

Debunking Zionist myths

By Mazin Qumsiyeh

Below we expose some of the most frequently mentioned myths that are used by Zionists and their apologists in defence of Israel and its crimes:

Myth 1: *Israel became a nation in 1312 B.C.E., 2,000 years before the rise of Islam.*

Fact: Israel did not "become" a nation and it is important not to compare apples with oranges. The Israel of today has little to do with the "Israel" of 3,000 years ago. Archaeologists at Tel Aviv University showed that city states and kingdoms were routinely made and obliterated in the ancient land of Canaan while the natives survived and continued to live. Ethnic cleansing was only recently practised (1947-49). The Israelites evolved from local Canaanites (archaeological evidence, not the stories of the Bible, which were never intended to be taken literally). But even if one is to take the stories of the Bible literally, there is plenty of "evidence" in the Bible that Hebrews prospered with Adomites and other Canaanites. These are not states or nations in the modern sense. In either case, what is the relevance of this to politics in the Middle East? Christianity arose 2,000 years ago, well after Judaism but before Islam, and that does not add anything to whether Christians need to go back and build a Byzantine state in Palestine. History is important ,so here goes.

Canaanitic groups are classified into Western Canaanitic languages (Aramaic, Assyrian, Phoenician, etc.) and Eastern Canaanitic languages (Arabic and Hebrew which were spoken but not written languages). Northern Canaanites (e.g. Nebateans and Phoenicians) developed the written languages.

The Jebusites (Canaanites) around 3000 B.C. dwelt on the tract of land "Jebus", which later became Jerusalem. Ur-Shalem (Jerusalem) is a Canaanite word meaning, the house of Salem, the chieftain of the clan of Jebusites. The name Salem is Shalem in the Aramaic language and was also adapted to Arabic and Hebrew (but much later) to indicate peace. Similarly, while Arabs and Jews think Bethlehem means house of or meat respectively, it is more appropriately house of Laham (the Canaanitic god of the southern hills). The temple of Solomon was probably built on the ruins of the Jebusite temple just like the Aqsa was built on the same ruins.

Historically, new religions did this so that they can adapt the locals to the new religion (i.e. you cannot shock them to stop them from going to their holy places but it is possible to change what Campbell calls "the face of God", i.e. the image. Hence, the Ka'ba in Mecca is also the same place that the ancient Pagans worshipped.

All these groups lived, fought, interacted, collaborated, etc. but no group was obliterated in history. Palestinian villagers, especially in northern Palestine, for hundreds of years and until today use the name Can'an for their children. Second, designs on the cloths of villagers (the folkloric symbols) are Canaanitic symbols (and are shared by location and by locals who are both Christian and Muslim). I can site several other examples, including ritualistic events that are probably pagan in origin. Jews converted to Christianity and Christian converted to Islam as major trends during the establishment of these religions, and this is also well documented.

One of the major myths perpetuated by latter followers of the religion is the notion of their novelty/freshness/uniqueness and, in the case of some followers of Judaism, the idea that it is more than a religion but an inherited attribute. Genetically, Palestinian Christians and Muslims are closer to Sephardi Jews than either group is to Ashkenazi Jews, who are in turn more Turkic (and indo-European, due to the significant pool of Khazars who converted to Judaism a few hundred years ago). Ashkenazis thus are not true Semites. The use of the word anti-Semitic is corrupted as Arabs are

Semites and most Jews are not.

Sources:

Davies P.R., "In Search of 'Ancient' Israel", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 1992.

Hadawi, S., "Bitter Harvest, a Modern History of Palestine", 4th Edition, Olive Branch Press, NYC, 1991.

Marcus, A.D., *The View from Nebo: How Archaeology is Rewriting the Bible and Reshaping the Middle East*, Little, Brown, Boston, 2000.

Whitelam K.W., *The Invention of Ancient Israel and the Silencing of Palestinian History*, Routledge, London, 1996.

