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WOJAC

VOL. 2

WORLD ORGANIZATION OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

NO. 1

The WOJAC Agenda

by Mordechai Ben Porat

Jews from Arab countries, along with their descendants, make up a major part of Israel's Jewish population today. Together with their counterparts who have settled elsewhere around the world, they make up the largest refugee movement in the contemporary Middle East. These Jews constitute a significant branch of the Jewish people, who have resided in Arab countries ever since the Babylonian exile, more than a thousand years before the rise of Islam. Over the centuries there were periods when they enjoyed rights and prosperity, and they have been the victims of persecution. As a population, they have made an invaluable contribution to the progress, welfare, culture and wealth of their native lands.

In recent generations, before the foundation of the State of Israel, Arab countries intensified their persecution of their Jewish inhabitants, humiliating, arresting and imprisoning them and forcing them to flee, destitute, after their property had been confiscated. Most of these refugees settled in Israel, while a minority chose to emigrate to other countries for safety. From a population of more than a million Jews who lived in Arab countries more than a century ago, now only 30 thousand or so have remained, most of them living in fear, suffering from discrimination, deprived of their basic rights and freedoms, simply because they are Jews.

Jews from Arab lands, together with all the People of Israel, have been watching with deep concern the worsening fortunes of Jews remaining in Arab countries. Through WOJAC,



Mordechai Ben Porat is the Chairman of WOJAC.

Jews from Arab countries call upon the Arab states to initiate a new era of peace and brotherhood between our two peoples, and immediately cease their persecution of the Jews still living in their countries, granting them human rights and allowing freedom of movement for those who wish to leave. WOJAC calls on the Arab states to fulfil their legal and moral obligations to the Jews, acknowledging their historical rights by compensating them for expropriation of their property and for damages and losses suffered in their countries of origin. WOJAC further calls upon the Arab lands to return to Jewish hands the Jewish religious and cultural assets in ruin and neglect under their control, to guarantee their restoration and repair, and to safeguard freedom of access to the tombs of the Jewish prophets, other religious sites and objects of spiritual importance.

Jews from Arab lands call upon the world community to recognize the fact that a *de facto* ex-

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TAMMAN SELECTED



Leon Tamman is the newly selected Chairman of the WOJAC Presidium

WOJAC To Peres: Remember!

WOJAC chairman Mordechai Ben Porat has written to Prime Minister Shimon Peres concerning recent developments in the peace process. The former minister and member of Knesset noted that Israel has always given priority to the question of the rights of Jews from Arab lands who were forced to flee. "Israel," wrote Ben Porat, "must bring up this issue for ideological reasons as well as for the practical and tactical considerations of raising mutual claims." □

Update: The Remaining Communities

An estimated 65,000 Jews remain in Arab and Islamic lands today, although their number was over one million just one generation ago. Seventy percent of this wide-ranging community made its way to Israel between 1947 and 1961. They have been absorbed by Israel and are full and equal citizens of the Jewish state.

JEWS UNDER ISLAM AND ARAB RULE TODAY

Egypt: There are 220 Jews living in Egypt today.

Ethiopia: 10,000 Jews remain, longing to reach Israel.

Morocco: 7,000 Jews remain, free to travel and trade as they please. The government takes special care to ensure their freedom.

Tunisia: 3,500 Jews live in perpetual worry. The most recent manifestation of hatred was on Succot, when a guard at a synagogue opened fire on the worshippers, killing several Jews and wounding others.

Iran: About 25,000 Jews are

forbidden to leave. A recent liberalization has permitted some to leave Iran in the course of their business transactions.

Turkey: Some 12,000 Jews live a normal and full communal life with full religious and political equality.

Syria: About 4,500 Jews continue to live in Damascus and Aleppo. Emigration is forbidden and any Jew who is allowed to leave on business must leave his family behind as hostage, as well as a deposit of \$3,000 to \$5,000. Some 250 unmarried young women have almost no hope of finding Jewish husbands in Syria, yet are not allowed to leave.

Lebanon: 170 Jews are free to leave but have not yet exercised that option. There have been recent incidents of kidnapping and murder.

Yemen: About 1,200 Jews live normally, though various limitations are in place.

Iraq: About 300 Jews remain out of 140,000. The last Jew to leave was allowed to do so three years ago. □

Resettling Refugees: Israel's Proposal

The Ben Porat Plan, originally issued by former Minister Mordechai Ben Porat in the fall of 1983, calls for the rehabilitation and improvement of conditions for refugees living in territories under Israeli administration, through the dismantling of existing refugee camps and erection of new housing either nearby or in new urban centers. The plan evolved from a Cabinet request in August 1982 and was assigned to then-Minister Ben Porat as a far ranging proposal grappling with the complex issue of permanent amelioration of the Palestinian Arab quandry.

The committee headed by Ben-Porat included fellow government Ministers Yitzhak Shamir, David Levy, Moshe Arens, Moshe Nissim and Yuval Ne'eman. The committee noted the responsibility of the Arab countries for the refugee problem and recalled Israel's demand that the Arab states absorb those refugees living on their soil. The Ben-Porat Program was designed to be Israel's contribution to the economic and social betterment of the refugees on its soil. The goal of the program is to grant the refugees a sense of belonging to the society in which they live by resettling them into dwellings within proper communal infrastructure, thereby integrating the

"The dismantling of the refugee camps will effectively eliminate their negative stigma . . ."

refugees into the surrounding regular population.

The dismantling of the refugee camps will effectively eliminate their negative stigma, while the refugees living in their own homes and gainfully employed will be participating in the shaping of their own future. Israel hopes that countries and bodies interested in solving the refugee problem will contribute financially and practically to the implementation of this program, which may prove a humanitarian boon to the refugees and a political boon once the festering sore of the refugee camps is removed.

Mordechai Ben Porat explains, "As possible negotiations with Jordan and Palestinian Arab representatives seem to be coming closer to reality, the relevance of my plan is more compelling than ever before. It is a logical, humane, long range solution to the Israeli-Arab dilemma. I call upon the government of Israel to reconsider seriously the steps necessary to win its acceptance and speedy implementation." □

Agenda —

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change of population has taken place in the Middle East between Jews from Arab countries and Arab refugees who emigrated from the Land of Israel. Israel has done its share in solving the refugee problem by absorbing Jewish refugees. It is now incumbent upon the

Arab nations to cease the shameful exploitation of the Arab refugee issue for political purposes and absorb their brethren in their midst, settling them within their vast borders, as Israel has done with her own citizens who have originally come from Arab countries. □

Jordan Rejects Resettlement Plan

Jordan has sharply rejected the Ben Porat plan for a concrete solution to the Palestinian Arab refugee problem. The message was communicated in an article published recently in the Jordanian newspaper *Zut Alshaab*. The Arab kingdom's Office for the Occupied Territories cited unacceptable Israeli objectives and alleged racism of Jewish settlers involved in the "terrorizing" of refugees as the basis of objections, also noting that the \$15 million promised by the United States for the plan's implementation has, in any event, not materialized. King Hussein was quoted in the *Hawadeth* magazine as saying that "Israel . . . has presented a program by which it would dispossess the refugees . . . I believe

this to be a step to put pressure on them to leave their land."

"Israel . . . has presented a program by which it would dispossess the refugees . . ."

Other previously issued reactions to the plan include that of the UN, which called upon Israel to "abandon the project and desist from expelling refugees," and that of the U.S. State Department, which announced that the U.S. "objects to the rehabilitation of the refugees without their own wish. We do not object to refugees leaving camps by their own choice for the purpose of improving their living conditions." □

Goldberg: Set Up Commission on Rights

The Honorable Arthur Goldberg, former United States Ambassador to the United Nations, has called for an international commission to study and publicize the claims of Jews from Arab countries.

Mr. Goldberg, who was the guest of honor at WOJAC's Second International Congress in London in December, 1983 placed his remarks in the context of the Camp David accords. "My country has acknowledged, as the result of Camp David, that we will give due regard to the rights of the Palestinians," he said. "But Jews from Arab countries have rights too — rights too long ignored. Justice is due and owing to the Jews who were summarily expelled from Arab countries."

The former ambassador stressed the need for a means to acquaint the world community with the issue of the rights of Jews from Arab lands. "A per-



manent jury of Jewish and non-Jewish members should be established," he urged, "to publish a definitive report about what happened to the Jews in Arab countries. That report ought to be made publicly available, particularly because in the Camp David accords, it is recognized that there are justifiable claims, not only by Palestinians but by Jews as well." □

Jewish Claims Documented in Judea & Samaria

A small but dramatically effective advertisement placed by WOJAC in the Israeli press has led to the discovery of a number of Jews who can prove having purchased land in Judea and Samaria fifty years ago.

The original ad, which ran in June, generated interest, publicity, and results. Since that time, approximately forty families, most of Iraqi origin, have come forth with documented proof of their claim to what totals about 500 acres of land. The land is concentrated primarily in two areas, Dir Rabala on the outskirts of Ramalla and in the Samaria region near Tulkaram.

Attorney Shlomo Horesh is the main organizer of the campaign. From his Jerusalem office, he explained some of the many challenges he faces. "Over fifty years have passed since these people purchased their land. Many have died, many have left Israel. In a number of cases, those who have inherited the deeds have no idea of their existence."

[illegible]

"Approximately forty families, most of Iraqi origin, have come forth with documented proof of their claim to what totals about 500 acres of land."

Horesh's primary source of listing is the Land Registration ("tabu") Office in Ramallah. There he has free access to all

necessary documents.

At the present time, none of the land in question is inhabited by Arabs. It is hoped that once the tracts are re-registered, they can someday be resettled by Jewish settlers. □

Jewish Property in Arab Countries

Developments in Arab countries continue to have their bearing on the claims of Jews to their property left in those countries, whether confiscated, "frozen," sized control of, or simply looted. Thus, a news report by France-Press, published in *Maariv* on November 18, 1985, quotes the Official Libyan Press Agency as saying that "the revolutionary forces seized control of the Land Registry Office and burnt down all the files and documents of the Land Registry in order to accomplish the radicalization of the masses' power". Such revolutionary measures can hardly be considered as very helpful to the identification of property and the recognition of ownership by Jews as well as by others. In defense of the Libyan mea-

sures it can be said that they are not directed specifically against Jews or their property. This much cannot be said, however, in favor of Iraqi initiatives. Originally merely "frozen" by the Iraqi authorities, all property belonging to Jews was formally "nationalized" according to a press report in *Maariv* of November 11, 1980, based on a "government order" dated September 1, 1980. Prior to this report rumors circulated as to the Iraqi Government's intention to liquidate the custodianship (*amana*) which had been established in the early fifties to take care of the "frozen" Jewish properties. The "frozen" property remained theoretically in the ownership of its original owners, but this did not prevent the Iraqi authorities from selling out prop-

erty held by the custodianship throughout the years of this administration's existence, long before the "frozen" properties were "nationalized."

"Orderly" Treatment

Egypt, the country which concluded peace with Israel, distinguishes itself by its "orderly"

treatment of property belonging to Jews. Most Jews were affected by Military Order No. 4 of 1956, by virtue of which property of people "under surveillance" was sequestered. Once the people "under surveillance" were liberated from prison and left the country,

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WOJAC

World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries

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WOJAC welcomes comments and letters-to-the-editor, which should be sent to: WOJAC, 118a Ben Yehuda Street, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Jewish Property Stressed on Libyan Community Day

Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of property was left behind when tens of thousands of Libyan Jews fled Libya, according to WOJAC Chairman

The immigration itself was discussed at the museum in a dialogue between the former immigrants and their Israeli-born descendants. The program also included films on the



Newly-arrived immigrants, 1949.

Mordechai Ben Porat. Interviewed by radio in Jerusalem at the Israel Museum's Libyan Jewry Community Day this past August, Ben Porat stated that WOJAC is considering means to reclaim the property, abandoned when virtually the entire Libyan Jewish community immigrated to Israel.

