THE BIRTH OF THE
PALESTINIAN REFUGEE
PROBLEM REVISITED

Benny Morris’ *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*, was first published in 1988. Its startling revelations about how and why 700,000 Palestinians left their homes and became refugees during the Arab–Israeli war in 1948 undermined the conflicting Zionist and Arab interpretations; the former suggesting that the Palestinians had left voluntarily, and the latter that this was a planned expulsion. The book subsequently became a classic in the field of Middle East history. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* represents a thoroughly revised edition of the earlier work, compiled on the basis of newly opened Israeli military archives and intelligence documentation. While the focus of the book remains the 1948 war and the analysis of the Palestinian exodus, the new material contains more information about what actually happened in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa, and how events there eventually led to the collapse of Palestinian urban society. It also sheds light on the battles, expulsions and atrocities that resulted in the disintegration of the rural communities. The story is a harrowing one. The refugees now number some four million and their existence remains one of the major obstacles to peace in the Middle East.

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THE BIRTH OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM REVISITED

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To the memory of my mother, Sadie, and my father, Ya'akov, who, I am sure, had a hand in the creation of this work in more ways than I can imagine.
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Abbreviations

AAA – Antiquities Authority Archive
AFSC – American Friends Service Committee
AHC – Arab Higher Committee
ALA – Arab Liberation Army
AM – Agriculture Ministry (Israel)
BGA – David Ben-Gurion Archive
CAB – Cabinet Papers (Britain)
CIGS – Chief of Imperial General Staff (British Army)
CGS – Chief of General Staff (IDF)
CO – Colonial Office (Britain)
CP – Cunningham Papers
CZA – Central Zionist Archive
DBG-YH – David Ben-Gurion Yoman Hamilhama (the war diary)
DMZ – demilitarized zone
FM – Foreign Ministry (Israel)
FO – Foreign Office (Britain)
GSS – General Security Service (Shin Bet), Israel
HA – Haganah Archive
HC – High Commissioner (British in Palestine)
HHA – Hashomer Hatz’ir Archive
HHA-ACP – Hashomer Hatz’ir Archive – Aharon Cohen Papers
HHA-MYP – Hashomer Hatz’ir Archive – Meir Ya’ari Papers
HGS – Haganah General Staff
HIS – Haganah Intelligence Service
HIS-AD – Haganah Intelligence Service – Arab Department
HNS – Haganah National Staff
ICP – Israel Communist Party
IDF – Israel Defence Forces
IDF\GS – Israel Defence Forces General Staff
IDFA – Israel Defence Forces and Defence Ministry Archive
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IJMES – International Journal of Middle East Studies
ISA – Israel State Archive
IZL – Irgun Zva’i Leumi (National Military Organisation or ‘Irgun’)
JA – Jewish Agency
JAE – Jewish Agency Executive
JA-PD – Jewish Agency Political Department
JEM – Jerusalem and East Mission
JI – Jabotinsky Institute
JM – Justice Ministry (Israel)
JNF – Jewish National Fund
JPS – Journal of Palestine Studies
KMA – Kibbutz Meuhad Archive
KMA-ACP – Kibbutz Meuhad Archive – Aharon Cising Papers
KMA-IGP – Kibbutz Meuhad Archive – Israel Galili Papers
KMA-PA – Kibbutz Meuhad Archive – Palmah Archive
LA – Labour (Histadrut) Archive
LHI – Lohamei Herut Yisrael (Freedom Fighters of Israel or ‘Stern Gang’)
LPA – Labour Party (Mapai) Archive
MAC – Mixed Armistice Commission
MAM – Minority Affairs Ministry (Israel)
Mapai – Mifletet Poalei Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel Labour Party) (Yishuv)
Mapam – Milfeget Poalim Meuhedet (United Workers Party) (Yishuv)
MEJ – Middle East Journal
MES – Middle Eastern Studies
NA – National Archive (USA)
NC – National Committee
OC – officer in command
PIAT – projectile infantry anti-tank
PMO – Prime Minister’s Office (Israel)
PRO – Public Record Office (London)
PS – Parliamentary Private Secretary
RG – record group
SAMECA – St Antony’s College Middle East Centre Archive
SMC – Supreme Muslim Council
STH – Sefer Toldot Hahaganah (the history of the Hagannah)
TJ – Transjordan
UN – United Nations
UNA – United Nations Archive
UNRWA – United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCOP – United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
WO – War Office (Britain)
YND – Yosef Nahmani Diary
Key to Map 2