Myth 2: *Arab refugees in Israel began identifying themselves as part of a Palestinian people in 1967, two decades after the establishment of the modern State of Israel.*

Fact: For well over 2,000 years, the land was called Palestine and its inhabitants, the Palestinians, and by the rest of the world. Any search of textbooks published before Israel was established will reveal this very clearly. The issue of nationalism requires some comment. The Philistines settled in the land of Canaan around 1250 B.C., establishing five kingdoms: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron. It was from the Philistines that Palestine received its name. Since Roman times, this land has been known as Palestine. The Palestinians of today, Muslims and Christians, trace their descent to all the peoples who have lived on this land from the time of the Canaanites. Natives in Palestine (who happen to speak Arabic and hold religions such as Bahai, Christian, Muslim, Jewish) are like all native people anywhere in the world. In their natural state over thousands of years, they identified themselves with their villages, tribes and languages but not necessarily to a nation in the modern sense of the 20th century. Arab nationalism was bolstered to counteract the Ottoman Empire and Palestinian nationalism is part of the nationalism and development of new countries all over the previous colonial empires in Africa and Asia (witness Kenya or Tanzania or Nigeria, none of them had nationalism, as seen today, a hundred years ago).

This was true for all natives regardless of the religion they had. Of course, if they travelled outside of Palestine, they were recognized and identified as Palestinian by their dress, accent (Palestinian accent is very different from, say, Arabic accent in Egypt or Lebanon or Jordan), and their own self identification. This is analogous to Irish people versus English. Arab nationalism and Palestinian nationalism have books written on them.

But whether people align themselves with local nationalism, pan-Arab nationalism, Islamism, Zionism or communism, natives (regardless of their religion) do not lose their rights to continue to live and prosper in their own land and country.

Myth 3: *Since the Jewish conquest in 1272 B.C.E. the Jews have had dominion over the land for 1,000 years with a continuous presence in the land for the past 3,300 years.*

Fact: There was no Jewish conquest in 1272 B.C. As mentioned above, Judaism evolved as one of many religions in the land of Canaan. They certainly did not have dominion over the land for 1,000 years, nor did they have a continuous presence on the land of Canaan.

Relevant quotes

"Between 3000 and 1100 B.C., Canaanite civilization covered what is today Israel, the West Bank, Lebanon and much of Syria and Jordan... Those who remained in the Jerusalem hills after the Romans expelled the Jews [in the second century A.D.] were a potpourri: farmers and vineyard growers, pagans and converts to Christianity, descendants of the Arabs, Persians, Samaritans, Greeks and old Canaanite tribes." (Marcia Kunstel and Joseph Albright, *Their Promised Land*.)

"But all these [different peoples who had come to Canaan] were additions, sprigs grafted onto the parent tree... And that parent tree was Canaanite...[The Arab invaders of the 7th century A.D.] made Muslim converts of the natives, settled down as residents, and intermarried with them, with the result that all are now so completely Arabized that we cannot tell where

the Canaanites leave off and the Arabs begin." (Illene Beatty, *Arab and Jew in the Land of Canaan*.)

"The extended kingdoms of David and Solomon, on which the Zionists base their territorial demands, endured for only about 73 years... Then it fell apart...[Even] if we allow independence to the entire life of the ancient Jewish kingdoms, from David's conquest of Canaan in 1000 B.C. to the wiping out of Judah in 586 B.C., we arrive at [only] a 414-year Jewish rule." (Illene Beatty, *Arab and Jew in the Land of Canaan*.)

Myth 4: *The only Arab dominion since the conquest in 635 C.E. lasted no more than 22 years.*

Fact: Arab refers to people whose mother tongue is Arabic. Since the 635 A.D., the only time the land was not ruled by people who are Arab by definition is when it was under Ottoman rule. This is over 800 years of Arab rule and it was over all the land of Palestine (more than twice the time the small part of Palestine was ruled by the kingdoms of Judah and Israel). But even the Ottomans had the natives run most of their affairs and, thus, the leadership in Palestine under Ottoman rule were natives of the regions ruled and, in the case of Palestine, they were Palestinian Arabs. The Arab delegates from Palestine to the Ottoman grand parliament had to travel regularly back and forth and used declarations in both Turkish and Arabic.

"Palestine became a predominately Arab and Islamic country by the end of the 7th century. Almost immediately thereafter its boundaries and its characteristics - including its name in Arabic, Filastin - became known to the entire Islamic world, as much for its fertility and beauty as for its religious significance... In 1516, Palestine became a province of the Ottoman Empire, but this made it no less fertile, no less Arab or Islamic... Sixty percent of the population was in agriculture; the balance was divided between townspeople and a relatively small nomadic group. All these people believed themselves to belong in a land called Palestine, despite their feelings that they were also members of a large Arab nation... Despite the steady arrival in Palestine of Jewish colonists after 1882, it is important to realize that, not until the few weeks immediately preceding the establishment of Israel in the spring of 1948, was there ever anything other than a huge Arab majority. For example, the Jewish population in 1931 was 174,606 against a total of 1,033,314." (Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*.)