Libyan Jewish community and a session on the role of women in its daily life.

The museum's grounds were transformed into a giant picnic area as hundreds of Israeli families of Libyan extraction gathered to celebrate their heritage. □

WOJAC-Theme of U.S. Lectures

During the course of a trip to the United States this past fall, Shimon Avizemer, a member of the executive board of WOJAC, had the opportunity to speak twice publicly about the political and sociological issues for which WOJAC stands.

In Santa Cruz, Ca., together with Michael Caspi, professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of California, Avizemer described the plight of Jews in Arab countries before the establishment of the State of Israel.

At a second lecture, given before the Jewish Labor Community in Detroit, Mi., Avizemer presented his audience with a new way to consider the

political significance of the Arab refugee problem. He stressed that since 1948, an actual exchange of populations has taken place in the Middle East, with some 600,000 Jews leaving their Arab homelands as an exodus of some 590,000 Palestinian Arabs from Israel simultaneously took place. He pointed out that Israel has long since absorbed the Jewish refugees, while the Arab lands have refused to absorb their own brethren.

Avizemer reports that this approach to the Middle East conflict and Arab-Jewish relationships aroused the interest of the audience more than any other topic he brought up in connection with Israel. □

Moslem Anti-Semitism Attacked at Christian Zionist Congress

Nearly 600 Christian delegates representing countries around the world heard an analysis and attack on Arab anti-semitism this past August at the first International Christian Zionist Congress held in Basel, Switzerland.

Bat Ye'or, author of *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam*, and a member of the World Executive of WOJAC described the Islamic concept of "Jihad," or holy war, as a religious imperative which explains Arab assaults on the Christians of Lebanon and the Jews of Israel. A refugee from

her native Egypt, Bat Ye'or, who now lives in Switzerland, represented WOJAC at the Congress.

The author appealed to the Arab world to reject Jihad ideology and to "accept a peaceful coexistence with all nations of the world and the recognition of their legitimacy." The Christian Zionist Congress was sponsored by the International Christian Zionist Embassy in Jerusalem, 88 years after the first Zionist Congress was initiated by Theodor Herzl in Basel. □

The following letter from Stavanger, Norway, appeared recently in the London Economist:

Israel

SIR — In your otherwise interesting survey of Israel you fall for the usual trendy cliché: "a democracy built on the backs of several million dispossessed Palestinians". Reliable figures usually quote 800,000 — one million at most — who left in 1948. This figure is matched by the number of Jews who left Arab countries: you mention them in the context of social deprivation ("Jews from Africa and Asia who flocked to Israel in the late 1950s and 1960s"), but you don't attempt to explain *why* they flocked.

In Iraq, for instance, out of a community of 120,000 Jews, only 300 remain. No

doubt there were a few Zionist zealots among those who went to Israel, but people don't normally leave their homes en masse unless life is made intolerable for them, or there is no future for them. The undisputed truth (suppressed by the Israeli government during the 1960s and 1970s for various reasons) is that the majority of Arab Jews left as refugees, many of them destitute. While countries like Iraq and Syria might not be built on their backs, they were certainly enriched by confiscated Jewish assets.

L. Julius
L. Julius

**WOJAC expresses condolences to
Malka and Yehuda Shulewitz on the death
of their son
Yonatan ז"ל.
May they be comforted with the mourners
of Zion and Jerusalem.**

WOJAC Raises Plight of Syrian Jewish Women in Nairobi

by Ora Schweitzer

Ora Schweitzer was WOJAC's delegate to the U.N. International Conference on the status of women, held in Nairobi this past July. Mrs. Schweitzer, who was forced to leave her native Egypt in 1948, is an outspoken advocate for Jews from Arab countries. Here is her report:

(TEL AVIV) — If ever I had any doubts about the need to support and promote the cause of WOJAC, they were dispelled at the Nairobi Conference. The "politics" of this Conference of some 13,000 delegates played a major part in most of the workshops on health, education, rural development, or culture. Some have described this as a "hijacked conference" and there may be some truth in it. There were 22 workshops on refugees alone, and most of these were taken over by a large, well-organized PLO delegation of 130 delegates accompanied by men who controlled and directed the women.

The most vicious accusations were hurled at us, some so preposterous that a Hebrew University professor, experienced in international "meets," broke into tears when she realized she had been made use of in a "Peace Tent" set up for the purpose of vilifying the United States and Israel. The microphone was often denied the Israeli delegates.

"Out, Zionists, Out!"

The Israelis were shouted down many times with cries of "Out, out, Zionists, out!" by 'Shador' — clad, "truly liberated" Iranian women, or Egyptian hysterical demonstrators who tried to prevent the holding of a workshop on Egyptian-Israeli Friendship League. The police restored order, and finally a Kenyatti woman took over and chaired the meeting, which continued with one Israeli and one Egyptian alternatively given the right to speak.

On a more positive note, there were many highly interesting workshops on health and shel-

ters for battered women, to mention but a few where the public hushed the Arab women who came to politicize these subjects, and even asked them to leave the room if they did not keep quiet.

Resettling Refugees

However, the arguments that were most effective without any doubt, in the political discussions on the Middle East conflict, were the WOJAC ones. Introducing myself as a former refugee from an Arab country, I told the Palestinian women that we, the Jews from Arab countries, were today fully integrated in our State, while they represented a third generation of refugees. I often asked a telling question: "Why couldn't the Arab oil-producing countries, with a net benefit of 230 billion dollars, use some of these funds to resettle some of the refugees instead of maintaining them in camps for 37 years, as a weapon to be used against Israel?" I presented some of the women with the plan for resettling the refugees devised by our Chairman, Mordechai Ben-Porat, while Minister of State in the Israeli Government.

Jewish Women in Syria

I prepared a two-page pamphlet on the fate of Jewish women in Syria, and had the opportunity, at a workshop on Human Rights for Women, to suggest that in the program they presented for adoption they include "freedom of movement".

Many of the younger Arab women I spoke to, including a convicted terrorist (Fatma Badnaoui, who planted a bomb in Zion Square in Jerusalem; another one who was given a life sentence also participated in the Forum — both had been "exchanged"), did not believe me when I told them that 856,000 Jews left or were expelled from eight Arab countries, that 600,000 of these Jews settled in Israel and that almost half the population of

the State was made up of these Jews and their descendants. They simply told me I was lying. My reply was: "There were 85,000 Jews living in Egypt, today there are 400. Do you know of any people who leave a country if they

have it "good" there?" Even more upsetting, was the fact that many of these younger women were convinced that we, Israel, had invaded the Arab countries in 1948 and had attacked them in the five past wars. □

The INTERNATIONAL CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS (1966), Paragraph (2) 12, states:

"Every person is free to leave any country, including his own country."*

On March 8th, 1973, Lulu Ziback (28 years old), Mazal Ziback (26), Perach Ziback (20) and Hava Sa'ad (18) tried to reach FREEDOM. They were caught at the Lebanese border, and after cruel torture they were raped, then murdered in cold blood by government agents and their quartered bodies were thrown into the Jewish Ghetto in Damascus, as an example to anyone else who would try to escape.

In January 1984, at the center of Aleppo, Lilian Abadi, 26 years old, in her fifth month of pregnancy and her two small children, aged 7 and 4, were stabbed and shot many times and their bodies were gruesomely mutilated; they were found by the head of the family who was told by an anonymous call to go home and see what awaited him. It is suspected that this murder was committed by elements within the secret police.

These are two examples of the atrocities still being committed against a small Jewish community held hostage in one of the Arab countries which considers itself at war with Israel, and they serve as a painful reminder of the palpable danger which constantly threatens them.

The pitiful remnant of a once splendid Jewish community today numbers approximately 4,500-5,000 Jews who are not allowed to leave that country, by a regime which is signatory to the International Charter of HUMAN RIGHTS. Any attempt to leave is brutally suppressed. If caught, the person is thrown into prison and subjected to cruel torture and degrading treatment.

Most tragic is the fate of the YOUNG JEWISH GIRLS, who cannot find a husband within the dwindling community. By the time these young women may be able to leave, they will probably not be of CHILDBEARING AGE, and will be deprived of the most elementary human right — that of MOTHERHOOD.

Women of all races, creed and nationality:

Please APPEAL to President Assad to be true to his signature on the Declaration of Human Rights and allow freedom of exit to all Jews who wish to leave, and, above all, to the YOUNG JEWISH WOMEN OF SYRIA. □

****This statement was distributed by WOJAC's representative in Nairobi.***

Morocco: The Shining Exception

Morocco, once home to numerous Talmudic scholars including Maimonides, to this day maintains a special relationship with its Jewish population. The positive attitude of Morocco's rulers to its Jewish population was overtly displayed during World War II, when Hitler pressured King Mohammed V to have the Jews deported to Germany. The king viewed his country's Jews as a kind of good-luck charm and felt his rule would be en-

"The king viewed his country's Jews as a kind of good-luck charm and felt his rule would be endangered if they were harmed."

dangered if they were harmed. He insisted that all his subjects were equal and would not hand over the Jews.

This past summer, the Association of North African Immigrants in Israel donated money to the Jewish National Fund to plant a forest in Jerusalem's Ramot neighborhood in memory of the late king, who died

in 1961. Five pine and cypress trees from the forest will be set aside for the royal courtyard of King Hassan II, son of Mohammed V. Moroccan Jews now living in Israel say that the present king also has a favorable attitude toward his country's Jews, despite considerable pressure from Arab countries. The country's respect for Jews

was curiously apparent one day in May, when a French newspaper published in Casablanca by a relative of King Hassan bore the Hebrew date alongside the Moslem and Christian date on its masthead.

Among the major Jewish institutions operating in Morocco are a Lubavitcher yeshiva in Casablanca. Disciples of the Lubavitcher rebbe have been working in Morocco for the past 30 years. □

Future Uncertain for Tunisian Jewry

Many of Tunisia's Jewish residents say there is hardly any anti-Semitism in their country, yet they carry airplane tickets so as to be able to flee at a moment's notice. Some 40 synagogues are still active throughout the country, and the Tunisian government subsidizes special social services and medical centers for the Jewish community, yet even the most optimistic of Tunisia's 3,500 remaining Jews wonder about what will happen to them after President Habib Bourguiba, 82, retires or dies.

A feeling of uncertainty about the future and being part of a dying community were the prevalent attitudes picked up by the French newspaper *Le Monde* in an investigation carried out in the wake of the October 8 attack by a Tunisian policeman on a crowd of worshippers in a Jerba synagogue. Five people, four of them Jews, were killed and eight others wounded in the attack.

According to *Le Monde*, many of Tunisia's 120,000 Jews fled the country while Israel fought for its independence, others during the Six Day War in 1967, more in 1973 during the Yom Kippur War and the last wave in 1982, during Israel's invasion of Lebanon.

Most of the Jews questioned by *Le Monde* said there is little anti-Semitism in Tunisia and that past troubles were caused by Moslem extremists and more recently by Libyan radio broadcasts — including a special station beamed to Tunisia and known as "The Radio of the Sacred Hate."

Le Monde reported that the September 1982 anti-Jewish demonstrations in Zarzis, a village near Jerba, were caused by Libyan hate broadcasts.

"A feeling of uncertainty about the future..."

After that demonstration, Bourguiba personally reassured the chief rabbi. After the Jerba killings in October, a Jewish delegation met only with the Tunisian minister in charge of security, Ben Ali. Local Jews quoted by *Le Monde* said they believed the government chose to keep this contact at a relatively low level because of the Libyan threat and the Israeli air raid on the Palestinian base near Tunis on October 1.

The *Le Monde* article concluded that Tunisia's Jews have little to fear for the time being, but after Bourguiba, many of them will probably leave Tunisia forever. □

Property — Continued from pg. 3 the sequestration orders were abolished.

