palestinian Arab civilians. In fact, Minister of Minority Affairs Bechor Shitrit almost stopped the expulsion from Ramle and Lydda. Shitrit was visiting Ramle since he would be responsible for the welfare of Israel's Arab minority population, but he would be shocked by what he saw there since he had not been told about the expulsion order (Morris, 1986). Kiriyati Brigade commander Michael Ben-Gal told Shitrit that the IDF was following orders from General Allon to take all men of military age prisoner and expel the rest of Ramle's population, and was told the same was to be done to Lydda's inhabitants. Angry about what he saw and found out, Shitrit reported his observations to Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, who subsequently met with Ben-Gurion and came up with policy guidelines for how the IDF should treat the civilians of Lydda and Ramle. The guidelines Sharett and Ben-Gurion agreed to were to let anyone who wants to leave Lydda and Ramle to do so; women, children, elderly, and the sick would not be forced to leave the town; and anyone who wished to remain behind would be warned to do so on their own responsibility (Morris, 1986). Shitrit ultimately did not end up stopping the expulsion of Lydda and Ramle's inhabitants, just modifying it. The Mapam party's leaders were shocked by the expulsions, but did not want to create tensions within Ben-Gurion's Cabinet and they realized Palmach officers part of their party were involved in the expulsion, so they would take a stance condemning the Ramle expulsion, but not the Lydda expulsion. Mapam members of Ben-Gurion's Cabinet who were previously opposed to expulsions of Arabs and supported Arab-Jewish coexistence and return of Palestinian refugees would go against their own platform when it came to the expulsion of Lydda's inhabitants. In a strange turn, Ben Gurion on July 14 denied ordering an expulsion or even that one took place in Lydda and Ramle, claiming that the residents of the two towns left by their own will before and after the IDF conquered the two towns (Morris, 1986). This reflected inconsistent policy that had arisen in the previous month. The Israeli government had decided to establish a cabinet committee that was to decide treatment of Palestinian refugees and their abandoned properties within Israel on June 14, 1948, but two days later decided that Palestinians who fled their homes should not be allowed to return to their homes during hostilities of the war (Kadish & Sela, 2005). On June 30, the Israeli government decided that Arabs would not be expelled or be forced to transfer without the permission or decision by the Committee for Abandoned Property. The Committee for Abandoned Property would issue an official order on July 4 that forbade destroying Arab villages or neighborhoods or expelling their inhabitants unless soldiers are under the heat of

battle or have received an explicit order from the Minister of Defense (Kadish & Sela, 2005). The expulsion from Lydda and Ramle did not violate that order, but it still surprised Ben Gurion's Cabinet, particularly Shitrit and members of Mapam. Moreover, the timing of when Ben Gurion ordered the expulsion highlighted the disorganization of Operation Dani, which would cause a heavy toll on the residents of Lydda and Ramle.

Despite being expelled, many Palestinians in Lydda and Ramle either wanted to leave or did not protest their expulsion if they were reluctant to leave, due to abandonment by the Arab Legion and the amount of violence inflicted on them by the IDF's invasion. Despite this, refugees from Lydda would face brutal conditions and occasionally brutal treatment from Israeli soldiers on the road to locations beyond Arab Legion lines. During either the night of July 12 or the morning of July 13, Allon and Rabin decided to release the detainees so the complete exodus of the residents of Lydda and Ramle could happen, as families of the detainees did not want to leave without the detainees (Morris, 1986). Lydda's dignitaries were overjoyed when IDF officer Shmarya Guttman told them the detainees would be released and would be free to leave with the rest of the city's inhabitants, despite the fact that they were being expelled (Morris, 1986, Shavit, 2013). Most of the exodus took place on July 13, with the inhabitants of Ramle being mostly trucked and bussed to Al-Qubab by Kiryati Brigade units, and they would walk further in Latrun and Salbit to Arab Legion lines. Lydda's inhabitants, on the other hand, were forced to walk all the way to Beit Nabala and Barfilia. Reja-e Busailah would describe IDF soldiers being stationed all along the road starting from Lydda to keep the refugees moving along, shooting their guns constantly and it being hard to tell when the gunshots were a joke and when they were serious (Busailah, 1981). There were numerous reports of reported robbery by IDF soldiers on the road, particularly of women being robbed of their jewels (Morris, 1986). Busailah described soldiers searching refugees with the butt of their guns and taking whatever they found, especially jewelry (Busailah, 1981). Several months after the exodus, Allon received a complaint that troops had been ordered to take all watches, jewelry, and money from the expelled Palestinians. An Israeli soldier would describe the hunger and thirst of the refugees in 30-35 degrees Celsius (86-95 degrees Fahrenheit) heat, and how children got "lost" and even died (Morris, 1986). One woman was described to be taking care of her seven young nieces and nephews whose parents had been killed in front of their eyes. There were certainly deaths among the child refugees from Lydda on the way to Ramallah and Amman, but the number is unknown. After the refugees got to Amman,