In the Key, the following codes are used for decisive causes of abandonment:
A Abandonment on Arab orders
C Influence of nearby town’s fall
E Expulsion by Jewish forces
F Fear (of being caught up in fighting)
M Military assault on settlement
W Whispering campaigns - psychological warfare by Haganah/IDF

The lines between C, F and M are somewhat blurred. It is often difficult to distinguish between the flight of villagers because of reports of the fall or flight from neighbouring settlements, flight from fear of “being next” or flight due to the approach of a Haganah/IDF column. I have generally ascribed the flight of inhabitants on the path of an Israeli military advance to M, even though some villagers may have already taken to their heels upon hearing of the fall of a neighbouring village (which could go under C or F).
Similarly the line between M and E is occasionally blurred.

Galilee Panhandle

1 Abil al Qamb - F, C, 10 May 1948
2 Zuq al Faquni - W, M, 21 May 1948
3 Shauqa al Thata - F, 14 May 1948
4 Sanbariya, al - May 1948 (?)
5 Khasas - W, C, E, 25 May 1948 / June 1949
6 Huzin - F, E, 3 May 1948 / September 1948
7 Mansura, al - W, 25 May 1948
8 Lazzaza - W, 21 May 1948
9 Zuq al Tahtami - C, 11 May 1948
10 Khalisa, al - C, W, 11 May 1948
11 Madahul, al - F, 30 April 1948
12 Qeiyi - W, E, 19 May 1948 / June 1948
13 ‘Abisiyya, al - C, 25 May 1948
14 Dawwara - W, 25 May 1948
15 Salihna, al - F, W, 25 May 1948
16 Muftakhira, al - F, 16 May 1948
17 Zawiya, al - M, E, 24 May 1948
18 Buweziyya, al - C, 11 May 1948
19 Na’ima, al - C, 14 May 1948
20 Hamara, al - F, M, 1 May 1948
21 Ghraba, F, 28 May 1948
22 Kahirbet Khiam al Walid - F, I May 1948
23 Jahula - May 1948 (?)
24 Qadas - C, 28 May 1948
25 Matlikiya, al - M, 28 May 1948
26 Nabli Yusha - M, 16 May 1948
27 Beisamun - W, 25 May 1948
28 Mallaha - W, 25 May 1948
29 Darbashiya, al - May 1948 (?)
30 ‘Uldanya, al - M, 20 April 1948
31 ‘Arab Zubeh - F, 20 April 1948
32 Deishum - M, 30 October 1948
33 ‘Alma - M, 30 October 1948
34 Saliba - M, 30 October 1948
35 Farah - M, 30 October 1948
36 Husseinia, al - C, 21 April 1948
37 Tuleil - late April 1948 (?)
38 Kafr Bir‘im - E, early November 1948
39 Ras al Ahmar - M, 30 October 1948
40 Dallata - Not known
41 Marus - C, 26 May 1948 and M, 30 October 1948
42 Kirad al Ghannama - C, 22 April 1948 (later resettled, E 1956)
43 Kirad al Banqara - C, 22 April 1948 (later resettled, E 1956)
44 Teitaba - May 1948 (?)
45 Safa‘ - M/F, 29 October 1948
46 Qaddita - C, 11 May 1948
47 ‘Ammuqa - M, 24 May 1948
48 Qaba‘a - M, 26 May 1948
49 Weizira - May 1948 (?)
50 Mughr al Kheit - M, 2 May 1948
51 Fir‘im - M, 26 May 1948
52 Ja‘una - C, 9 May 1948
53 ‘Ein al Zeitan - M, 2 May 1948
54 Biriya - M, 2 May 1948
55 (Amb) Safad - M, 10–11 May 1948
56 Meirun - (C, (?)) 10–12 May 1948
57 Sammu‘i - C, 12 May 1948
58 Dhahiriya Thaha - C, 10 May 1948
59 Mansurat al Kheit - M, 18 January 1948
60 Sa‘a‘a - M/E, 30 October 1948
61 Ghabbatu‘a - (?), 30 October 1948