Following the big exodus of Jews from Egypt in the years 1956-57, no more than 6,000-7,000 Jews were left in that country. Their right to compensation was set down in by a series of laws which were finally amended following the peace treaty with Israel. Jews who left Egypt during that period are theoretically entitled to compensation for their property exceeding 30,000 Egyptian pounds for every individual, provided that the maximum for a whole family does not exceed 100,000 pounds. Claimants living outside Egypt are not entitled to restitution in kind, although this right is granted to claimants who are Egyptian residents, provided the property is still in the hands of the Egyptian Government.

No Successful Claimant

So far no case of a successful claimant has been known. It is known that various legal obstacles are put in the way of any Jew trying to materialize his rights to assets or property in Egypt. However, in view of a number of recent Court decisions reported in the Egyptian press, there may be some more promising prospects for claims for compensation for illegal detention. Denouncing the period of injustice during the times of Gamal Abdul Nasser, when liberties of the individual were

denied to citizens, an Egyptian court has ruled that detention orders issued during that period are null and void. The court stated that the administration has no power to imprison individuals or to confiscate their property, because this power falls within the jurisdiction of the courts. The Egyptian Government was ordered in this judgment to pay 140,000 Egyptian Pounds (approximately \$100,000) "to 15 members of the Moslem Brotherhood who had filed a claim for compensation for damages, both physical and moral, inflicted upon them by Nasser's dictatorial regime which kept them in prison during long years without any reason or legitimate trial" (*Al-Wafd* daily of November 14, 1985). This Egyptian Court decision may be of interest to those large numbers of Jews who were interned in Egyptian prisons almost every time Egypt was engaged in war with Israel. Such large scale arrests took place, for example, after the Six Day War in June 1967. In the first week of August 1967, there were still about 500 Jews in jail. By September 15, 1967, about 330 to 350 stateless or Egyptian Jews remained in Aban-Zaabal prison. At the end of February 1969, 129 Jews were transferred from the Toura prison to the Barrages prison. All of them were released by May 5, 1969. However, approximately 95 Jews stayed in the Toura prison until July 1970. □

Exposing Myths

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL:

The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine,
by Joan Peters. Harper and Row Publishers.

Occasionally, a book sheds new light on an old subject, but rarely does a book show nearly all previous discussion on the matter to be shadowed in darkness. Such a work, however, is Joan Peters' *From Time Immemorial*. Peters, a journalist, set out to investigate the "Palestinian problem" and the plight of the "Arab

len with tens of thousands of recent Arab immigrants, at a time when Jews were being forcibly returned to Europe to their deaths. She also bares the commonly-ignored issue of the mistreatment of Jews in Arab lands and in the Holy Land. Interviewing many Jews from Arab countries now living in Israel, Peters presents their

"Peters demonstrates that Jews did not displace Arabs in Palestine but that Arabs displaced Jews."

refugees." After much thorough research, though, she found that the facts were indeed contrary to the rhetoric. In this fascinating book, Peters demonstrates that Jews did not displace Arabs in Palestine but that Arabs displaced Jews, proving that, in reality, the "Palestinian Arab population" living in the Land in the 1930's was the result of a major, hidden migration of Moslem Arabs from 20 countries. Peters also discovers that British Mandatory Palestine was swol-

startling stories in depth. Even the most casual reader of *From Time Immemorial* will be gripped by the realization that a serious consideration of the facts as Joan Peters finds, analyzes and presents them could very well change the course of history. Exhaustively researched, yet exceptionally readable, this book should be read by anyone who cares about the history of the Jewish-Arab relationship and the current Middle East situation. □

— Nahum Schnitzer



A temporary home for new immigrants in Israel, 1954.

THE DHIMMI: Jews and Christians Under Islam,

by Bat Ye'or. 1985, Fairleigh Dickenson University Press.

Unlike the Christian world, which has come to terms with its harsh treatment of Jews, the Arab countries have preserved a myth that everything was fine for the Jews and Christians in their domains. This is totally false and it is a myth that must be exposed."

The speaker is Gisèle Littman, an Egyptian-born Jew now residing in Switzerland, who, under the pen name of Bat Ye'or, has written a book to document Moslem mistreatment of Jews and Christians. Her recently published *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam* argues that while Islam accepts the existence

serve the interest of Islam.

Bat Ye'or draws her conclusions from the Koran and many Islamic texts never before analyzed in the West, as well as accounts of Western visitors to Islamic countries. She paints a picture of overt discrimination against and sometimes bloody repression of the Jewish and Christian communities of the Moslem Middle East through the centuries, which is greatly at variance with the common belief that Moslem treatment of Jews and other minorities was largely benevolent.

Drawing conclusions for the present day from the history of Moslem mistreatment of the dhimmi, the author argues that

"The rights given equally to the dhimmis to practice their religion were conditional rights and could be abolished unilaterally."

of Judaism and Christianity, dhimmis — Jews and Christians living under Moslem rule — must accept a situation of permanent inferiority. She states that the rights given equally to the dhimmis to practice their religion were conditional rights and could be abolished unilaterally if an Islamic ruler believed this would

Christians in Middle Eastern countries are caught in an impossible position, unable to seek or accept help from the west, which Moslem rule would consider collusion with the infidels, yet in danger of gradually disappearing as the result of fanatic Moslem legislation and practice if they are not helped by Western nations. □

RECOMMENDED READING



Jews in an Arab Land: Libya 1835-1970, by Renzo De Felice. University of Texas Press. Chronicles the deterioration of the relationship between Jews and Moslems in Libya; documents the fortunes of Jews in independent, monarchic Libya and under the revolutionary regime of Col. Qaddafi.

Qehillot HaYehudim BeMitsrayim (Jewish Communities in Egypt), by Reuven Kashani.

Jerusalem, published by the author.

A panoramic account of over 3,000 years of the Jewish connection with Egypt.

Yemenite Jews: A Photographic Essay, by Zion Mansour Ozery. Shoken Press.

An insider's view of the last generation of a culture dating back to the destruction of the first Temple.

A WORLD THAT HAS VANISHED

Photos of Jews in Arab lands, compiled by WOJAC and Beth Hatefutsoth, the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora. This selection is part of a major collection of such photographs in the Beth Hatefutsoth archives.



Rabbi Zion Bitan with his students, Tripoli



A Zionist organization meets, Tetuan



Studying in the synagogue



On the way to the synagogue, Djerba

הארגון העולמי של יהודים יוצאי ארצות ערב المنظمة العالمية لليهود النازحين من البلدان العربية WOJAC WORLD ORGANIZATION OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES JUIFS ORIGINAIRES DES PAYS ARABES

THE NATURE OF WOJAC

WOJAC (World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries) was established in 1975. It seeks to represent the interests of approximately two million Jews originating from Arab countries living throughout the world, the majority of whom live today in Israel and make up approximately 41% of its population.

WOJAC came into being because of the widespread belief among the Jews originating from Arab countries that the time has come to raise the issue of their legitimate rights and to counter hostile Arab propaganda which exploited the status of the poor refugees, a problem they themselves had created. On the other hand, the Jews who had fled from Arab countries after having been humiliated, persecuted and imprisoned, have claims and rights which have long been ignored.

A possible explanation for it having remained an underplayed issue could be the reluctance of Israel, including its Oriental Jews themselves, to describe the immigrants from Arab countries as refugees and apply this term to them, preferring to consider them as immigrants motivated by Zionist ideals. The fact remains that even for the Israeli public, the subject had to be placed in a new focus.

THE STRUCTURE OF WOJAC

WOJAC is a voluntary, international, independent, non-governmental and a-political organization. It includes: The Greater Israel Council, which consists of the leaders of the associations representing the communities of immigrants from the various Arab lands, as well as well-known public figures in Israel; and the Israel Executive, which acts on behalf of the Council.

On the international level, WOJAC is represented by the World Executive consisting of 23 members from eight countries, and a Presidium with 7 members. Heading the World Organization are Mr. Leon Tamman from England who serves as Chairman of the Presidium, and Mr. Mordechai Ben-Porat, former Minister of the State of Israel, who is Chairman of the World Executive - which roles interchange once a year.

The Organization enjoys the support of an extensive lobby among Members of the Knesset, the Government of Israel and the Jewish Agency.

WOJAC's CLAIMS FROM THE ARAB COUNTRIES

- (a) To initiate a new era of peace and brotherhood between our two peoples, the offspring of the same Biblical Patriarch, Abraham;
- (b) To cease immediately their persecution of the Jews still living in their countries, to grant these Jews human rights and allow for freedom of movement to those who so wish;
- (c) To fulfil their legal and moral obligation toward the Jews, to acknowledge their historical rights, to compensate them for the expropriation of their property and for damages and losses suffered in their countries of origin;
- (d) To return to Jewish hands the Jewish religious and cultural assets in ruin and neglect under their control and to guarantee their restoration and repair and freedom of access thereto;
- (e) To cease the shameful exploitation of the Arab refugee issue for political purposes;
- (f) To absorb their brethren, the Arab refugees, in their midst, within the vast areas under their rule, just as Israel has done with her own citizens who originally come from Arab countries.

*

As WOJAC attaches great importance to American public opinion and appreciates the American People's innate sense of fairness and traditional quest for justice, it has decided to convene its Third International Conference in the United States at the end of February or the beginning of March 1987. The Conference will be held under the sponsorship and with the assistance of American Jewish organizations, headed by the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations.

The issues to be debated at the Conference are the following:

- (a) Exchanges of population which have taken place throughout the world, including the Middle East, in the past 50 years.
- (b) Sample models of groups of refugees who have been rehabilitated.
- (c) Ideas as to the possibilities of rehabilitating the refugees under control of the Israeli Administration, as well as refugees under the rule of Arab countries.
- (d) Formulation of the claims of Jews from Arab countries against their countries of origin.
- (e) Jews under Moslem and Arab rule.

(f) To what extent would the Jews originating from Arab countries serve as a bridge of understanding with Arab countries, given the following conditions:

1. that it would not be done at the expense of the State of Israel's vital interests;
2. that the rights of the Jews from Arab countries would be preserved.

WOJAC has already held two previous international conferences: the Founding First International Conference was held in Paris in November 1975, and the Second International Conference was held in London in November 1983.

* * * * *

AMNON SHAMOSH *

FOUR HUNDRED WOMEN **

In the name of four hundred women
I accuse

Four hundred women
Who did not give birth
Who will not give birth
Four hundred families
That were not created and will not
Be created
Speak to them
and they will thunder

Four hundred women

Four hundred potential mothers
Who will never
Never forget
Four hundred yearnings
To breast-feed
To wrap napkins
To rejoice

The sound of their bodies
Withering
And their flowering in despair
Crying from Kamishli
Aleppo and Damascus

Four hundred women

Four hundred couples
Of breasts
That were not caressed
Not filled
Did not taste lips
Did not feed
Did not give -
Fallow fields
never turned green
Trees
turned to dry sticks

Zion, will you not ask?
Will you not ask
What your shepherds
Your ministers do for
Your flock of prisoners?
Are they deaf
To the sounds
Of four hundred women?

Cry of four hundred
Brides
Brides without grooms
Never heard of before
By Satan

Let the voice pierce the ears
of those who should speak:

f o u r h u n d r e d w o m e n

WOJAC

הארגון העולמי ליהודים יוצאי ארצות ערב
المنظمة العالمية لليهود النازحين من البلدان العربية
WORLD ORGANIZATION OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES JUIFS ORIGINAIRES DES PAYS ARABES

JEWISH WOMEN IN SYRIA

The INTERNATIONAL CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS
(1966), Paragraph (2) 12, states:

"Every person is free to leave any
country, including his own country".

*

* AMNON SHAMOSH, writer and poet, born in Aleppo, Syria; one of
the founders and member of Kibbutz-Maayan Baruch.

** The Poem was translated from Hebrew by the poet ADA AHARONI.

On March 8th, 1973, Lulu Ziback (28 years old), Mazal Ziback (26), Perach Ziback (20) and Hava Sa'ad (18) tried to reach F R E E D O M .