Other sources:

Davies P.R., *"In Search of 'Ancient' Israel"*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 1992.

Hadawi, S., *Bitter Harvest, A Modern History of Palestine*, 4th Edition, Olive Branch Press, NYC, 1991

Myth 5: *For over 3,300 years, Jerusalem has been the Jewish capital. Jerusalem has never been the capital of any Arab or Muslim entity. Even when the Jordanians occupied Jerusalem, they never sought to make it their capital, and Arab leaders did not come to visit.*

Fact: Throughout the 5,000 year history of the area, Jerusalem was an Israelite (not Jewish) capital for only 421 years. After Solomon's death, when the kingdom split, this marked the end of a united kingdom of Israel. The Northern Kingdom was named Samaria after its capital. Jerusalem was not the capital of the Northern Kingdom, which was comprised of 10 tribes, the majority of the Israelites. The kingdom of Judah in the south kept its capital as Jerusalem, but that kingdom was made up of only two tribes. So, the majority of the Israelites did not consider Jerusalem their capital. When the Assyrians invaded Samaria, their inhabitants were dispersed, and came to be referred to as the "Ten Lost Tribes of Israel". So, the ten lost tribes of Israel had only lived in the Kingdom of Israel until the Assyrian invasion (205 years) before they ceased to exist. The Southern kingdom of Israelites, who descended from the tribe of Judah, made for Sephardic Jews of the present day (not Ashkenazis) . Jerusalem was the capital of Judah, not Israel, for 421 years.

Myth 6: *Jerusalem is mentioned over 700 times in Tanach, the Jewish Holy Scriptures. Jerusalem is not mentioned once in the Koran.*

Fact: Jerusalem is mentioned in the Holy Koran as is the Prophet Muhammad's night journey to it. Unlike the Tanach, the Koran is not a book of stories about historical figures and ancestors. The Koran is mainly concerned with giving guidance to the believers on how they can best achieve salvation. Mecca is mentioned only once in the Koran and Medina is mentioned only twice. The Koran does not

even mention these cities as being holy, and offers very few names of places. The fact that they are mentioned so few times certainly does not diminish their status in the eyes of all Muslims. Islam is not only comprised of the Koran, but of the Hadith [sayings] of the Prophet and the Shari'ah [Islamic law]. The Prophet said: "A journey (with the intention of worship) should be taken only to three mosques: The Sacred Mosque in Mecca, my Mosque in Medina and the Masjid Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem." It is a sacred duty for Muslims to visit Jerusalem, its mosque and the sacred areas that surround it. Pilgrims to Mecca and Medina often visit Jerusalem first. Virtually the entire city of Jerusalem is Waqf land (religious endowment). This land cannot be sold or transferred. The Masjid Al-Aqsa has always been a primary seat of learning in Islam, attracting many Muslim scholars who have settled in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is also mentioned countless times in the New Testament (Christian Holy Book) and many other Holy Books (Bahai's, etc.). If this is supposed to make it any less important to one religion or another, it is a ridiculous assumption. But the rights of native Palestinians (Jews, Christians and Muslims) to Jerusalem is not derived of religious texts but by virtue of domicile and living there for hundreds and thousands of years.

Myth 7: *King David founded the city of Jerusalem. Muhammad never came to Jerusalem.*

King David did not found Jerusalem. Jerusalem was founded by Jebusites (Canaanites). King David merely renamed it from Ur-Shalem to Yerushalayim. Many Zionists consider David an important king. Muslims and Christians revere King David more as a prophet/messenger of God. It was also documented that the Prophet Muhammad revered Jerusalem from early childhood, and he visited Syria and Palestine on trading expeditions with his uncle, and later for his future wife, Khadija. Let us also not forget that Christian Palestinians hold Jerusalem as their most holy city, one that has been holy to them for 2,000 years. However, their ancestors have lived continuously in this city for 9,000 years, since Christian Palestinians trace their descent to all the peoples of Canaan who lived on this land.