Upper Galilee
Western Galilee

78 Bassa, al - M/E, 14 May 1948
79 Zib, al - M, 14 May 1948
80 Tell, al - M, 21 May 1948
81 Kabri, al - F, M, 5, 21 May 1948
82 Nahal, al - M, 21 May 1948
83 Umm al Farsi - M, 21 May 1948
84 Ghaibisya, al - E, May 1948 E, 1949
85 Alamqa - M, 10-11 July 1948
86 Kuweikut - M, 10 July 1948
87 Sumeiriya, al - M, 14 May 1948
88 Manshiya (near Acre) - M, 14 May 1948
89 Birwa, al - M, 11 June 1948 (?)
90 Damun, al - M, 15-16 July 1948
91 Ruweis, al - M, 15-16 July 1948
381 Wa'arar al Sarris - Not known
382 Hawasha - M, mid-April 1948
383 Khirbet Kasyur - M, mid-April 1948

Lower Galilee, Jordan, Jezreel and Beit Shean valleys

92 Majdal - M, C, 22 April 1948
93 Ghuweir Abu Shusha - M, C, 21 and 28 April 1948
94 Hittin - F, M, 16-17 July 1948
95 Nimrin - (?) F, M, 16-17 July 1948
96 Lubya - F, M, 16-17 July 1948
97 Khirbet Nasir al Din - M, C, F, 12 and 23 April 1948
98 (Arab) Tiberias - M, 18 April 1948
99 Manara, al ('Arab al Manara') - M, early March 1948
100 Shajara, al - M, 6 May 1948
101 Kaf Sabt - C, 22 April 1948
102 Samra, al - C, 21 April 1948
103 Samakh - M, 28 April 1948
104 Ubeidiya, al - F, 3 March 1948
105 'Ajlun - A, 6 April 1948
106 Hadatha - A, 6 April 1948
107 'Umm - A, 6 April 1948
108 Sirin - A, 6 April 1948
109 Tira, al - W, 15 April 1948
110 'Indur - C, M, 24 May 1948
111 Danna - E, 28 May 1948
112 Bira, al - C, 16 May 1948
113 Jubla - M, 16 May 1948
114 'Ajlun - C, 16 May 1948
115 Kaukab al Hawa - M, 16 May 1948
116 'Arab al Subah - C, 19 April 1948
117 Murassas, al - C, 16 May 1948
118 Kafr - C, 16 May 1948
119 Harmadiya, al - C, 12 May 1948
120 Quimya - F, 26 March 1948
121 Zir'in - M, 28 May 1948
122 Mazar, al - M, 30 May 1948
123 Nuri - M/F, 29-30 May 1948
124 Khirbet al Jaufa - (?) C, 12 May 1948
125 Tall al Shauk - (?) C, 12 May 1948
126 Beisan - M, C, E, May 1948
127 Ashraftiya, al - (?) C, 12 May 1948
128 Farwana - M, 11 May 1948
129 Samiriyah, al - M, 27 May 1948
130 'Aruda, al - C, 20 May 1948
131 'Arab al Khuneitzir - C, 20 May 1948
132 'Arab al Safa - C, 20 May 1948
133 'Arab al Zara'a - (?) C, 20 May 1948
134 'Arab al Ghazawiya - (?) C, 20 May 1948
135 'Arab al Bawati - (?) C, 16 or 20 May 1948
136 'Arab al Bashiriya - C, 16 May 1948
137 Mujeidil, al - M, 15 July 1948
138 Ma'li - M, 15 July 1948
139 Safuruya - 20, 20 May 1948
140 Saifeh - M, E, 20 July 1948 / January 1949
141 Beit Lahm - M, April 1948
142 Waldheim (Umm al 'Amad) - M, April 1948
143 Khirbet Ras 'Ali - Not known
144 Yair - M, C, 25 April 1948
145 Biara al Sheik - M, C, 25 April 1948
146 Arab Ghawarina - (?) W, M, mid-April 1948
147 Nuqiebeh ('Arab Argibat) - E, 14 May 1948
148 Khirbet Saron ('Arab al Masharqa) - Not known
149 'Arab al Mawasi (Khirbet al Wa'ara al Sawda) - E, 2 November 1948
150 'Arab al Samakha (Samakha/Talhum) - Not known
151 'Arab al Sakhna - Not known
MAPS