They were caught at the Lebanese border, and after cruel torture they were raped, then murdered in cold blood by government agents and their quartered bodies were thrown into the Jewish Ghetto in Damascus, as an example to anyone else who would try to escape.

In January 1984, at the center of Aleppo, Lilian Abadi, 26 years old, in her fifth month of pregnancy and her two small children, aged 7 and 4, were stabbed and shot many times and their bodies were gruesomely mutilated; they were found by the head of the family who was told by an anonymous call to go home and see what awaited him. It is suspected that this murder was committed by elements within the secret police.

These are two examples of the atrocities still being committed against a small Jewish community held hostage in one of the Arab countries which considers itself at war with Israel, and they serve as a painful reminder of the palpable danger which constantly threatens them.

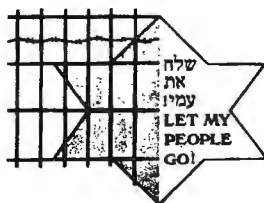
The pitiful remnant of a once splendid Jewish community today numbers approximately 4,500 - 5,000 Jews who are not allowed to leave that country, by a regime which is signatory to the International Charter of HUMAN RIGHTS. Any attempt to leave is brutally suppressed. If caught, the person is thrown into prison and subjected to cruel torture and degrading treatment.

Most tragic is the fate of the YOUNG JEWISH GIRLS, who cannot find a husband within the dwindling community.

By the time these young women may be able to leave, they will probably not be of CHILDBEARING AGE, and will be deprived of the most elementary human right - that of M O T H E R H O O D .

Women of all races, creed and nationality:

Please APPEAL to President Assad to be true to his signature on the Declaration of Human Rights and allow freedom of exit to all Jews who wish to leave, and, above all, to the Y O U N G J E W I S H W O M E N O F S Y R I A .



המועצה הציבורית להצלת היהודים בארצות ערב
Israel Council for the Rescue of Jews in Arab Countries

Ben-Yehuda 118a, Tel-Aviv 63410
Tel. (03) 240173-4

ב'יהודה 118א' תל אביב
טל. 240173-4 (03)

LET THEM GO!



SYRIAN JEWRY IN DISTRESS



Dr. ADA AHARONI

Ada Aharoni was born in Cairo (Egypt), and emigrated to Israel in 1950. She published ten books, including two novels: *THE SECOND EXODUS* and *THEA: TO ALEXANDRIA, JERUSALEM AND FREEDOM* (Dorrance: Pryn Mawr, 828 Lancaster Ave, PA 19010).

These two poems are part of her book: *FROM THE PYRAMIDS TO THE CARMEL* (1980), and *A GREEN WEEK*.

Ada Aharoni received many literary awards, including "Haifa Cultural Foundation Award" and "Keren Amos: President Award". She is professor of literature and history, and she lectures on the History of Jews from Arab Lands, in the Technion, Haifa.

ADA AHARONI,

LET THEM GO

Haunted
by tied wrists
with barbed wires
amid the broken glass
of their past
in Damascus and Kimichle
in Syria

Haunted
by three thousand hurt looks
three thousand bowed heads
craving eyes
bandaged mouths
Jewish faces
hidden, effaced

Haunted
by their piercing cries
through the bars
of broken years
begging
brothers come, come
to free us ...
Our beards have the color of dawn
no one can
can shave.



FARHA ZIBACH



MAZAL ZIBACH



LULU ZIBACH



HAVA SA'AD

FOUR JEWISH SYRIAN DAUGHTERS

Written for the commemoration of the four Syrian Jewish girls (see photos) who were raped, murdered and mutilated, when they tried to flee from Damascus Ghetto, February 1974.

My four sisters
The blood that flowed from you
Was my blood too,
The misuse of you,
The dismembered members
Were mine too

I heard him grin at Damascus Gate,
From this one I shall break
A breast,
From this her shapely leg
And small white ear,
From that a Jewish arm
And a cleft,
And from this one,
She is so pretty —
Just a tongue

If you see my Syrian sisters weeping in Damascus Ghetto,
Tell them
Their daughters' tongues
Have been grafted onto mine.

Ada Aharoni

WOJAC Pamphlets (3)

and

"Syrian Jewry in Distress"

118a Ben-Yehuda Str., Tel-Aviv 63401
Tel. (03) 240173-4

THE CASE OF THE JEWS

FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

Facts and Statements

BACKGROUND

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * There has been an uninterrupted presence of Jewish communities in the Middle East since the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles in the Eighth and Sixth Century BCE - 1,000 years before the Arab invasion of the Land of Israel, and more than 2,500 years before the birth of the modern Arab states...
- * Except for very short periods, Jews have been persecuted and discriminated against by Arab regimes ever since the rise of Islam in the Seventh Century CE. They were never considered equal citizens; they were compelled to live in segregated quarters, and they were forced to embrace Islam or pay the "Jizya" - a humiliating protection tax...
- * Despite these adverse conditions, Jews residing in Arab lands have been able to contribute significantly to the economic, social and cultural development of their countries of residence...

REFUGEES - AND LEGITIMATE RIGHTS

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * Political developments in the 20th Century - notably, the establishment of independent Arab states and the rebirth of sovereign Israel - led to intensified persecution of the Jews. In flagrant violation of human rights, their property was confiscated, their citizenship revoked, and pogroms were carried out against them with the tacit consent of the authorities. They were expelled en masse or, to save their lives, were compelled to flee, leaving behind substantial personal and communal property and forfeiting their rightful share of the natural resources of their native lands...
- * of some 850,000 Jews who lived in the Arab countries until 1948, only a few thousands have remained. In many cases, notably in Syria and Yemen, they are not permitted to emigrate and have, in fact, been turned into political hostages...
- * Unlike Jews in Arab countries, Palestinian Arabs were neither expelled nor forced to leave. The majority left Israel of their own free will, as has many times been determined - by Arab sources, among others - having been instigated by their leaders to take flight in order to clear the way for the Arab armies which invaded the newborn State of Israel in 1948...
- * The 150,000 Palestinian Arabs who did not heed their leaders' call and remained in Israel were granted full citizenship. As a result of natural increase and reunification-of-families arrangements, they presently number some 750,000 within the 1949-67 armistice lines including East Jerusalem. They enjoy today a far higher standard of living and measures of freedom than prevails in any of the Arab countries bordering on Israel...

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * Most of the Palestinian Arabs were immigrants who came to Palestine in this century from other countries of the region, attracted by the better job opportunities and the higher standard of living generated by Jewish development of Palestine...
- * In the de facto exchange of populations that has taken place in the Middle East since 1948, it was the Jewish side that suffered the heavier losses: The number of Jews expelled from Arab countries exceeds the number of Palestinian Arabs who left the State of Israel. The personal and communal property they left behind surpasses many times the possessions left by the Arabs in Israel...
- * About one and a half million out of the three and a half million constituting Israel's Jewish population today - or 43% - stem from Arab countries, while the Arabs who left Israel and their offspring constitute less than 2% of the total Arab population in the area. Even so, the Jewish refugees were - in spite of tremendous difficulties, especially in the early years of Israel's independence economically and socially absorbed and given a secure haven in the State of Israel, whereas many Arab refugees were deliberately kept in refugee camps, devoid of minimal conditions for decent life, so that they might become a political and propaganda tool in the hands of the Arab governments in their relentless fight against the very existence of the State of Israel...
- * Arab refugees, on the other hand, were left to the sole responsibility of the United Nations, whose agencies - primarily, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) - have spent almost two and a half billion dollars, from 1950 until 1985, on their maintenance. All the 22 independent Arab states together contributed less than 5% of this amount, while their revenue from oil during that period reached hundreds of billions of dollars...

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * During the same period, the Government of Israel contributed to UNRWA for the support of the Arab refugees a sum which is 35% more than the total contribution of oil-rich Kuwait, over 75% more than the contribution of Egypt, more than twice the contribution of Jordan, $3\frac{2}{3}$ times that of Syria and more than 7 times the contribution of Iraq...! All this in addition to the billions of dollars spent by the State of Israel on the absorption and rehabilitation of the Jews who arrived as refugees from Arab countries...
- * Simultaneously with its contribution to UNRWA, the State of Israel has spent considerable sums since the Six-Day War on education services, housing, medical care and social welfare services, as direct aid to the Palestinian refugees in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District, amounting approximately to 75 million dollars in the past three years alone...
- * On August 1, 1982, the Israel Government set up a ministerial committee, headed by then-Minister Mordechai Ben-Porat and charged with drawing up plans for the solution of the refugee problem in the Middle East, in the way most refugee problems have been solved in other parts of the world - through the refugees' resettlement and rehabilitation in their present countries of residence. The activity of the Committee embraced, on the political level, the demand that the Arab states accept and absorb the refugees living on their soil, thus paralleling Israel's absorption of the Jewish refugees from Arab lands; and, on the practical level, the support of a program for the social and economic rehabilitation of the refugees living under Israel's control in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District.
- * All these facts and figures have been suppressed by hostile Arab propaganda, which has succeeded in establishing, in the organs of world public opinion, the concept that "legitimate rights" are the prerogative of one side of the dispute only...

INTERNATIONAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * Nonetheless, the international community is beginning to recognize the fact that the Jewish refugees from Arab countries have no less legitimate rights, and that these rights should be acknowledged and restored..
- * U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, the widely accepted basis for any future settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, states clearly the "necessity for a just settlement of the refugee problem" as an essential precondition for the establishment of a "just and lasting peace". It specifically refers to the "refugee problem" and not to the "Arab refugee problem". This formulation was no accident, but the result of intensive prior negotiations...
- * The Working Paper agreed upon between Israel and the United States on October 5, 1977, states: "The solution of the problem of the Arab refugees and the Jewish refugees will be in accordance with terms to be agreed upon..."
- * Following this agreement, President Carter announced at a press conference on October 27, 1977: "Well, the Palestinians have rights... Obviously, there are Jewish refugees also... They have the same rights as others do..."
- * In the Framework Agreement for Peace signed at Camp David on September 17, 1978, it was stated that "a Claims Committee may be established for the mutual settlement of all financial claims".
- * On February 7, 1979, then-Prime Minister Menachem Begin declared from the rostrum of the Knesset: "The issue of Jewish property expropriated in Arab states, and not just in one state, has been and will be raised in all our talks. It was also brought up in our negotiations with the Egyptians, when we agreed that a Claims Committee would be established and each one of the parties would submit its claims. In due course we shall raise the claim that the property unlawfully taken away from them be returned to its owners..."
- * Article 8 of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty states: "The parties agree to establish a Claims Committee for the mutual settlement of all financial claims".

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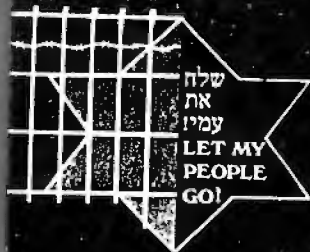
- * On June 15, 1982, a question was addressed to the Minister of Justice by then-Minister and Member of Knesset Mordechai Ben-Porat, as to the status of property claims of Jewish immigrants from Arab countries living in Israel and abroad. In response, the Minister of Justice ordered that efforts be stepped up to gather all the pertinent information and data on the subject...

ABOUT WOJAC

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * In their Preparatory Convention held in Paris on November 24, 1975, the Jews from Arab Countries established WOJAC - the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries - an international, independent, non-governmental, non-profit organization, under the dynamic joint chairmanship of Mr. Leon Tamman of Britain and Mr. Mordechai Ben-Porat of Israel.
- * WOJAC was established with the view of achieving the following objectives:
 1. To represent the personal and collective claims of Jews from eight Arab states against their respective governments;
 2. To safeguard the human and civil rights of Jews in Arab lands;
 3. To draw the world's attention to:
 - (a) the facts, hitherto distorted or overlooked, regarding the long-neglected problem of the Jews who left Arab countries as refugees, and of their legitimate rights;
 - (b) the fact, in particular, that a de facto exchange of populations occurred in the Middle East in 1948, and that acknowledgement of this fact would constitute a major contribution to a solution of the refugee problem of the region.
- * WOJAC has been approved as NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) for association with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI).