the Transjordanian government gave each refugee in Amman two loaves of bread per day; many of the refugees there had few possessions and lived in tight quarters (Morris, 1986). After the IDF took control of Lydda and Ramle, less than 1000 people remained in each town, down from a population of 50,000-70,000 before Operation Dani. The remaining residents would be placed under military rule and live behind barbed wire. On July 26, Shitrit visited Lydda and found 700 Arabs who were going without food, were afraid of going into town, and were supplied with water by the IDF (Morris, 1986). Whether the residents of Lydda and Ramle stayed in their homes or were uprooted by the events of Operation Dani, they were deprived of resources and their lives had completely changed. Despite there not being an expulsion order before Operation Dani started, it would displace Palestinians who were not able to come back to their hometown. Reports of what happened to the Palestinian refugees, in Lydda and Ramle and other Arab villages in Israel, would spread to the Arab world, including Iraq. The Iraqi government and a large portion of the Iraqi Arab population would be infuriated by the stories of the Palestinian refugees, but that anger would be taken out on its Jewish community.

Case Study 2 - Jewish exodus from Iraq

In Iraq, persecution and violence against the country's Jewish community would escalate after the UN Partition Plan passed and the 1948 war broke out. Although the Iraqi government would at first implement measures to protect the Iraqi Jews from violence, it would eventually start systemically cracking down on its Jewish community as Iraq became increasingly involved in the 1948 war. Jews previously had been well integrated into Iraqi society and given equal rights with the establishment of the Iraqi monarchy in 1921, but after Iraqi independence from the UK and the rise of Arab nationalism in Iraq in the 1930's, discrimination against Jews increased, which would be exacerbated by the German embassy in Iraq's dissemination of antisemitic Nazi propaganda (Gat, 2006). In June 1941, 180 Jews in Baghdad were murdered in a two day massacre known as the Farhud, shattering the Iraqi Jewish community (Gat, 2006, Black, 2016, Beker, 2005). After the Farhud, Iraqi Jews would be divided into those who believed Jews had a future in Iraq and those who did not, yet most Jews would stay in Iraq as persecution against them decreased. After the UN passed the Partition Plan and the breakout of the 1948 war, antisemitic demonstrations became common, in addition to widespread calls of "Death to the Jews." The arrival of Palestinian refugees into Iraq and stories about other

Palestinian refugees enraged a large portion of the Iraqi population, but the Iraqi government tried to do everything to prevent rioting or another Farhud (Gat, 2006). The Iraqi authorities increased security in Jewish neighborhoods in Baghdad in 1948, banned public gatherings in the streets of Baghdad and the army set up a cordon around the Jewish neighborhood in Mosul (Bashkin, 2012, Gat 2006). The establishment of Israel in May 1948 and subsequent Iraqi invasion of Palestine would cause a large increase in mistrust towards Jews among the general population of Iraqi Arabs and the Iraqi government, despite attempts by Iraqi Jews to prove loyalty, such as by donating to Palestinian causes (although some said they were forced to) and the official leader of the Iraqi Jewish community, Rabbi Khaduri, declaring that Palestine “belonged to the Arabs.” (Bashkin, 2012, Gat, 2006) Despite efforts to prove loyalty to Iraq, right-winged Iraqi politicians would denote all Jews as Zionists, which was seen as being an enemy to Iraq (Bashkin, 2012). Although the Iraqi government did not wish to incite violence and persecution against the Iraqi Jewish population, it could not let Iraqi Jews go about their daily lives normally while it was at war with the Jewish state (Gat, 2006). Moreover, the antisemitic stance of the Iraqi government would be intensified by the inclusion of the nationalist al-Istiqlal party in government coalitions (Bashkin, 2012). In August 1948, the Iraqi Minister of Finance revoked the licenses that permitted three Jewish banks to engage in foreign currency transactions, claiming that it was necessary to prevent foreign capital from being directed to Jews in Israel - since Iraq was at war with Israel (Gat, 2006). Around the same time, most Jews working in the civil service, government ministries, the port of Basra, the Postal and Telegraphic Service, and the Railway Authority would be fired from their jobs. A Zionist account from October 1949 estimated 1500 Jews in the private and public sector combined lost their jobs (Bashkin, 2012, Gat, 2006, Beker, 2005). Recent Jewish university graduates had trouble finding employment; Jewish doctors were no longer accepted to work in government jobs and were refused licenses to practice medicine privately (Gat, 2006).