Expansion on the issue of Jerusalem

The modern 20th century concept of "capital" is not the same as what was practised in history. Three thousand years ago was a period of city-states. But, regardless, let us talk about Jerusalem.

Jerusalem has always been at the centre of life for the native Palestinian inhabitants, going back 5,000 years. The Jebusites (Canaanites) around 3000 B.C. dwelt on and built the city they called Ur-Shalem (Jerusalem), a Canaanite word meaning the house of Salem, the chieftain of the clan of Jebusites. At the time this was the beginning of periods in history called city-states (small states with one large city centre). The name Salem is Shalem in the Aramaic language and was also adapted to Arabic and Hebrew (but much later) to indicate peace. Similarly, while Arabs and Jews think Bethlehem means house of or meat respectively, it is more appropriately house of Laham (the Canaanitic god of sustenance, the God of the hills or Efrata). The temple of Solomon probably was built on the ruins of the Jebusite temple, just like Al-Aqsa was likely built on the same ruins. Historically, new religions did this so that they can adapt the locals to the new religion (i.e. you cannot shock them to stop them from going to their holy places but it is possible to change what Campbell calls "the face of God", i.e. the image). This Palestinian centre of life continued as the area came under various degrees of control from Assyrians to Egyptian to Judahite to Roman to Khalifate Islamic to Ottoman to British to Jordanian and to Israeli. Jerusalem thus has always been a centre of Palestinian/natives' life as Beirut was of Lebanese life or Cairo/Giza of Egyptian life before the modern era of national independence from colonialism. The modern concept of a political capital for a multi-city state is a much later historical development. In Palestine, the recognition of Jerusalem as a political capital was congruent with the separation and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. As an economic and religious capital for Palestine, Jerusalem has always been recognized by the people of the area. It is not a surprise thus that printing presses, major business, religious centres, etc. were all in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem has always been an international city with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community. In fact, even kings Solomon and David allowed flourishing Canaanite (native inhabitants) in the land while they ruled from Jerusalem. The city saw even more open and accelerated development with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community flourishing during the Islamic periods. The Khalif Umar, who brought Jerusalem under Islamic rule, was the most recognized pluralist in this regard. Karen Armstrong, in her well-respected book, *Jerusalem: One City Three Faiths* (NY, Knopf, 1996) writes:

Umar also expressed the monotheistic ideal of compassion more than any previous conqueror of Jerusalem, with the possible exception of King David. He presided over the most peaceful and bloodless conquest that the city had seen in its long and often tragic history. Once the Christians had surrendered, there was no killing, no destruction of property, no burning of rival religious symbols, no expulsions or expropriations, and no attempt to force the inhabitants to embrace Islam. If a respect for the previous occupants of the city is the sign of the integrity of a monotheistic power, Islam began its long tenure in Jerusalem very well indeed. (p.228)

Not only did the Muslim conquerors do well by the Christians, but Umar lifted the ban on Jews living in the city for the first time since 70 C.E. As for the Temple Mount, Umar was infuriated at how it had been allowed to deteriorate and set about clearing and restoring it. Armstrong writes:

As soon as the platform had been cleared, Umar summoned Ka'b ibn Ahbar, a Jewish convert to Islam and an expert on the *isra'iliyat* or, as we would say, "Jewish studies." It came naturally to the Muslims to consult the Jews about the disposition of the site that had been sacred to their ancestors. Both the Jewish and Muslim sources make it clear that Jews took part in the reclamation of the Mount. (p.230)

When the Crusaders took over Jerusalem, both Muslims and Jews were persecuted and banished from the city. It was not until Salah al-Din (Saladin) reconquered the city in the late 12th century that they were invited back to the city they held sacred. Saladin, like Umar before him, protected the Christian holy sites even though he was advised by some of his entourage to destroy them. Jewish and Christian holy places also managed to survive Ottoman rule for five centuries.

Myth 8: *Jews pray facing Jerusalem. Muslims pray with their backs to Jerusalem.*

Fact: Muslims living anywhere except between Jerusalem and Mecca (a very small population) simply do not have their backs towards Jerusalem. The Muslim *qibla* (direction of Prayers) is towards Mecca, where Muslims believe the Prophet Abraham built the Ka'ba as a place of prayer. The Black Stone in the Ka'bah has been there since the time of Adam. Abraham and his first born son, Ishmael, built the Ka'bah because of God's commandment to do so (2:125-27). The original Muslim *qibla* was actually Jerusalem and was changed only after the Prophet's journey to Jerusalem (the miraculous Mi'raj) that he received commandments to change it. Some believe this was to recognize the earlier historical events and some think it was to unify the tribes of Arabia. Muslims, though, like other people, believe God is everywhere and is certainly not residing in one place or another.