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המועצה הציבורית להצלת היהודים בארצות ערב
Israel Council for the Rescue of Jews in Arab Countries

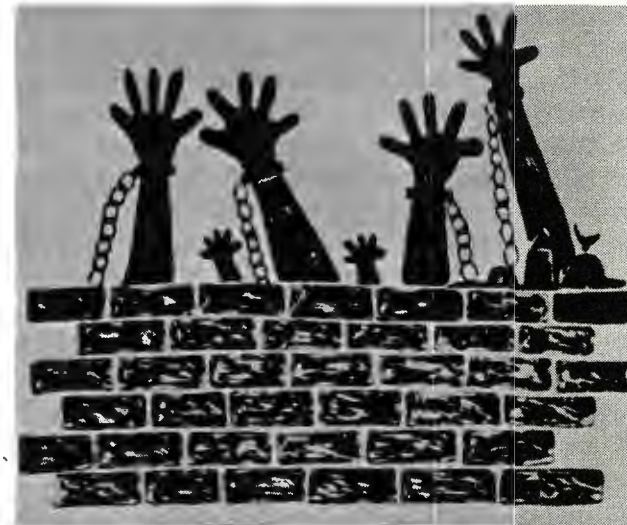


SYRIAN JEWRY IN DISTRESS

THE PUBLIC COUNCIL FOR THE RESCUE OF JEWS IN ARAB LANDS

AIMS

1. A struggle for and protection of the right of the Jewish people in Arab countries to free exit from the countries where they lived.
2. Increasing concern for the problem in world public opinion as a whole and among the world Jewish public in particular.





**Speech by the
Prime Minister,
Menachem Begin,
in the - Knesset -**

October 9, 1980

Mr. Speaker, in Syria the survivors of a once splendid Jewish community continue to be persecuted. There are now no more than 1,000 Jewish families left there. They are locked in their ghetto, living in constant fear. In Aleppo there have been four incidents of rape of young Jewish women; Jews have become the object of lawlessness. And again, we fail to understand this particular kind of sadism. What is the aim of the Syrian ruler, who faces so many difficulties on his own doorstep, who is waging a war against the extremists known as "The Moslem Brotherhood" who have resorted to the use of arms both against the Syrian regime as well as their Russian advisers, in still keeping this tiny Jewish community, in fact the survivors of the Syrian Jewish community, as hostages and persecuting them?

There are people of goodwill, headed by our dear friend Alan Poher, Speaker of the French Senate, whose benevolence we shall forget, who never ceases to be active on behalf of our brothers in Syria and in other Arab countries. We appeal to all men of goodwill to enlist their effort to give help until we succeed in bringing our persecuted brothers to the shores of safety.



**Speech by the
Knesset Speaker,
Mr. Menachem Savidor**

March 8, 1982

Members of the House, today it is nine years since the murder of four Jewish girls who tried to flee from Damascus and reach freedom. They were caught at the Lebanese border, were cruelly tortured, raped and murdered in cold blood by government agents and their mutilated bodies were stuffed into sacks and thrown into the Jewish ghetto in Damascus; they were buried on the 11th of Adar 5734.

The Knesset expresses its solidarity with the memory of Lulu Ziback 28, Mazal Ziback 26, Perach Ziback 20 and Hava Sa'ad 18, who were deprived of their lives under these tragic circumstances. The blood of these four young girls cries out to us from the earth to come to the help of the Jews still living in Syria in any way possible and to break down the locked gates.

The problem is not confined to the fate of these girls alone. In Syria, the survivors numbering about 5,000 persons are still being treated cruelly, being held as hostages by the regime who withhold from them the right to leave that country in complete contravention of the International Convention of Human Rights, to which Syria is a signatory.

This oppressive and humiliating situation has caused a number of families to work up the courage to seek refuge by endangering their lives. If they are caught, they are thrown into prison and subjected to cruel tortures and their Jewish identity and dignity are degraded.

From this platform, I call upon the Syrian President, Hafez el-Assad, to grant Syrian Jewry the right of free emigration, as is the rule for other citizens of that state.

While remembering the four girls who were murdered, we declare our solidarity with our Jewish brothers in Syria and declare that the State of Israel will not rest until the last of the Syrian Jews is free and attains a safe haven.

Dear Reader,

This is the first attempt to open its struggle for the succour of a number of these organisations, who are active abroad in the rescue of the Jews in Syria and to interview Jews who were fortunate enough to get out of the Syrian hell. In this booklet we bring the stories of several refugees, and express our thanks to those who compiled them in New York, South America, Canada and Europe.

From reliable sources, we feel sure that most of the 5,000 Jews who are today living in three towns in Syria are prepared to leave for any country accepting refugees.

Though recently a number of restrictions were removed, which had been a heavy burden on the Jews, such as the prohibition to use the telephone; Jewish students are now accepted by the universities and a small number of Jews, who need medical care abroad are given a passport, the exit conditions remained the same: Handing over a deposit of between \$2,000-\$7,000 per person and leaving behind members of the family as hostages. Also, Jews are allowed to move between the cities in Syria somewhat more freely than in the past. On the other hand, other restrictions have remained in force. The word -

for a member of the Mosaic faith still appears on the identity card of Jews (only), though not over the full length of the page but in small letters; The property of a Jew who leaves Syria is transferred to the authorities and his family is held for questioning.



YAACOV TSUR



HAIM COHEN



MORDECHAI
BEN-PORAT



MENACHEM YEDID

The Council's activities are conducted on the basis of humanitarianism and its goal is obtaining the permission for the Jews to leave in accordance with the Human Rights Convention, to which Syria too is a signatory. The Council continues to function in the spirit of dedication of the two chairmen who preceded me - Supreme Court Justice Mr. Haim Cohen and Mr. Yaacov Tsur. May they be blessed.

The Council expresses its thanks and appreciation to Mr. Alen Poher, President (Speaker) of the French Senate, for his extensive activity as President of the International Council for Jews from Arab Countries.

After being appointed Minister in the Israel Government, I passed my office on to Mr. Menachem Yedid.

Minister Mordechai Ben-Porat.

PREFACE BY MENACHEM YEDID

Dear Reader,

We submit to you herewith a review on Syrian Jewry, comments of celebrities and extracts from the stories of those who succeeded in crossing the Syrian borders on their own and reaching safety.

We believe that the day will come when we shall be able to divulge details of the resourcefulness, the courage and sacrifice of each and every one of the surviving Jews in Syria.

Our main efforts today are devoted to alerting and enlisting world public opinion, world leaders and public figures to act, for humanitarian reasons, to move the Syrian authorities to grant full rights to the 4,500 Jews today living in Syria and most



important of all, to cease keeping them as hostages. This is in complete contradiction to the International Convention on Human Rights to which Syria is a signatory.

We all pray that our efforts will bear fruit and that we shall be privileged to see the Syrian Jewry freed.

Events in Syria in recent years

Up to 1947, about 30,000 Jews lived in Syria. At the time of the UN resolution on the partition of Eretz Israel in November 1947, masses of fanatical Arabs fell upon the Jews; in the rioting against the Jews of Aleppo that followed, dozens of Jews were killed and wounded, eight synagogues were destroyed among them the Great Synagogue dating back to the time of King David, which was built by Yoav Ben-Seruya, was set on fire. Hundreds of Jewish houses were burned down and Jewish property was robbed. As the result of the riots, about 15,000 Jews fled for their lives.

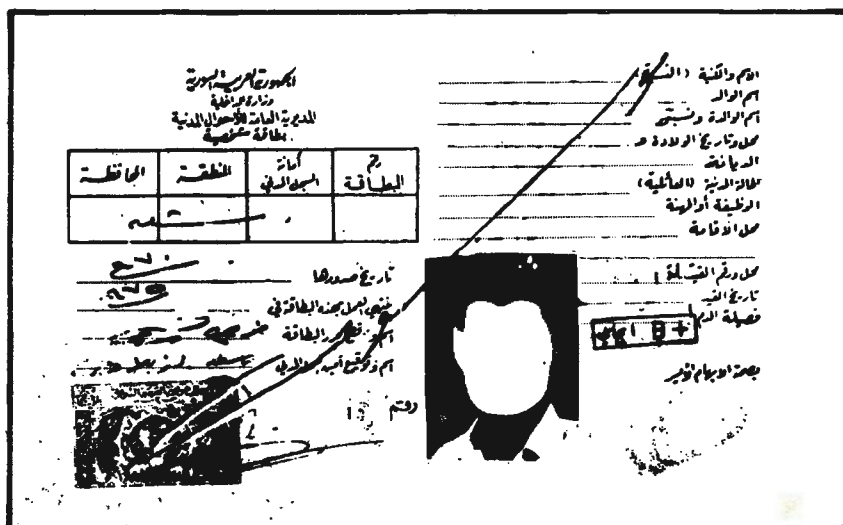


AN ALLEY IN THE GHETTO OF DAMASCUS

Upon the establishment of the State of Israel, restrictions and prohibitions were imposed on the Jews which made their lives intolerable, and many succeeded at that time in getting out of Syria penniless. From the beginning of the '50's Jews were forbidden to leave apart from two short periods: once during 1954, under the rule of el-Atassi and the second in 1958 during Egyptian-Syrian unity.

According to data that we have, it seems that during 1948-1963 about 10,000 Jews managed to leave Syria by various means. Today there are about 4,500 Jews left there - a small and degraded community.

With the seizure of the rule in Syria by the Ba'ath in March 1963, the situation of the community worsened as the result of even greater restrictions and prohibitions directed against it; in this way it seems that the regime is revenging itself on the Jews for the existence of the State of Israel.



AN IDENTITY CARD OF A JEW WITH THE WORD "MOAIC"

SYRIA FOR THE USE OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AGAINST ISRAEL

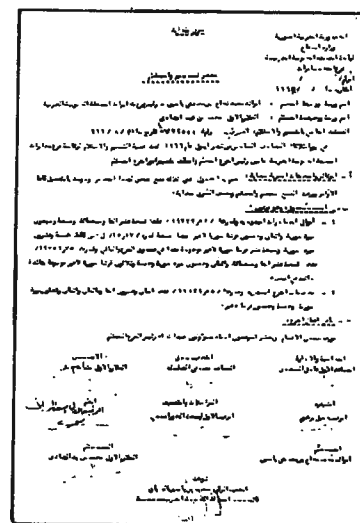
In the offices of Syrian Intelligence in Kuneitra, a strictly confidential document was found, dealing with the replacement of the Head of the Intelligence Branch in the South-Western Region on September 6, 1966.

The document reveals that confiscation of Jewish property in Syria constituted the main budget for Syria Intelligence action against Israel. The document refers to the confiscation of Jewish property which was made available to Syrian Intelligence on the Israel front.

This refers to a sum of 19,777.52 Syrian pounds (about \$5,180), some 88% of the total budget of Syrian Intelligence on the front.

This document is signed by the outgoing Syrian Intelligence officer and by the officer who took his place. In the body of the document, there appears also the signature of a higher-ranking Syrian officer, the commander of the front, Brigadier Sa'id Ben-Yassin el-Tian, who confirms the following facts.