Concerned about the active Iraqi Zionist underground while fighting a war against Israel, the Iraqi government would start a harsh crackdown against it, but would collectively punish all Jews in Iraq. The underground Zionist movement in Iraq would have a peak membership of 2,000 in 1948-1949, a minority of Iraqi Jews, in addition to the presence of Zionist emissaries since the aftermath of the Farhud encouraging Iraqi Jews to immigrate to Israel (Bashkin, 2012, Shenhav, 1999). In July 1948, the Iraqi parliament passed a law declaring support for Zionism a

crime, equal to supporting communism and anarchism, punishable by a minimum seven years in prison to death in extreme cases (Bashkin, 2012, Gat, 2006, Black, 2016). Despite the law being directed at the Zionist underground, Jews who had no associations or connections to Zionism would be arrested. This would be in part due to any remote connection to Jews in Palestine, even before support for Zionism was made illegal, being considered support for Zionism. Letters between Iraqi Jews and their relatives or friends in Palestine even going as far back as the 1920's were used to arrest Iraqi Jews (Bashkin, 2012). The Iraqi government confiscated mail addressed to Jews and viewed any visits Jews made to Palestine or contacts to Jews in Palestine with extreme suspicion. A 60 year old Jewish man was sentenced to 5 years in prison for simply receiving a letter from his son in Palestine; a 55 year old man was sentenced to 3 years in prison simply because two witnesses claimed he had contacted his son in Israel (Bashkin, 2012). According to Rabbi Khaduri, police would search Jewish homes at night if they suspected that Zionist activities were taking place (Bashkin, 2012). The persecution of Iraqi Jews under the guise of criminalizing Zionism would reach new and shocking levels with the arrest and execution of Shafiq Ades, the millionaire head of the Ford Agency in Iraq. Shafiq Ades was accused of buying tanks, truck parts, and other vehicular equipment and sending them to Israel through Italy (Gat, 2006, Bashkin, 2012). It is possible the scrap metal was being imported to Israel, but it is unlikely Ades knew that it would be exported there. Moreover, he would be the only person in his partnership to be arrested, in addition to being the only Jew to be in that partnership. In August 1948, Ades was arrested and tried by a military court, and he was sentenced to death by hanging and fined five million dinars for supporting Zionism and communism (Gat, 2006, Bashkin, 2012). Ades' family hoped until he was executed that his sentence would be commuted because the accusation against him didn't seem credible and they believed his business connections could save him. Regardless, on September 23, Ades was publicly executed at the entrance to his home in the city of Basra, and many individuals would be invited to see his body, in an effort meant to celebrate the killing of someone deemed a Zionist traitor (Bashkin, 2012). One Jewish resident of Basra, Ozer Benjamin, would describe seeing demonstrators carrying a dead dog on a stick saying, "This is the lot of the Zionist 'Adas,'" and throwing stones at his house. Ozer Benjamin further described how his Muslim neighbor would yell at the demonstrators, showcasing a great example of how the Iraqi government was persecuting Jews, while their neighbors were protecting them. The execution of Ades and the

celebration of it by demonstrators shocked the Jewish community in Iraq and strained Jewish relationships even further with Arabs (Bashkin, 2012). However, the targeting of high-profile Jews would continue after the execution of Shafiq Ades, as in January 1949, lawyer and former Iraqi parliament member Reuben Battat was sentenced to three years in prison for conducting business with the Jewish National Fund in the 1920's, despite Zionism then being legal in Iraq, which the court ignored (Bashkin, 2012). The Iraqi government had viewed Jews as a fifth column, as enemies, which became gradually clearer to Jews, even as their situation temporarily improved after the resignation of Prime Minister Nuri Sa'id at the end of 1949.