As for the direction of Jewish prayers, Jews did not always face Jerusalem in their prayers. The Bible says that the early Israelites faced south when they prayed (Exodus 27:9ff;40:24). This confirms that the Ka'bah, which is south of Jerusalem, was the *qiblah* for the early Israelite communities as well.

Myths 9-12:

- *In 1948 the Arab refugees were encouraged to leave Israel by Arab leaders promising to purge the land of Jews. Sixty-eight per cent left without ever seeing an Israeli soldier.*
- *The Jewish refugees were forced to flee from Arab lands due to Arab brutality, persecution and pogroms.*
- *The number of Arab refugees who left Israel in 1948 is estimated to be around 630,000. The number of Jewish refugees from Arab lands is estimated to be the same.*
- *Arab refugees were intentionally not absorbed or integrated into the Arab lands to which they fled, despite the vast Arab territory. Out of the 100,000,000 refugees since World War II, theirs*

is the only refugee group in the world that has never been absorbed or integrated into their own peoples' lands. Jewish refugees were completely absorbed into Israel, a country no larger than the state of New Jersey.

Facts: Two competing stories existed until recently: Palestinians who reported how they were basically ethnically cleansed before, during and after the war, and the Israeli story that left of their own will or were encouraged to leave despite being asked to stay. However, the "new Israeli historians", such as Ilan Pappé, Benny Morris, Sternhall, Avi Shlaim and Tom Segev, have debunked the established Israeli myths using Israeli archives and declassified material. As an example, after opening the Israeli army archives we find a cable dated 31 October 1948, signed by Major-General Carmel and addressed to all the division and district commanders under his command: "Do all you can to immediately and quickly purge the conquered territories of all hostile elements in accordance with the orders issued. The residents should be helped to leave the areas that have been conquered."

The truth, which was revealed and documented by direct references to Israeli, American, British and UN archives, by historians like Michael Palumbo and the Israeli historians (Pappé, Shlaim, Segev, Morris, Sternal) not to mention the credible Palestinian historians, was contrary to the Israeli and Zionist propaganda about the war. According to these honest and credible accounts, the truth, which is there for everyone who wants to know the truth, was as follows:

The "War of Independence" did not start on 15 May and in self-defence against the "aggression" of the Arab armies who invaded Israel. The war started in early April by the Haganah, which launched its offensive according to "Plan Dalet". Preparations for this war began immediately after World War II. (I refer you here to the activities of Ben-Gurion that were detailed in Michael Bar-Zohar's book, *Ben-Gurion: A Biography* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1977).

The Zionist leadership was in tacit agreement with Emir Abdullah of Transjordan. According to this agreement, Palestine would be divided between the Jews and Abdullah. Abdullah would take that part of Palestine allotted to the Arabs west of the Jordan Valley according to UN Resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. This part later became to be known as the West Bank. The rest of Palestine was to be left for the "Exclusive Jewish State". (Documented and intriguing details of this agreement were presented in Avi Shlaim's book, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, The Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

Yosef Weitz, director of the Jewish National Fund Lands Department, was very active as of March 1948 in planning for and implementing plans to expel the Palestinians, destroy their villages and build new homes for the influx of new Jewish immigrants. These activities were given in detail by Benny Morris in his books, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem: 1947-1949*, and *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians*. If the Jewish community in Palestine was in a state of self-defence and threatened by the "mighty Arab armies", they could not afford the time for Yosef Weitz activities (that were planned and implemented in cold blood).

In his book, *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, David Hirst describes in detail covert Israeli operations to scare Iraqi and Egyptian Jews into fleeing their homes for the "sanctuary" of Israel. In Iraq they did so by placing bombs in areas frequented by Iraqis who were Jewish, then starting whispering campaigns that scared people into emigrating. The plan worked brilliantly, but then again, Israeli intelligence/covert operatives had experience with such things from massacres like Deir Yasin, where they slaughtered 250 people and subsequently terrorized hundreds of thousands into fleeing their homes lest they suffer the same brutal fate. In Egypt, the plan had two targets, one, to spur emigration of Egyptian Jews, and two, to damage nascent relations between the Free Officers group, led by Jamal Abdel Nasser, and the US and Britain. A series of bombings took place and a handful of Jewish residents, some Egyptian, some foreign, were arrested, tried and convicted. Two were hanged. Again,

the whispers started, but few actually left the country.

