

The Nakba Narrative

What Does “Nakba” Mean

“Nakba” in Arabic means “catastrophe” or “disaster” and is used by Palestinians to refer to their plight in the aftermath of Israel’s War of Independence.

Competing Narratives

- Nakba Narrative: Well-armed and financed Jewish immigrants overran peaceful Palestinian villages and brutally expelled Palestinians from their homes and their country.
- Zionist Narrative: The War of Independence was a battle of the few against the many, a conflict forced upon a beleaguered Jewish community by Palestinian militias and the invading armies of five Arab states.

Problems With the Nakba Narrative

The Nakba narrative conflicts with the historical record.

Israeli Intentions and Actions

- Israel had no policy of harming innocent civilians, as Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, stated repeatedly:
 - “We do not wish and do not need to expel Arabs and take their places. All our aspiration is built on the assumption – proven throughout all our activity ... that there is enough room in the country for ourselves and the Arabs.”
 - “In our state there will be non-Jews as well – and all of them will be equal citizens ... The attitude of the Jewish state to its Arab citizens will be an important factor ... in building good neighborly relations with the Arab states.”
- The only major expulsion of Palestinians was from the twin towns of Lydda and Ramle, which was completely justified: After accepting a ceasefire and promising to disarm, residents staged a violent uprising, forcing the IDF to conquer the towns again.
- The Palestinian leader, the Grand Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini, was a Nazi wartime propagandist, who stated the Arabs’ goal was “the elimination of the Jewish state.”
- Had Palestinians accepted the UN partition resolution calling for the establishment of an Arab state alongside a Jewish State of Israel, there would have been no war and no Palestinian refugees.
- Palestinians continued to decline offers of a Palestinian state at least twice more following 1948, in 2000 and 2008.

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Palestinian Rejection of Palestinian State

- In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak accepted President Clinton’s proposal of a peace agreement that would have involved major Israeli concessions to Palestinians, but Palestinian leader Arafat declined the offer and began the Second Intifada terror campaign targeting Israeli civilians.
- Prime Minister Barak nevertheless continued to negotiate, ultimately offering Palestinians a deal with the following details:
 - All of Gaza and most of the West Bank would be given to Palestinians.
 - Israelis would have control over the border with Jordan or the adjacent Jordan Valley.
 - Israel would annex the area around three settlement blocs, which would be balanced by an equivalent amount of Israeli territory to be given to Palestinians.
- Arafat refused the generous offer.
- In 2008, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made an even more generous Israeli offer that included the division of Jerusalem, but Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declined the offer.

Palestinian Appropriation of Jewish Narrative

The following is from Dr. Ruth R. Wisse’s book *If I Am Not For Myself*:

- Palestinians [have] shaped their national identity almost exclusively through usurped Jewish symbols and history:
 - They say they are the Arab diaspora, longing for their homeland.
 - The PLO writes a “covenant,” a sacred document like the one in the Torah, that promises the land of Israel to them, the Arabs.
 - They launch a ship called the Exodus to draw attention to Arab plight.
 - They claim to be suffering a Holocaust at the hands of the Jews.
 - They initiate the United Palestine Appeal, with the map of Israel as its logo.
 - A spokeswoman of the Palestinian Arabs, widely perceived as a new model of moderation, holds up the picture of a dead Arab girl as the Palestinian “Anne Frank.”
- The systematic appropriation by Arabs of Jewish symbols robs Jews of their national dignity and puts them on notice that another people intends to replace them.

For more information about the Nakba narrative, see CAMERA’s “The Nakba Narrative is Nonsense.”