Emigration out of Iraq had been illegal for Jews, but that would change in March 1950, following the passage of a law that would cause Iraqi Jews to have to make a difficult decision, but would ultimately result in only a few thousand Jews remaining in Iraq. Tawfiq al-Suwaydi, who became the Iraqi prime minister in February 1950, would pass the denaturalization law in March 1950, to be in effect for a year, allowing Jews to register to emigrate from Iraq, giving they would renounce their citizenship and never return to Iraq (Bashkin, 2012, Gat 2006, Shenhav, 1999, Black, 2016). The denaturalization law was an effort to control emigration from Iraq and allow Iraqi Jews to leave Iraq legally. However, the Iraqi government only expected a small number of Jews to emigrate, so it was surprised when 47,000 Jews had registered to leave Iraq by May 1950. By the time the denaturalization law expired, 104,000 Jews would register to emigrate out of Iraq (Bashkin, 2012). Nonetheless, the law itself did not incentivize Iraqi Jews to register to emigrate, and it is not known what exactly did. A grenade would explode at a Jewish cafe in Baghdad, and after which, the number of candidates for emigration would rise from 150 to 23,000. Until June 1951, four similar explosions would occur in Jewish areas in Iraq, but it is unknown who was behind the explosions, with speculations that the perpetrator was either Zionist emissaries, Iraqi nationalists, or the Zionist underground (Shenhav, 1999). The accounts that blame Zionist emissaries for the bombings speculate that they did them to frighten Iraqi Jews into registering to emigrate. However, this is not proven, and considering that most Iraqi Jews were committed to staying in Iraq after the Farhud, growth of the Zionist movement in Iraq, and systemic persecution during the 1948 war, a few bombings were likely not enough to frighten Iraqi Jews into leaving their country (Bashkin, 2012). The large number of emigrant registrants suggests that most Jews had lost all hope of getting equal rights in Iraq, a country they used to consider their homeland (Bashkin, 2012). Ironically, once Sa'id became prime minister

again in September 1950, he would immediately take steps to get as many Jews as possible to leave Iraq, completely contradicting the shock his predecessor had on the high number of registrants and the severe restrictions on Jewish emigration out of Iraq before the passage of the denaturalization law (Bashkin, 2012). More than 120,000 Iraqi Jews would be airlifted to Israel between May 1950 and June 1951, in what would be known as Operation Ezra and Nehemiah and was sponsored by the Israeli government (Shenhav, 1999, Black, 2016, Gat, 2006). Around 60,000 Jews would be brought to Israel in the last three months of the airlift, but after their property and assets were seized by the Iraqi government, following the passage of another depriving law for Iraqi Jews (Shenhav, 1999). Despite the negative impact this law would have on Iraqi Jewish emigrants, it would actually provide an opportunity for the Israeli government.

The Iraqi parliament would pass a controversial law that would freeze the property and assets of Iraqi Jews upon their departure from Iraq, providing the Israeli government with an opportunity to link the property of Iraqi Jews in Iraq to abandoned property of Palestinian refugees, following previous attempts to initiate a population exchange between Palestinian refugees and Iraqi Jews. On March 10, 1951, Sa'id submitted a bill to the Iraqi Parliament and Senate requesting to freeze Jewish property and assets. In order to halt transactions, the Finance Ministry closed Iraq's banks for three days, and the police were ordered to seal Jewish-owned stores, confiscate vehicles, and search homes of Jewish jewelers and merchants (Shenhav, 1999, Black, 2016). Most Israeli politicians ferociously condemned the freezing of Jewish property and assets by the Iraqi government. Despite their condemnation, the passage of the freeze law would be beneficial to the Israeli government since it relieved the need to make an official declaration of a population exchange, which they had failed to negotiate before (Shenhav, 1999). Back in January 1949, Sa'id had proposed expelling Iraqi Jews in January 1949 while meeting with British ambassador to Iraq Henry Mack, claiming that if Palestinian refugees are not compensated nor allowed to return to their former homes in Israel, he would deport 150,000 Iraqi Jews to Palestine (Bashkin, 2012). The British ambassador in Israel warned that there could be consequences of doing that, since Israel would welcome Jewish immigrants, using an expulsion of Iraqi Jews to not compensate Palestinian refugees and demand Arab states fully absorb and assimilate them instead (Shenhav, 1999, Bashkin, 2012). Despite this, the British in July 1949 would still put forward a population transfer proposal, trying to persuade Sa'id to settle 100,000 Palestinian refugees in Iraq (Shenhav, 1999). The British Foreign Office sent a letter proposing