Attached is a photocopy of the original document and a translation into English

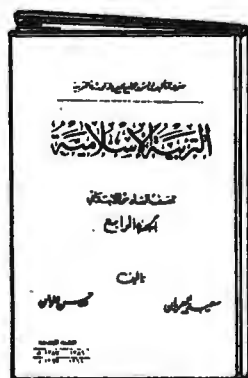


"HATRED IS SACRED"

مجمع اللغة العربية في القاهرة
الوطن العربي
وعلاقتها بالجامعة
أستاذ اللغة العربية
مجمع اللغة العربية
الطبعة الثانية
1974 - 1975

عرب فلسطين .
 ان تحقيق الوحدة بين اقطار الوطن العربي ، يتبع العرب العربا
 يمكن ان يستند عليه في استعادة الحق السليب ويتبع لهم ان يطوفوا
 اسرائيل ويرفوا اطلالها ويطرحوها الى البحر .
 ولقد وقع هذا الشعب في ورطة عند الانسحاب من احياء
 صادقا ، فاقبته في كل الاوقات نحو وحدة العرب وهم يظلمهم ، وهذا
 كان الاستقلال بالنسبة الى العرب وسيلة لا غاية ، وسيلة لتحرير العرب
 جميعا وتوحيد كلمتهم .

"The Jews have always and everywhere hated people who live in peace and tranquility ..."



وكان اليهود في المدينة يرقعون دائما بين الأوس والخزرج ، ليمش بعضهم
ملوحا لبعض ، فيسود اليهود ويتغلبوا .
ويهود في كل مكان ، وفي كل زمان ، لا يعيشون أن يعيش الناس في
سلام ، لأنهم لا يسودون ولا يتغلبون إلا حين تكون القوى ، وتكون القوة ،
ويكون الخمرام
فلما ظهر النبي عليه السلام ، أمدح الله المدينة ، وكرم فيها
الإسلام ، صار العرب بها واحدة ، لا عدوة بينهم ، ولا فرقة ، ولا خصام

"...to strangle Israel, to tear to pieces its aspirations and throw Israel into the sea"

The United States

Israel Ambassador to the United Nations, Prof. Yehuda Blum, delivered a speech to the Third Committee of the UN (The Committee on Human Rights) on 3.12.79, a substantial part of which was devoted to the intolerable situation of Syrian Jewry.

"We shall not rest nor remain quiet until the last of the Jewish captives are released and permitted to return to their families and people.

"Accordingly, I cannot keep silent as to the fate



of another Jewish community - the Syrian Jewish community. Though it is a small community numbering only 4,500 persons, we must still be aware of the fact that these unfortunate people are actual hostages in the hands of the Syrian Government. These Jews, who live as second-class citizens in the ghettos of Damascus, Aleppo and Kamishli, under the constant surveillance of the secret police in Syria, are still bereft of elementary human rights and first and foremost the right to emigrate.

"In fact, this year there has been a dramatic worsening in the attitude of the Syrian authorities towards the Jewish community. Jewish men were beaten and killed by the Muhabrat - the Syrian Secret Police - on suspicion of having helped Jewish families who wished to flee from the country.

"Restrictions were tightened on movement within the country and on the sale of movable property. Among the humiliations to which they are subjected, another



RALLY OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENCE IN FRONT OF U.N

was added. Immediate searches are carried out in any Jewish home where the lights are not lit in the evening.

"Mr. President, the situation of Syrian Jewry has in the past year drawn the attention of the whole world - as may be noted from a declaration by 40 members of the European Parliamentary Council, demanding that an end be put to the persecutions and that all the Jews be allowed to leave

the country. I very much hope that this humanitarian request of eminent European leaders will stir the Syrian Government to set aside political considerations and to permit the Jews to emigrate".

SHABBAT ZECHOR

A MEMORIAL SHABBAT
IN MEMORY OF THE FOUR GIRLS WHO WERE
MURDERED IN MARCH 1974 ON THEIR
WAY TO FREEDOM

1. ISRAEL



FARHA ZIBACH



HAVA SA'AD

The Council called upon the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, to request the cantors of the synagogues to offer a prayer for the welfare of Syrian Jewry and in memory of the four murdered girls. The Council also published obituaries in a number of newspapers.

The Council requested the Foreign Ministry to call upon their representatives abroad to see that prayers were said in the synagogues and assemblies or other activities held in accordance with local customs.

SHABBAT ZECHOR



LULU ZIBACK



MAZAL ZIBACK

2. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Prayers were offered in most synagogues throughout the country. Reports were received in particular from Houston, Philadelphia and Cincinnati, where in addition to prayers, the distress of Syrian Jewry, was commemorated, sermons were given and articles published in the press.

The American Jewish Committee published a bulletin on the meaning of "Shabbat Zehor" (the Memorial Shabbat) and recalled the situation of the Syrian Jewish community. The Bnai B'rith Bulletin published an article on the situation of the community.

The Governor of New York State, Hugh Karo, announced that "Shabbat Zehor" would be "a Shabbat of solidarity with Syrian Jewry". The notice stated

SHABBAT ZECHOR

that since August 1977, the Jews have not been permitted to emigrate. The 5,000 surviving Jews in Syria are not allowed to receive mail or telephone calls and they are subject to constant persecutions.

3. ENGLAND

Mr. Percy George, Chairman of the Committee of Jews from Arab Countries - in England - wrote a letter to readers of the "Jewish Chronicle", that on 11.3. a memorial day should be held in the synagogues for the four murdered girls and that prayers should be said for the well-being of Syrian Jewry.

4. CANADA

Canada, as in each year, saw to it that prayers were said and assemblies held in memory of the girls and



MARCH IN PARIS IN PROTEST AGAINST THE GIRLS' MURDER IN SYRIA

SHABBAT ZECHOR

that prayers were offered in all synagogues for the surviving Jews in Syria and their welfare.

5. FRANCE

As always, France is one of the main centres of activity in all matters pertaining to the rescue of Jews in Arab lands.

In response to an appeal by the Israeli Consul-General in Paris, the Chief Rabbi of France, Rabbi Yaacov Kaplan, sent out a letter to the presidents of congregations throughout France with the request that on "Shabbat Zehor" prayers be said in memory of the four murdered girls and also for the welfare of the Jews living in Syria and other Arab lands.

The Israel Consul-General in Strassbourg called upon the rabbis and heads of communities in the region with the request to hold prayers on "Shabbat Zehor" and suggested that the initiative be taken by organisations and committees to demand from the Syrian Government to permit the Jews living there to leave and unite with their families wherever they may be.

6. SWEDEN

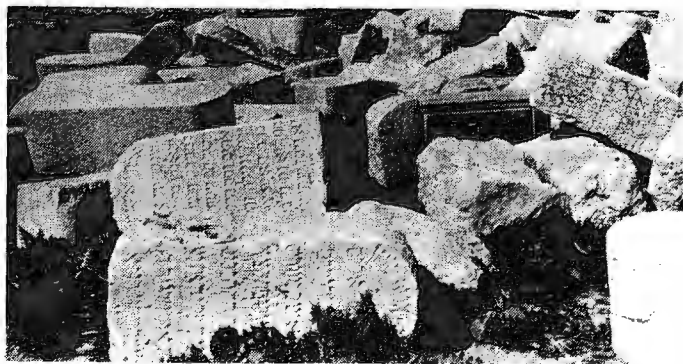
"Shabbat Zehor" was marked by a special prayer in the synagogues in Stockholm. In their sermons, the rabbis described the situation of the Jews in Syria and other Arab countries and called on the Jews of the free world to take action to rescue them.

SHABBAT ZECHOR

The Stockholm Jewish community intends this year to continue its two-year custom once more and send to the community in Damascus, through its Rabbi, a parcel containing religious objects, siddurim, etc. The Jewish Students' Association would try to insert an article on the subject in the students' newspaper of the Stockholm University, and include it in a students' radio programme (a private radio station in Stockholm). An evening on Syrian Jewry and the Jews of other Arab countries is planned at the Jewish Centre, where a film will be shown.

7. DENMARK

The Israeli Ambassador participated in the prayer on "Shabbat Zehor" at the Great Synagogue in Copenhagen, which was thronged with people. The Rabbi gave a sermon on the Jews on in Syria particular and those in Arab countries in general. He pointed out that throughout the enlightened world rabbis are today commemorating the distress of these Jews and are praying for their redemption.



PICTURE OF THE DESECRATION OF THE JEWISH CEMETERY IN DAMASCUS.

SHABBAT ZECHOR

8. VENEZUELA

Prayers were offered in all synagogues in memory of the four murdered girls and special prayers were said for the welfare of Syrian Jewry.

9. BRAZIL

All the synagogues in Sao Paulo, Parana and Rio-Grande-Del-Sol were requested by the presidents of the congregations to hold prayers on "Shabbat Zehor", and this was done, and reports were subsequently published in the Jewish press

10. CHILE

In the prayer on the eve of Shabbat, 29.2 at the Great Synagogue of the Santiago Congregation, a special ceremony was held to mark the anniversary of the murder of the Syrian Jewish girls. The Israel Ambassador delivered a speech on the situation of the Syrian Jewish community. A similar ceremony was held on the following day in the synagogue of the Sephardi Congregation and in that of the ultra-Orthodox Hungarian Congregation. The event was publicized in the newspaper of the Jewish community.

11. INDIA

This year, unlike in previous years, the Jewish community of Bombay joined in the commemorative

SHABBAT ZECHOR

services of "Shabbat Zehor". The Council of Indian Jewry decided to hold a special day of prayer in the synagogue and invited all the worshippers (including those from other synagogues in the city) to attend the special prayers.

Representatives of the Israeli Consulate were present at the prayer. The Consul described the situation of Syrian Jewry and the uniqueness of the event. In addition to the memorial service for the murdered girls, a special prayer was offered for the welfare of the Syrian Jewish community.

12. ITALY

Prayers were held in Milan's main synagogues for Syrian Jewry and in memory of the murdered girls.

13. TURKEY

In Istanbul, the "Hashkava" prayer was said during the reading of the Torah in the presence of about 500 worshippers and the Chief Rabbi.

14. SOUTH AFRICA

In the synagogues of Pretoria, Johannesburg and other cities throughout the country prayers were offered with the participation of many worshippers.

picture of the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Damascus.

TAKING THEIR LIVES IN THEIR HANDS

- Stories of Escape.

Despite our great desire to tell the stories of heroism, resourcefulness and self-sacrifice of those individuals who risked their lives and endangered their families for the sake of freedom, we have been compelled for obvious reasons to censor these stories. The day will come when the full stories can be told ...



A CHANCE FOR FREEDOM, A CHANCE FOR LIFE

My husband was a businessman, a man of property. In the early sixties, as a result of the decline in the local Jewish community where we lived, we decided to move to another Jewish centre only for the sake of our five children. We succeeded in finding a place to live, but the difficulties facing my husband prevented any possibility of his winding up his businesses in our previous place of residence and transferring them to our new place.

As Jews, with identity cards differing from those of other Syrian citizens (carrying a conspicuous stamp with the words "member of the Mosaic faith"), we did not have the permission of the security authorities to move freely from one place to another. As a result of this situation, we were only able to meet my husband infrequently, once every three or six months.

Like every Jewish businessman, my husband was compelled to accept a Moslem who was acceptable to the security authorities as a partner. This man saw to it that the books were kept in his favour and within a few years he succeeded in pushing my husband out of the partnership without a penny.

These crises that affected the family impelled my sons to try and find a way to freedom. At the beginning of the 70's, one of my sons fled from Syria. As soon as his absence became known, my husband was arrested and severely tortured, despite his advanced age. This affair was repeated two years later with the escape of our second son. A year later our only daughter fled. This time, the father

could no longer take the tortures of the interrogation and he died a beaten and broken man. Since that time, I had no rest, each time my children would leave the house I was gripped by fear lest they would not return. This constant fear impelled us to make our escape together.

After such secret preparations, a group was organized. We could not sell any of our property for fear of the watchful eyes of our neighbours. We left behind us everything that we had acquired from the work of years.

On the journey, it was dark and hot. Every stop silenced us completely from the intensity of our fear. We started with a forced march; as we progressed we got rid of all the things that would encumber us on the journey. From time to time, we heard the sound of a fall, followed by a feeble sigh of pain. We were bruised and wounded. When we became accustomed to the darkness and the conditions of the terrain ... the men took turns to carry the toddlers, including three with walking defects. Because of the darkness, one of the girls took the wrong turn in the path ... We went through long agonizing moments of fear until we succeeded in finding the other people in the group.