Despite Israeli protests that the accused were being framed a la Dreyfus, political infighting within the Israeli government over the matter, labelled the "Lavon Affair," after the then minister of defence, Pinhas Lavon, launched a 1960 inquiry that concluded that elements of the Israeli security apparatus, guided by David Ben Gurion, were in fact responsible for the bombings in Egypt. Sadly, after the 1956 Israeli-British-French invasion of Egypt, however, the Egyptian government took the Israeli bait and began ordering the expulsion of large numbers of Jews, some Egyptian, others with foreign citizenship, from Egypt. The number who left is as high as 50,000.

In his book, *Ben Gurion's Scandals*, Naeim Giladi (an Iraqi Jew and former Zionist) discusses the crimes committed by Zionists in their frenzy to import Jews from Iraq to Israel in the 1950s. He lives in New York now after he left Israel and he wrote to 'The Link' about his book, saying "About 125,000 Jews left Iraq for Israel in the late 1940s and into 1952, most because they had been lied to and put into a panic by what I came to learn were Zionist bombs. But my mother and father were among the 6,000 who did not go to Israel."

Here are relevant quotes from the horse's mouth on refugees:

"Before [the Palestinians'] very eyes we are possessing the land and the villages where they, and their ancestors, have lived... We are the generation of colonizers, and without the steel helmet and the gun barrel we cannot plant a tree and build a home." (Israeli leader Moshe Dayan, quoted in Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel*.)

In an article in the *Haaretz* newspaper, Danny Rabinovitz wrote, "What happened to the Palestinians in 1948 is Israel's original sin... Between the 1950s and 1976, the state systematically confiscated most of the land of its remaining Palestinian citizens."

Here is the testimony of an Israeli soldier who participated in the massacre at al-Duwayima village on 29 October 1948, quoted in *Davar* on 9 June 1979:

[We] killed between 80 to 100 Arabs, women and children. To kill the children they fractured their heads with sticks. There was not one house without corpses. The men and women of the villages were pushed into houses without food or water. Then the saboteurs came to dynamite the houses. One commander ordered a soldier to bring two women into a house he was about to blow up. Another soldier prided himself upon having raped an Arab woman before shooting her to death. Another Arab woman with her newborn baby was made to clean the place for a couple of days, and then they shot her and the baby. Educated and well-mannered commanders who were considered "good guys" became base murderers, and this not in the storm of battle, but as a method of expulsion and extermination. The fewer the Arabs who remain, the better.

Only a small number of Arab Jews supported Zionism and most immigrants were not refugees but immigrated to Israel in the 1950s (long after the war). The same for Russian or Polish Jews (who are not termed refugees but migrants, immigrants). Zionists of European origin, like David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir and Abba Eban often made derogatory statements regarding Arab Jews who they considered to be inferior to themselves. The Jewish communities had flourished in Arab lands for thousands of years, and they contributed greatly to Arab culture as did all other peoples who settled in the Arab world. Off the coast of Tunisia, on a small island of Djerba, a Jewish colony lived that traced its presence there to at least 1000 BC. According to Rabbi Moshe Schonfeld, "Some Djerban rabbis who were not to be fooled nor intimidated by the Zionists were harassed, threatened and even beaten". (Schonfeld, *Genocide in the Holy Land*, 508) Rabbi Schonfeld also wrote about the same tactics used to get the Jews of Iraq to flee to Israel. Zionists tried to convince these Arab Jews that it was the Arabs who were exploding bombs in their neighbourhoods, but it was the Zionists who dreamed of populating Israel with Jews from all over the world. Wilbur Crane Eveland, a former CIA operative, wrote about the Zionist crimes against Arab Jews in Iraq (Feuerlicht, *The Fate of the Jews*, 231). A Jewish author,

Alfred Lilienthal, wrote about the oppressive treatment by Ashkenazi (European) Jews in Israel of the Sephardic Jews (who were of Semitic Arab origin) in his book, *The Zionist Connection*.