Iraqi Jews move into Israel and receive compensation for their property from the Israeli government, while Palestinian Arab refugees immigrate to Iraq and move into Jewish property there. Sa'id demanded half of the Palestinian refugees be resettled in the territory of Palestine and the other half in Arab countries, but said if the refugee rearrangement was fair, he would permit the voluntary move by Iraqi Jews to Israel (Shenhav, 1999). The Israeli and international press would report the plan for a Iraqi Jewish-Palestinian population exchange, which both Ben-Gurion and the Iraqi ambassador to the UN denied agreeing to. In addition, reports of the plan enraged Palestinians in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, who refused to resettle in Iraq (Shenhav, 1999). Bechor Shitrit, now the Israeli Police Minister, still believed the Israeli government should accept offers for a population exchange if they were to be proposed. Ben-Gurion and Sharett ignored Shitrit because they knew if Israel and Iraq made concrete agreements about a population exchange, Israel would have to allow for the return of Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war and compensate them for their abandoned property (Shenhav, 1999). In addition, Sharett further said that there are more Palestinian refugees that would have to be absorbed by Iraq than Iraqi Jews, as well as agreeing to compensate Iraqi Jews on the basis of the Palestinian Arabs' property would create a dangerous precedent with other Arab countries that have had Jews emigrate from to Israel, such as Egypt. This would create a scenario where every Arab country would only agree to accept Palestinian refugees if that country has Jews living there to exchange in return (Shenhav, 1999). Regardless, the passage of the property freeze law by the Iraqi parliament relieved the need to make an official declaration of a population exchange. Addressing the Knesset, Sharett said the Iraqi freeze of the account made a link between the Iraqi Jews immigrating to Israel and the Palestinian refugees that abandoned their property in Israel, hoping to convince Iraqi Jews that the Israeli government acknowledged their concerns and would compensate them (Shenhav, 1999). The chair of the Movement of the Jews of Iraq and the East in Israel insisted that the Israeli government immediately compensate Iraqi Jewish immigrants using Arab property in Israel, but the Foreign Ministry simply replied that it holds its consistent concern over the property of Iraqi Jews. After all, Sharett had thought this proposal was unrealistic. Regardless, the Foreign Ministry would at the same time send a memorandum to the director-general of the Prime Minister's Office explaining that the registration of property claims were simply to be used as a creation of a bargaining chip for the Palestinian refugee problem. The memorandum would say, "We will not, then, be able to take the

opposite approach with the Iraqi immigrants without opening the gates to a flood of private claims from tens of thousands of Arab refugees who once owned any property in the Land of Israel.” (Shenhav, 1999) The Israeli government did not end up compensating the 1948 Palestinian refugees, arguing that Jews from Arab countries were also refugees. However, the linkage and comparison between the Palestinian refugees and the Iraqi Jews impaired the ability to address both the problems and concerns of Palestinians and Iraqi Jews (Shenhav, 1999). The attempts of either a population and property/asset exchange between Iraqi Jews and Palestinian refugees would be unsuccessful, but using both groups as bargaining chips was unlikely to work, especially agreeing on a negotiation between two governments that had not even signed an armistice agreement with each other after fighting a war against each other. Nevertheless, Iraqi Jews would be given Israeli citizenship, while most Palestinian refugees would remain stateless.

Conclusion

The Palestinian exodus completely changed Palestinians, showing how long a consequence of a war can last. After the 1948 war, the Palestinian people lost their unity and practically became homeless. Palestinian refugees longed to return to their abandoned homes in Israel and were very opposed to being integrated into the countries they moved to (Manna, 2013). Neither Palestinians nor the governments of the countries the refugees would now reside in would believe in full Palestinian integration into their societies because it would eliminate the belief of a return to Palestine. Some Palestinians view returning to their homeland as the only solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, but this solution might not be feasible considering the fact Israel denies the right of return to Palestinians. With the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continuing to this day and the refugee problem created in 1948 still not being solved to this day, Palestinians see the Nakba not as a historical event that ended after the 1948 war, but an ongoing problem for them that keeps getting worse (Manna, 2013). The continuation of a refugee problem makes it imperative to analyze what caused the Palestinian exodus during the 1948 war. Although it is debated whether the Palestinian exodus was pre-planned ethnic cleansing or a consequence of war, some conclusions can be drawn from the events in Lydda and Ramle. Operation Dani was not very well organized by IDF General Staff and parts of the military operation would not get sorted out until a few days before the operation was supposed to begin. The unexpected return of two Arab Legion vehicles to Lydda on July 12, 1948, would spark a

