

Commentary

"Israel wants peace!"

By ABRAHAM KATAN

Since the Israeli independence war in 1948, when the combined armies of seven Arab states invaded Israel trying to drive the Jews into the sea, there has been and still is a state of war between Israel and Arabia.

Why? What seems to be the problem? Why can't we Arabs and Israelis come to settlement of the problem, and once and forever live in peace, which the Israelis wish so much. The Arabs say there are reasons. First, it is their land, second, the Palestinian refugees, the homeless, jobless, nationless almost starving people who were pushed away from their homeland in Palestine and under no condition they have to return to Israel.

One can be very influenced under this merciful, tragic picture and it may sound as if the Arab leaders really concern and care about the refugees. But unfortunately, the opposite is the truth.

Let's dig to the roots of the problems, and see why and how the refugee problem was created.

We have to bear in our minds that the Jews were the original people of the land of Israel. The land had known many conquerors; Assyrians, Persians and Babylonians. The close of the classical period found the Jews in Israel under the Roman Empire, and when the Roman legion crushed the Bar-Kochva revolt and exiled the Jews, the re-named 'their' country Palestine.

Two thousand years later, Israel was conquered by many other successive foreigners. In the sixth century, Mohammed's followers, spreading the Moslem religion with the sword, swept out of the Arabian desert and conquered a large part of the Mediterranean world, including Israel. Jerusalem was theirs by force. Where Solomon's Temple long ago had stood, the Arabs built the Mosque of Omar.

They ruled for the next five centuries. But then more conquerors came, the Byzantines, the Seljuks, the Crusaders, the Mongols, the Mamelukes, the Ottomans and the British. The Arabs are one of many conquerors the land had known. They had never had an Arab sovereign state there, though. But Jews in the dispersion dreamed of returning or at least having gone to the promised land. The injunction, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" remained part of every Jew's prayer.

After the terrible Nazi massacre of the Jews in Europe, they had nowhere to go and came back by mass to Israel. The Arabs didn't like the idea and started creating problems. Many Jews were killed under Arab pogroms. The problem of the Arab-Jew was referred to the U.N. which on November 29, 1947 declared an establishment of two states, Jewish, where the majority were Jewish, and Arab, where the majority were Arab, joined in economic union.

The Jews accepted the plan, although it only satisfied part of their national aspirations. The Arabs rejected it outright and declared they would fight to thwart partition by force of arms.

Big Arab terrorist activities started taking place—hit-and-run raids on Jewish villages. Those attacks increased, and the whole country soon was involved in riots and pillage.

We have to keep remembering that at that time (like always) the Arab did not have a sovereign state, there. The land was ruled by British Mandate. When the British Mandate was over in May 14, 1948 Israel declared its independence. On the same day the combined army of the states of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen invaded Israel from every side in an attempt to crush the new nation.

With extreme brutality the Arabs fought against Israel when their main purpose was to wipe out the Jewish population. On May 15, 1948, Assan Pasha, then secretary-general of the Arab league, declared: "This will be a war of extermination and momentous massacre that will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades."

The first result of the Arab war on Israel was a mass exodus of Arabs to the neighboring countries. The problem of the Arab refugee was created by the brutal invasion of the Arabs to Israel, and the Arabs don't deny that they started that war. Israel was not the only victim of the war; there was another victim—the refugees themselves, which their departure was powerfully ordered by the Arab leaders themselves.

When this war against the Jewish community in Israel took place, and even before the end of the British Mandate in Israel, the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, who was the Arab's leader then, from his headquarters in Cairo gave an express order to the Arabs in the Jewish territory of Israel to quit. He

and his cousin, Jamal Hussein, in Jerusalem ordered the Arabs to abandon their villages and towns and carry out a mass exodus.

On October 12, 1963, the Cairo daily 'Akhbar el-Yom', recorded: "May 15, 1948 arrived...and the last British soldier left Palestine. On that very day the Mufti (of Jerusalem) appealed to the Arabs of Palestine to leave the country, to leave Haifa and Jaffa and other cities...because the Arab armies were about to enter and fight in their stead against the Jewish gangs and oust them from Palestine." The Arab armies were sure of their victory and wanted to look as a victorious liberator army.

The Jordanian daily, 'Falastin', wrote on February 19, 1949: "The Arab states, which had encouraged the Palestine Arabs to leave their homes temporarily in order to be out of the way of the Arab invasion armies, have failed to keep their promises to help these refugees."

The Arab leaders incited this exodus in order to create an artificial Arab "refugee" problem which would excite the public fervor in Arabian countries and force their undecided governments to invade Palestine. Furthermore, world public opinion would be returned against the Jews.

On the other hand, the Israelis tried very hard to arrest the Arab exodus by every means available—radio, hand-bills, sound-trucks. In Haifa for example, one of the biggest cities of Israel with 70,000 Arabs and 80,000 Israelis, the leaders of both sides met to sign a truce and discuss a way of allowing the Arabs to stay in Haifa. British police (which did not favor the Jews at all) reported to Jerusalem headquarters on April 26, 1948: "Every effort is being made by the Jews to persuade the Arab population to stay and carry on with their businesses open and to be assured that their lives and interests will be safe."