Jews in the Arab world were always treated with respect and civility throughout history. Any mistreatment they received was at the hands of the Zionists in Israel. In either case, Arab countries continue to have a policy of welcoming emigrants back to those countries unlike Israel

As to the absorption of Palestinian refugees in Arab countries, that is against international law and becomes complicity with a war crime. Jewish immigrants are absorbed in Israel as part of the Zionist dream and this is not the same thing as indicated above (i.e. not an issue of population exchange). For example, there was no population exchange when one million Russian Jews came to Israel. In either case, the right of those people to return to their countries is preserved by international law which is very clear about the forcible movement of people.

Nathan Chofshi, wrote: "We came and turned the native Arabs into tragic refugees. And still we have to slander and malign them, to besmirch their name. Instead of being deeply ashamed of what we did and trying to undo some of the evil we committed ... we justify our terrible acts and even attempt to glorify them." (*Jewish Newsletter*, New York, 9 February 1959, cited in Erskine Childers, 'The Other Exodus', in *The Spectator*, London, 12 May 1961)

Martin Buber, Jewish Philosopher, addressed Prime Minister Ben-Gurion on the moral character of the state of Israel with reference to the Arab refugees in March 1949: "We will have to face the reality that Israel is neither innocent, nor redemptive. And that in its creation, and expansion; we as Jews, have caused what we historically have suffered, a refugee population in Diaspora."

Myth 13: *The Arabs are represented by eight separate nations, not including the Palestinians. There is only one Jewish nation. The Arab nations initiated all five wars and lost. Israel defended itself each time and won.*

Fact: Arab is not equivalent to Jew. Arabs are people of diverse religions (including Jewish). Anybody who speaks Arabic is an Arab. Some are descendants from Canaanites, some from Berber or Pharaonites or Israelites.

Myth 14: *The Palestine Liberation Organization's Charter still calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. Israel has given the Palestinians most of the West Bank land, autonomy under the Palestinian National Authority, and has supplied them with weapons.*

Fact: The PLO Charter called for a democratic one state for all its citizens. This was changed when the PLO moderated its views in the 1970s to accept a two-state solution. Charter articles were voided that did not agree with this concept and were not based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The Oslo accords include as supplements a statement made by PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. In this statement, Arafat writes: "The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security. The PLO accepts United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338." In the Declaration of Principles, Article I states: "The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council, (the "Council") for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338."

What the PLO agreed to was actually not good. Many believe that, if by the Jewish state you mean maintaining all the racist laws and institutions which exist in Israel, then we should all be against such a state. If Israel is to become a state of its people, then it is a state worth supporting.

A Jewish human rights advocate asked me to imagine if a country had no constitution but a set of basic laws that say its land belongs to Baptists as a nation (or Bahai, Sufi or Shinto). The law distinguishes between Baptist nationals (found all over the world) and citizens who actually live there and gives nationals many rights not accorded to non-Baptists under its control.

Imagine a country with specific programmes to ensure its designated capital remains at least two-thirds or more Baptist (by denying residency rights and building permits to non-Baptists) and does not allow non-Baptist refugees and internally displaced people to return to their homes, stating openly that this may upset the Baptist nature of the state.

Imagine if its parliament enacted a law that prohibits parties from running in elections if they deny the Baptist nature of the state. Imagine a national anthem that talks about Baptist yearnings. Imagine if that country's Supreme Court allows the executive branch to build and run Baptist-only roads, towns and villages on lands confiscated from native citizens.

To reduce their mingling, and for Baptist security, non-Baptists are segregated in small "bantustans" that are surrounded by army checkpoints so that they cannot travel between them and, thus, are effectively confined in prisons without the need for the Baptists to feed them. Baptists nearby - many living on confiscated land - control most of the resources, (use seven to 10 times more in water per capita in an area with a water shortage) control most of the agricultural lands, receive government subsidies and go to work and schools unhindered by any checkpoints.

A country with all these characteristics and basic laws not only exists, but also gets 5 billion US dollars of our (US) tax money annually without any tangible benefit to the United States. These Israeli basic laws were unfortunately upheld by its Supreme Court. Israel is also in violation of more than 80 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions as well as in violation of US laws pertaining to the use and dissemination of US-supplied weapons and technology. Many in the Muslim and Arab world and many Jews in Israel hold opposition not to an undefined "Israel" but to a Jewish supremacist state which must change if it is to survive.