battle that would result in many Palestinian Arab civilian casualties, which some would consider a massacre. Avraham Sela and Alon Kadish take away from their analysis that the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs in Lydda and Ramle was not due to premeditated factors but an unfortunate consequence of an uncontrollable battle where civilians and combatants became almost completely indistinguishable from each other (Kadish & Sela, 2005). Despite these circumstances, IDF actions towards civilians during the entire operation were meant to frighten them and encourage them to leave, along with Israel leaders previously viewing the large Arab population center and Arab military activity in Lydda and Ramle as a threat. The IDF and Israeli government's decision making in Lydda showed the inconsistency of policy towards Arab inhabitants of communities Israel would take control of during the 1948 war, but inconsistent and last minute decisions would have intergenerational consequences for Palestinian refugees.

In Iraq, violence and systemic persecution clearly connected to the 1948 war - push factors - contributed to the Jewish exodus out of the country. Although there was a presence of a Zionist underground in Iraq and Zionist emissaries from Israel trying to persuade Iraqi Jews to immigrate to Israel, the majority of Iraqi Jews were not interested in Zionism. Most Iraqi Jews felt that Iraq was their homeland, and not even massacres, such as the Farhud, would cause them to flee. However, as the Iraqi government gradually starting persecuting all Jews under the guise of targeting Zionists during the course of the 1948 war, no matter what a Jews' relationship to Zionism was nor their socioeconomic status, living conditions in Iraq became unbearable and many felt they had no choice but to leave. Although what exactly motivated Iraqi Jews to register to emigrate en masse following the passage of the denaturalization law, it is apparent that Iraqi Jews felt they had no future in a country that had one of the largest and oldest Jewish communities in the Middle East. Moreover, the majority of the Iraqi Jewish community was not part of the Zionist movement, with the Jewish community leadership being opposed to Zionism and at certain points declaring support for the Palestinian cause. Therefore, it is striking and surprising how almost the entirety of the Iraqi Jewish community would immigrate to Israel in only a little more than over a year alone. It is not likely that only pull factors could cause so many Jews to immigrate in such a short span of time.

The Palestinian exodus and Jewish exodus from Arab countries are often compared to each other to create competition between the two exoduses or downplay one of the exoduses. For example, during the Jewish exodus out of Iraq, the Iraqi nationalist newspaper *Al-Yaqdha* would

claim Iraqi Jews had a much more “pleasant” experience departing Iraq by trains and airplanes, as opposed to Palestinian refugees, who were driven out of their villages often on foot.

Al-Yaqdha would further claim that since Palestinians were displaced from their homeland, Iraqi Jews should be expelled from Iraq (Bashkin, 2012). The Israeli government, on the other hand, would claim Iraqi Jews and other Jewish immigrants from Arab countries in Israel were refugees and use them as an excuse to not compensate Palestinian refugees (Shenhav, 1999). However, it is important to make comparisons between the two exoduses because it shows the similar - yet still different - experiences Palestinians and Mizrahi Jews underwent having to be uprooted from their homes and being exiled from their homeland. Palestinian refugees wanted to return to their homes and were denied citizenship in most of the countries they were living in, while Israel granted citizenship to all Jewish immigrants. Israel would perceive Iraqi Jews and other Mizrahi Jews as returnees to their ancestral homeland, rather than refugees, even though Iraqi Jews felt they were arriving in a new location, where they would face discrimination, prejudice, and would remain in transit camps for years (Bashkin, 2017). Nonetheless, both Palestinian refugees and Iraqi Jews were unable to return to their original homes. Additionally, living conditions of Israeli Iraqis in the 1950s were similar to conditions of Palestinian refugees in the Palestinian diaspora and Palestinians who remained in Israel and became Israeli citizens. Regardless, Israel wanted to absorb immigrants relying on its economic resources, donations from diaspora Jewish communities, American support, and German reparations, while Arab governments wanted Palestinian refugees in their nations to be cared for by international bodies, such as the UN, and receive the right of return to their former homes (Bashkin, 2017). Avi Beker, former secretary-general of the World Jewish Congress, would point out that the UN has passed more than 100 resolutions about Palestinian refugees, but not a single one about Jews from Arab countries, considering them to be forgotten refugees (Beker, 2005). While Beker seems to be comparing the experiences of Palestinians and Jews from Arab countries to create “competition” between the two exoduses, there are still similarities between them that can be recognized. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the dispossession and displacement that both Palestinians and Jews from Arab countries faced due to the 1948 war and the reaction to that war in the Arab world, respectively.

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