So you, the reader, can see for yourself that the accusation that the Jews had thrown out the Palestine Arabs in order to fill the land with Jewish refugees is very shamefully untrue.

The Arab governments demanded that the refugees would be permitted unconditionally to return to their homes. The demand may sound very humane and full of love. It is true that is has even been suggested by the U.N. Resolution of December, 1948. But it is only part of the truth. The other part isn't mentioned by the Arabs. Only the

whole truth is the real truth. The part that is not mentioned is about a peaceful Arab-Israeli settlement. It was suggested by the U.N. Resolution that realizing the importance and extreme urgency of the refugee problem, it can't be isolated from an overall peace settlement. Israel wants a complete assurance to her security.

It can't accept the returning of the refugees unconditionally while the Arabs at the same time declare war of extermination, blockade and boycott.

The truth is known to all, the Arab states do not want to negotiate and not even to take compensation which Israel is willing to pay.

Today the situation is worse. Arab children were educated to hate blindly and they advertise their hatred and aggressiveness in the U.N. itself. They claim that the refugee return will be a means to destroy Israel.

The Jordanian Government Radio in Amman December 26, 1960 announced: "Jordan will accept no solution to the Palestinian problem that does not involve the liquidation of Israel."

Gamal Abdul Nassar, in an interview in September 1, 1961 declared: "If the Arabs return to Israel—Israel will cease to exist."

It must be understood now that Israel has no desire whatsoever to commit a suicide.

It is perfectly clear, as a former representative of Unrua in Jordan, Andrew Bodil, wrote in a letter to the U.N. in 1953: "It is quite obvious that the Arab leaders don't care about the refugees. They don't give a damn whether the refugees are dead or alive. They want to keep the refugees as miserable as they are as a weapon against Israel and as a sore against the United Nation."

Israel wants peace. Where are the Arab governments? Israel is willing to meet Arab representatives any place, anytime to settle all problems, including the refugee one. The Arabs refuse. There is no other way but war, they say. And when it will come, if it will, they will cry again as babies: "It isn't fair, we lost. It just isn't just."

And I ask you now—"Is it?"

Note: This article first appeared in the Emerald on April 11, 1970. Katan graduated from the University with a degree in architecture last June. He left for Israel, his homeland, only last week to join the fighting. The article was suggested for publication by Fred Levy, coordinator of the "Israel Must Live" booth at the EMU.

Commentary

Arab blackmail: Let them eat oil!

By Ron Eber

The headlines read, "Arabs Cut Oil," thus bringing the fear of blackouts, cold homes and no gasoline to the "energy crisis" scared American public. Is this fear justified? Are we, in fact, dependent on Arab oil? Must we abandon our support of Israel for Arab oil? The answer is emphatically—NO!

Oil from the Arab nations (not including Iran) is only 800,000 barrels per day (four per cent) of the 17 million barrels used in the United States. This, in turn, meets only 1.76 per cent of our total energy needs.

Loss of Arab oil will not cause blackouts. 1.2 million barrels of oil per day are used to generate electricity. 80 per cent of this 1.2 million barrels (960,000 barrels) is imported from all sources. The exact amount

of this from the Arab countries is unknown; however, even if all the Arab oil went toward electrical generation (800,000 barrels), which it does not, we would not jeopardize our electrical supply because oil meets only 15 per cent of our electrical power needs.

Loss of Arab oil will not make it a long, cold winter. According to Secretary of the Interior, Rogers Morton, we can save 350,000 barrels per day by simply turning down our thermostats 3 degrees. This is nearly one-half the imported Arab oil and a sizable savings from but one of many possible sources.

As of Sunday, October 21st, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Qatar, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi have cut off all their oil exports to the United States. Along with the five per cent production cut by the

remaining Arab countries; seven-eighths of all the Arab oil we imported has been cut off. Yet the lights still burn and our homes remain warm.

Oil companies and the electrical utilities have been predicting that in the next decade we will need to drastically increase our imports from the Arab nations. Will we be able to sustain our present losses with this prediction of rapidly rising energy demands? The answer here is emphatically—YES!

U.S. government estimates show that during this coming year alone we could save 3.3 million barrels per day; more than three-times all the Arab oil presently imported. In the next decade our savings can be even greater. Industry spokesmen predict a 7.3 million barrel per day savings by 1980. Reducing automobile weights

from 3,500 lbs. to 2,500 lbs. will save 2.1 million barrels per day, an amount equal to more than the Alaska Pipeline will deliver. (Autos presently account for one-third of our total yearly oil use.) Improved insulation can cut one-third to one-half of our home heating energy use and recycling promises to cut our energy needs even more.

We need not fear the loss of Arab oil. Nor should we entertain the idea of abandoning Israel for Arab oil. Our support of Israel must be based upon its right to exist as a free nation. The attempted Arab blackmail presupposes our dependence on their oil. This we are not, and we can learn to do without it.

Oil import figures; U.S. Dept. of Commerce
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