Myth 15: *Under Jordanian rule, Jewish holy sites were desecrated and the Jews were denied access to places of worship. Under Israeli rule, all Muslim and Christian sites have been preserved and made accessible to people of all faiths.*

Between 1948 and 1967, the two states were in a state of war. People from both sides were not allowed to travel to the other side. Muslims and Christians from the West Bank could not visit West Jerusalem and Jews from Israel could not visit East Jerusalem (including the Old City). Jews other than from Israel had access, including, for example, Samaritan Jews who lived in the West Bank and continued to live there throughout this period. I know many American Jews who also visited during that time.

The statement that "all Muslim and Christian sites have been preserved and made accessible to people of all faiths" is one of the most grossly erroneous statements made by Zionist propagandists. On the contrary, it is the Jewish state that has had a long history of desecrating Christian holy sites and both Christian and Muslim cemeteries. The Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv stands on a Muslim cemetery bulldozed indiscriminately. In 1947 there were 350,000 Christians in Palestine. The Melchite church lost many churches in 1948 at the hands of the Israelis. They lost churches in Damound, Somata, Kafr-Bur'om and Ikret, a village destroyed by the Israeli army on Christmas day in 1952. During the 1967 war, many churches in Jerusalem and Bethlehem were desecrated and looted by soldiers and civilians alike. The names of all churches as well as the details of each incident since 1948 are well-documented by the clergy of each denomination, and the incidents number in the hundreds. The lack of respect for biblical history is also exhibited by the destruction of three biblical villages, Beit-Nuba, Emmaus and Yalu. These villages were known from the time of Jesus. Since 1948, Israel has demolished 531 Palestinian villages and towns, many of which were part of biblical history. Many Christian shrines have been

destroyed as well. Since 1948, there has been a continual campaign against Christian missionaries, persecution of Christians in Israel, attacks against Jewish-Christian meetings, censorship of films that mention the name of Jesus Christ, attacks on Christian schools, the confiscation of Christian artefacts from private homes, the beating of Christian women and the obliteration of Christian shrines. The confiscation by Jewish settlers of St Johns' Monastery, located near the church of the Holy Sepulchre, is an example of the regular attacks committed by Israelis against Christian holy sites.

Of the 175 UN Security Council resolutions passed before 1990, 97 were directed against Israel. Of the 690 UN General Assembly resolutions voted on before 1990, 429 were directed against Israel.

This happened for good reasons. Unfortunately, most of these resolutions have no enforcement authority. The US, as Israel's patron and mentor, vetoed resolutions with teeth.

Myths 16-17:

- *The UN was silent while 58 Jerusalem synagogues were destroyed by the Jordanians.*
- *The UN was silent while the Jordanians systematically desecrated the ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives.*

Fact: Israel destroyed 531 Palestinian villages and hundreds of mosques and dozens of churches (see <http://www.palestineremembered.com>). No UN resolutions were passed condemning this destruction. There is no credible evidence of 58 synagogues destroyed by the Jordanians. There was a road built through the area which includes a cemetery on the Mount of Olives, but this happened even before the Jordanians (under British and Ottoman rule). By contrast, dozens of Muslim cemeteries were bulldozed with the 531 villages ethnically cleansed and erased by the Israeli forces since 1947. I recommend that people should read the book *Collusion across the Jordan* by Avi Shlaim about the very close and intimate relationship between Israeli leaders and the Jordanian regime, including during times when the two countries were considered at war. Certainly, if these were issues for the Israeli government, they would have addressed it with their Jordanian friends and collaborators.

Myth 18: *The UN was silent while the Jordanians enforced an apartheid-like policy of preventing Jews from visiting the Temple Mount and the Western Wall.*

Fact: As stated above, between 1948 and 1967, the two states were in a state of war. People from both sides were not allowed to travel to the other side. Muslims and Christians from the West Bank could not visit West Jerusalem and Jews from Israel could not visit East Jerusalem (including the Old City). Jews other than from Israel had access, including, for example, Samaritan Jews who lived in the West Bank and continued to live there throughout this period. I know many American Jews who also visited during that time.

<http://www.redress.btinternet.co.uk/mqumsiyeh2.htm>