The guides demanded more money threatening to abandon us at that point, if we didn't pay.

With the break of dawn, we arrived ... The dogs greeted us with loud barking that frightened the wits out of the children ... We waited ... we again doubled the payment ... No one was there ... and they left us. We began to doubt whether anyone had any real chance to be saved from here.

"IT'S TWENTY YEARS SINCE JEWS ESCAPED THIS WAY..."

When there is a change of Commissioner of Jewish Affairs by the Syrian Intelligence Authorities, a heavy cloud falls on the Jewish community. Naturally, the new Commissioner aims to prove his efficiency as soon as he starts on his job. This leads to the introduction from time to time of new regulations that restrict and hinder any movement by the Jews.

One of the new commissioners required the Jewish men to go to the synagogue every morning and evening; there they held a most humiliating census accompanied by insults and the desecration of holy objects even to the throwing of the Torah to the ground. These census takings are intended to ensure that no man has run away and it is hoped in this way to deter them from seeking to escape or to be able to follow anyone as soon as possible after such an attempt.

Jews were forbidden to leave the city and even within the quarter their movements were restricted, which prevented family visits.

In order to justify his actions, the Commissioner decided to incriminate the Jews and prove publicly their hostility to the regime. He instructed one of the leaders of the community to provide him within a fortnight with all the expressions by Jews against the regime. Against this background, it is not difficult to understand the motivations of those people who were daring enough to risk their lives and flee.

I was born in 1960. When I turned 17 I made up my mind to escape. I knew that I would be exposing my family to maltreatment by the authorities; I knew that if I were caught my fate would be a bad and bitter one, like the fate of others who had tried to escape and were caught. But all this did not prevent me from sticking to my decision.

... My friend and I arranged with ... The date was fixed and the cost agreed upon 3,000 Syrian pounds.

We left the house secretly, without saying a word to anyone and without parting. The burden was a heavy one; we knew that the moment our absence was noticed our family would be arrested and tortured; we knew that we would be hunted and what awaited us if we were caught.

We reached the home of ... He tried to get out of it and to postpone the date of departure, but we insisted. We were afraid that we would not have the strength of will to do this a second time. We wanted to start on our way without any delay, before our absence was noticed

We arrived at ... we hid in a dark room (compartment) ... Passengers entered the compartment and it was lit up. Our fear intensified. ... was very tense and did not stop smoking. We feared that we would be handed over... we saw ourselves being returned and this time we would go straight to prison. ... At the end of the argument, which was intended among other things to raise the bribe, he said "Such merchandise I shall no longer permit to be transferred".

... We arrived at a late hour at a village, but could not find any place to rest. Also it was our first night outside Syria and on the threshold of freedom. ... a synagogue.

"AS IF A MAN DID FLEE FROM A LION ..."

When I recall my escape from Syria, I picture to myself the Day of Judgement in the Book of Amos. "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him' and went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him" (Amos 5, 19).

At the end of '78, my daughter was born - my fourth child. Before her birth, I did not dare leave Syria for I feared that my pregnant wife would not be able to stand the hardships of the road. After the birth, I did not wish to delay our departure. At the end of that year, I made up my mind to escape with my mother, my wife and four children. Two friends would accompany us.

The affair of the escape I arranged ... We left our home secretly and behind the closed door we left all our belongings - the labour of years.

I soon found out ... caused us to wander around for hours on end in seemingly interminable areas on paths that were almost impassable. My children were tired and nervous, but my main concern was my wife who was carrying our month-old daughter and my mother, whose many long years in the diasporah had left their mark. The danger ... hovered over our heads and more than once during the gruelling journey I reflected on whether I had acted wisely in deciding to escape.

After hardships and wandering ... In my innocence I thought that with ... our hardships would end, but I was greatly mistaken. ... We were caught.

LEAVING THE COUNTRY FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT

The easiest and least dangerous way of leaving Syria is crossing the border post with Syrian passports and exit permits. But what hardships must be endured before one can attain this desirable situation. The declared purpose of such an exit is the need for medical treatment. Permission to leave is subject to the deposit of large sums of money as a guarantee, in addition to the personal guarantee of two persons acceptable to the Syrian intelligence authorities, usually members of the local Congregation Committee. A further condition for such a trip is leaving behind, in Syria, the closest relatives - parents, children or brothers.

I was born in Syria in 1950. When I was a girl of 10 one of my brothers fled from Syria. As a small child I was not yet the subject of maltreatment. Ten years later a second brother escaped. When this was discovered, my parents were arrested as well as my 12-year-old brother and myself. We were interrogated at length by the Syrian Intelligence people; they wanted to know who helped my brother to escape and what route was used. The interrogation was accompanied by severe tortures. To this day, the scars caused by putting out a lighted cigarettes on various parts of our bodies are still evident. Worse than anything was the abuse suffered by my younger brother, who was cruelly degraded, and who knows if he will ever mentally overcome this traumatic experience.

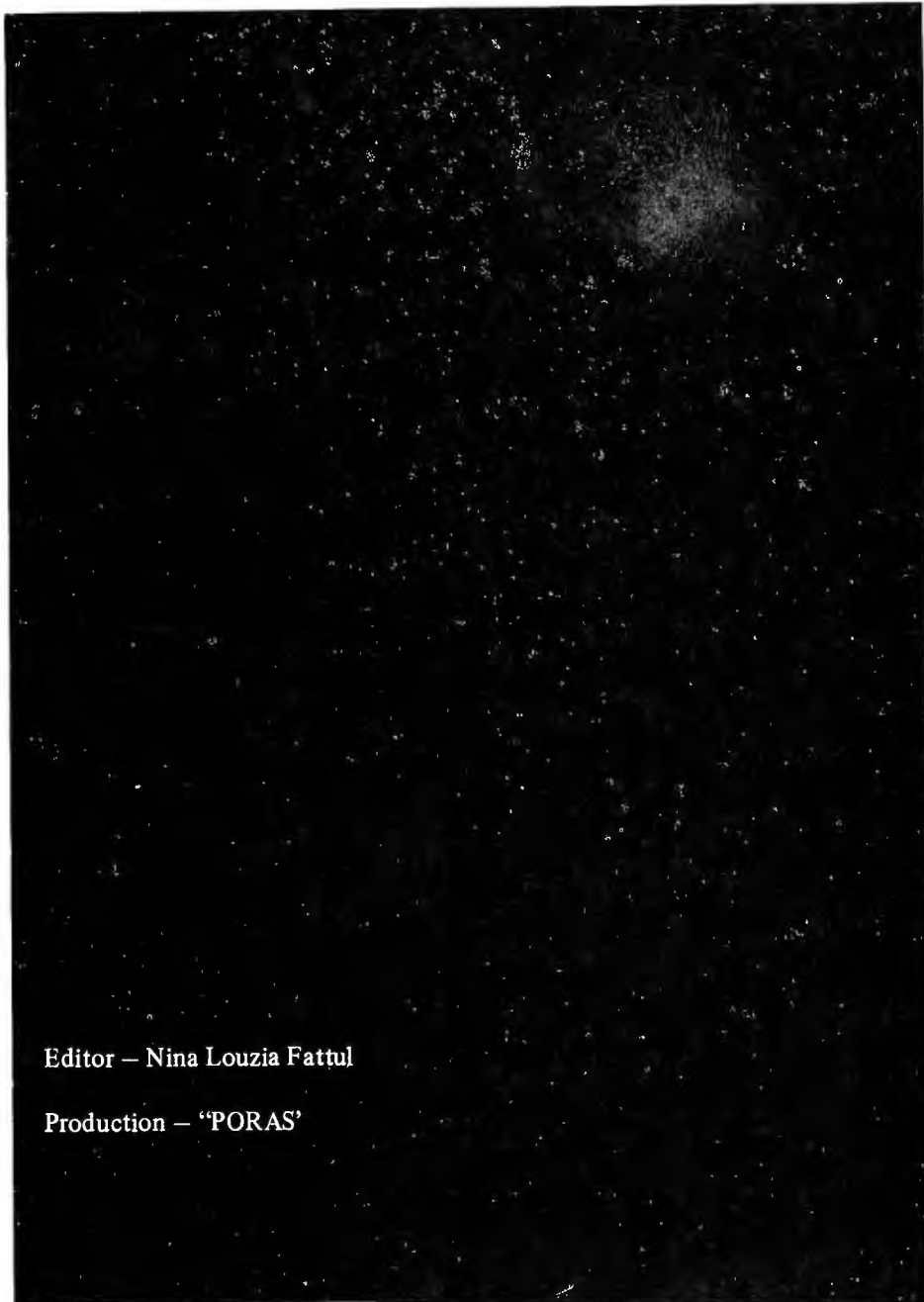
AND WHEN THEY ARE CAUGHT.

In 1973, the Syrian authorities caught a group of Jews with their guide on their way to freedom.

During the course of the interrogation, which was accompanied by severe tortures, the guide broke down and gave the name of the initiator and organizer of the escape. The latter was arrested together with his brother, and immediately they were interrogated as usual accompanied by the most unbearable tortures. At one stage of the interrogation, the Jewish prisoner was compelled by the intelligence people to beat the guide with the aim of breaking their spirit and forcing them to reveal further details of other persons involved in attempts at escape.

The wife of the organizer, who was pregnant at the time of his arrest, lost her child in the eighth month as a result of the tension and fear for her husband.

Thanks to the special connections of the father of the prisoners with people in the regime and after paying large sums in ransom money, one of his sons was released after three weeks in prison. The second son was sent to the Intelligence Centre in Damascus for further interrogation.



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W H A T I S W O J A C ?

THE PURPOSE, NATURE AND OBJECTIVES
OF THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF JEWS
FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

TOWARDS ITS THIRD INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

OCTOBER 1987

PURPOSE

Established in 1975, WOJAC (the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries) seeks to represent the interests of over two million Jews from Arab countries now living throughout the world, the majority of them in Israel, where they make up approximately 44% of the population.

WOJAC came into being because of the widespread belief among Jews originating from Arab countries, that the time had come to raise the long neglected issue of their legitimate rights and claims against their countries of origin: most of them fled these countries or were forced to leave them, in the wake of humiliation, persecution, imprisonments and executions.

*

CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE

WOJAC is an independent, voluntary, international, non-governmental and a-political organization.

WOJAC has been approved as a NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) for association with the United Nations Department of Public Information.

*

The Organization includes:

* The ISRAEL COUNCIL (120-150 members) - leaders of the associations representing the communities of immigrants from eight Arab Countries in Asia and Africa, as well as eminent public figures in Israel;

* The ISRAELI EXECUTIVE (26 members) - carries out policies of Council.

* The GENERAL MEETING (80-100 delegates) - elected every 4 years by the Israel Council and WOJAC Chapters abroad; supreme organ of WOJAC;

* WORLD EXECUTIVE (23 members from eight countries, including 12 from Israel) - elected by General Meeting, sets up standing committees and defines their powers, appoints treasurer and director-general and defines terms, conditions, functions and powers of their office;

* The PRESIDIUM (7 members, including 4 from Israel) - executive organ of World Executive, functions in accordance with its resolutions.

* Heading the organization are:

Mr. Leon Tamman of Britain, who serves as Chairman of the Presidium; and Mr. Mordechai Ben-Porat, former Minister of the State of Israel, who is Chairman of the World Executive. They exchange roles annually.

* Membership is open to Jews from Arab countries and their descendants, as well as to anyone who identifies with its aims and wishes to participate in its activities in Israel and abroad.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON

WOJAC, in presenting its case to American public opinion, appeals to the American People's innate sense of fairness and traditional quest for justice. Its Third International Conference will be held in Washington D.C., at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, between the 26-28 October 1987, under the sponsorship and with the assistance of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, as well as other American and international Jewish organizations.

The objectives of the Conference are:

1. RIGHTS OF JEWS IN ARAB COUNTRIES

- To act for the Jews held hostage in Arab countries to be permitted to leave and, up to such time, to have their civil and human rights respected.

WOJAC does not include all Arab states in one category, but draws a distinction between countries where Jews live in distress, and one or two Arab states whose attitude towards their Jewish citizens is relatively liberal.

2. RIGHTS OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

- To win recognition for the right to compensation of the Jews who left Arab countries and were dispossessed of their private and communal property, and to ensure the salvaging of their cultural and religious assets.

3. REFUGEES

- To win recognition, by the United States Administration and Congress of the de facto exchange of populations that occurred in the Middle East when some 600,000 out of the 850,000 Jews who left the Arab lands settled in the State of Israel, while a similar number of Palestinian Arabs left Israel to live in Arab states.

- To get the Arab states to absorb and integrate the Palestinian Arab refugees in their midst, just as Israel has absorbed and rehabilitated the Jewish refugees from Arab countries at the cost of over \$11 billion despite its difficult economic situation.

- To support any Arab, Israeli, international or private initiatives for the development of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, that will result in a better quality of life for the Arab refugees within these areas, irrespective of the final political solution.

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The Conference will examine the extent to which the vast experience and knowledge of the Jews from Arab countries regarding the lands of their origin could be utilized to help achieve greater understanding between Israel and the Arab countries, and to seek to ensure that any peace settlement will endure.

WOJAC has already held two previous international conferences: its Founding Conference took place in Paris in November 1975, followed by the Second International Conference which convened in London in November 1983.

*

A CALL TO THE ARAB STATES

WOJAC calls on the Arab states -

(a) To initiate a new era of peace and brotherhood between Jews and Arabs - the offspring of the same Biblical Patriarch, Abraham - on the basis of the full and fearless recognition of historical facts and legal and moral rights with reference to both sides of the dispute;

(b) To cease immediately the persecution of the Jews still living in their countries, to grant these Jews civil and human rights, including the freedom to leave, if they so desire.

(c) To fulfil their legal and moral obligations towards the Jews, including compensation for the expropriation of their property and for damages and losses suffered in their countries of origin;

(d) To return to Jewish hands the Jewish religious and cultural assets under their control, after restoration and repair;

(e) To guarantee Jews free access to sites holy to them in Arab countries;

(f) To desist from the exploitation of the Arab refugee issue for political and propaganda purposes.

(g) To absorb their brethren, the Arab refugees, in their midst, within the vast areas under their rule, just as Israel has absorbed and rehabilitated Jews who had come from Arab countries.

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THE CASE OF THE JEWS
FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

Facts and Statements
1986

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * There has been an uninterrupted presence of Jewish communities in the Middle East since the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles in the Eighth and Sixth Centuries BCE - 1,000 years before the Arab invasion of the Land of Israel, and more than 2,500 years before the birth of the modern Arab states...
- * Except for very short periods, Jews have been persecuted and discriminated against by the Arabs ever since the rise of Islam in the Seventh Century AD. They were never considered equal citizens; they were compelled to live in segregated quarters, and they were forced to embrace Islam or pay the "Jizya" - a humiliating protection tax. Despite these adverse conditions, the Jews residing in Arab lands have been able to contribute significantly to the economic, social and cultural development of their countries of residence...

./..

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * In the wake of the 20th Century, political developments - notably, the establishment of independent Arab states and the rebirth of sovereign Israel - persecution of the Jews was intensified. They were deprived of their elementary human rights, their property was confiscated, their citizenship revoked, pogroms were organized against them with the tacit consent of the authorities. They were expelled *en masse* or, to save their lives, were compelled to flee, leaving behind incalculable personal and communal wealth and forfeiting their rightful share in the natural resources of their native land...
- * Out of some 850,000 Jews who lived in the Arab countries until 1948, only a few thousand have remained. In many cases, notably in Syria and Yemen, they are not permitted to emigrate and have, in fact, been turned into political hostages...
- * Unlike Jews in Arab countries, Palestinian Arabs were neither expelled nor forced to leave. Their majority left Israel of their own free will - as has many times been ascertained, by Arab sources among others - having been instigated by their leaders to take flight in order to clear the way for the Arab armies which invaded the newborn State of Israel in 1948...
- * The 160,000 Palestinian Arabs who did not heed their leaders' call and remained in Israel were granted full citizenship, and they and their descendants - who number at present over 740,000 within the 1967 borders, including East Jerusalem - enjoy today the highest standard of living in the Middle East...
- * Unlike the Jews from Arab countries, most of the Palestinian Arabs were immigrants who came to Palestine in this century from the countries of the region, attracted by the better job opportunities and the higher standard of living created by Jewish development of Palestine. Their material state in Palestine was, therefore, limited (compared to that of many Jews in Arab lands) - all the more so, as most of the Palestinian Arabs were not landowners but sharecroppers, hired labourers or professional people...

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * In the *de facto* Exchange of population which has taken place in the Middle East since 1948, it was the Jewish side that suffered the heavier damage: The number of Jews expelled from Arab countries exceeds the number of Palestinian Arabs who left the State of Israel; the Jews who constituted in 1948 1.5% of the total population of the Arab lands in which they had been living, evacuated approximately 100,000 Sq.Kms. - five times the territory of Israel prior to the Six-Day War. The private and communal property they left behind surpasses many times the possessions left by the Arabs in Israel - as do their social losses and the religious treasures and facilities the Jews were compelled to leave behind...
- * About one and a half million out of the 4,400,000 constituting Israel's Jewish population today have come from Arab countries, while the Arabs who left Israel constitute less than 2% of the total Arab population in the area. Even so, the Jewish refugees were - in spite of tremendous difficulties, especially in the early years of Israel's independence - economically and socially absorbed and given a secure haven in the State of Israel, whereas the Arab refugees were deliberately herded into refugee camps, devoid of minimal conditions for decent life, so that they might become a political and propaganda tool in the hands of the Arab governments in their relentless fight against the very existence of the State of Israel...
- * Jewish refugees received no financial support whatsoever from the international community: Their absorption was financed by the Israel Government and by their Jewish brethren in Israel and abroad...
- * Arab refugees, on the other hand, were left to the sole responsibility of the United Nations, whose agencies - primarily, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) - have spent almost two and a half million Dollars from May 1950 until 1985 on their maintenance. All the 22 independent Arab states contributed less than 5% of this amount, while their revenue from oil during that period reached hundreds of billions of Dollars...

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * During that same period, the Government of Israel contributed to UNRWA for the support of the Arab refugees a sum which is over a 1/3 more than the total contribution of oil-rich Kuwait, over 3/4 more than the contribution of Egypt, more than twice the contribution of Jordan, $3\frac{2}{3}$ times that of Syria and more than 7 times the contribution of Iraq...!
- * Simultaneously with its contribution to UNRWA, the State of Israel has spent considerable sums since the Six-Day War on education services, housing, medical care and social welfare services as direct aid to the Palestinian refugees in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, amounting approximately to \$75 million Dollars in the past three years alone...
- * On the 1st of August, 1982, the Israel Government set up a Ministerial Committee, headed by then-Minister Mordechai Ben-Porat and charged with drawing up principles, ways and methods for the solution of the refugee problem in the Middle East through their resettlement and rehabilitation in their present countries of residence. The activity of the Committee embraced: On the political level, the demand that the Arab states accept and absorb the refugees living on their soil, thus paralleling Israel's absorption of the Jewish refugees from Arab lands; and on the practical level, the support of the programme for the social and economic rehabilitation of the refugees living under Israel's control in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, thus helping to solve this painful humanitarian problem...
- * Needless to say that all these facts and figures have been well suppressed and silenced by hostile Arab propaganda which has succeeded in establishing the concept of the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians" in the organs of world public opinion; in spite of it, however, the international community is beginning to recognize the fact that the Jewish refugees from Arab countries have no less legitimate rights, and that these rights should be fully acknowledged and restored...

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * UN Security Council Resolution 242, the widely accepted basis for any future settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, states clearly "the necessity for a just settlement of the refugee problem" as an essential precondition for the establishment of a "just and lasting peace." It specifically refers to the "refugee problem" and not to the "Arab refugee problem". This formulation resulted from intensive negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union - the latter pressing for the more restrictive formula...
- * The Working Paper agreed upon between Israel and the United States on October 5, 1977, states: "The solution of the problem of the Arab refugees and the Jewish refugees will be in accordance with terms to be agreed upon..."
- * Following this agreement, President Carter announced in a press conference on October 27, 1977: "Well, the Palestinians have rights... Obviously, there are Jewish refugees also... They have the same rights as others do..."
- * In the Framework Agreement for Peace signed at Camp David on September 17, 1978, it was stated that "a Claim Committee may be established for the mutual settlement of all financial claims."
- * On February 7, 1979, then-Prime Minister Mr. Menachem Begin, declared from the rostrum of the Knesset: "The issue of Jewish property expropriated in Arab states, and not just in one state, has been and will be raised in all our talks. It was also brought up in our negotiations with the Egyptians, when we agreed that a Claim Committee would be established and each one of the parties would submit its claims, and in due course we shall raise the claim that the property unlawfully taken away from them be returned to its owners..."
- * Article 8 of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty states: "The parties agree to establish a Claim Committee for the mutual settlement of all financial claims".
- * On June 15, 1982, a question was raised by then-Minister and Member of Knesset Mordechai Ben-Porat, as to the status of property claims of Jewish immigrants from Arab countries living in Israel and abroad.

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The question was addressed to Minister of Justice Moshe Nessim, whose Ministry has been compiling documented evidence of those claims...

*

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- * In their preparatory Convention held in Paris on the 24th of November, 1975, the Jews from Arab countries established W O J A C - the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries - an international, independent, non-governmental, non-profit organization, under the dynamic joint chairmanship of Mr. Leon Tamman of England and Mr. Mordechai Ben-Porat of Israel.

Additional institutions of WOJAC are:

- The World Executive;
- The Israeli Executive and the Israeli Board;
- The Israel Council;
- Chapters in the United States and Europe.

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- * WOJAC has been established with the view of achieving the following objective:
 1. To represent the personal and collective claims of Jews from eight Arab states against their respective governments;
 2. To rescue the Jews still remaining in Arab lands from their distress and ensure that their human and civil rights in their countries of residence be safeguarded;
 3. To draw the world's attention to:
 - a) The true facts, which have hitherto been distorted or overlooked, and the too-long neglected problem of the Jews who left Arab countries as refugees and their legitimate rights;
 - b) The fact that a *de facto* exchange of population occurred in the Middle East in 1948, and that recognition of this fact constitute a major contribution towards a solution of the refugee problem of the region.

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**600,000 JEWISH REFUGEES
LEFT ARAB COUNTRIES IN 1948
WHERE ARE THEY NOW ?**



Do you know that...

- Jewish communities lived in the Middle East **1000 years before** the birth of **Islam**?
- Jews who lived **under** Arab rule were called “**ahl al-Thimma**” i.e. protected people, treated as **second class citizens**, **humiliated**, **persecuted**, **their property confiscated** and **their human rights violated**?
- in **1948**, **856,000** Jews lived in Arab countries and in **1982** only **35,000** Jews were left there, some of them, like those in Syria, are still held as hostages?
- **most of the Jewish refugees** were **absorbed by Israel** whereas many Arabs still remain refugees because the Arab states neglected to improve their status?
- **U.N. Security Council Resolution 242** calls for “**a just settlement of the refugee problem**” thus placing both **Arab and Jewish refugees on equal footing**?

WOJAC

WORLD ORGANIZATION OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES JUIFS ORIGINAIRES DES PAYS ARABES
118a, BEN-YEHUDA STREET, TEL-AVIV 63 401, ISRAEL