379 Hirbiya - M, E, late October-early November 1948
380 'Iraq Suweidan - M, 8 July 1948
389 'Arab abu Rizik - F, March-April 1948

Jerusalem Corridor

327 Deir Muheisin - M, 6 April 1948
328 Beit Jiz - M, 20 April 1948
329 Beit Susin - M, 20 April 1948
330 'Isin - M, 18 July 1948
331 Ishwa - M, 18 July 1948
332 Sar'a - M, 18 July 1948
333 Deir Rafat - M, 18 July 1948
334 'Arruf - M, 18 July 1948
335 Deiraban - M, 19–20 October 1948
335 Beit Mahsur - M, 10–11 May 1948
337 Deir Ayyub - M, April 1948
338 Kasla - M, 17–18 July 1948
339 Deir al Hawa - M, 19–20 October 1948
340 Sufia - M, 19–20 October 1948
341 Jarash - M, 21 October 1948
342 Beit Nattif - M, 21 October 1948
343 Beit 'Ibat - M, 21 October 1948
344 Beit Umm al Meis - (?) M, 21 October 1948
345 Saris - M, 16–17 April 1948
346 'Allar - M, 22 October 1948
347 Ras Abu 'Ammar - M, 21 October 1948
348 Qabu, al - M, 22–23 October 1948
349 Walaja, al - M, 21 October 1948
(transferred to Jordan and resettled 1949)
350 Khirbet al 'Umur - (?) M, 21 October 1948
351 Deir al Sheikh - (?) M, 21 October 1948
352 'Aqqu' - M, 13–14 July 1948
353 Suba - M, 13 July 1948
354 Sataf - M, 13–14 July 1948
355 Jara, al - Not known
356 Qasala, al - M, 3 April 1948
357 Beit Naquba - M, early April 1948
358 Beit Thul - Not known
359 Qalunia - M, early April 1948
360 'Ein Karim - C, 10 and 21 April 1948; M, 16 July 1948
361 Malia, al - C, 21 April 1948; M, 15 July 1948
362 Deir 'Azzin - M/E, 9–10 April 1948
363 Lifta - M, January 1948
364 Jammama - M, 22 May 1948
365 'Arab al Jubarat - Not known
366 Huj - E, 31 May 1948
367 Muharraqa, al - M, 25 May 1948
368 Kaufakhha - M, 25 May 1948
369 Beersheba - M/E, 21 October 1948
377 Shu'ut - F, M, summer 1948

Key to Map 3

The Hebrew name of the settlement is given first, followed by the former Arab name of the site or nearest site and the date of the settlement’s establishment.

1 Beith Lekhem Hag'ililit - Beit Lahm - April 1948
2 Sheluhot - Al Ashrafiyah - June 1948
3 Reshafim - Al Ashrafiyah - June 1948
4 Ramot-Menashe - Dalijat al Ruha - July 1948
5 Bama'vak (Ma'vak, Alonei Abba) - Waldheim - May 1948
6 Brur Hayil - Burayr - May 1948
7 Shomrat - south of Al Sumeiriya - May 1948
8 Hahotrim - north of Al Tira - June 1948
9 Nahsholim - Tantura - June 1948
10 Ein Dor - Kafr Misr - June 1948
11 Netser (Sereni) - Bir Salim - June 1948
12 Timurim (Shimron) - Ma'ul - June 1948
13 Habonim (Kfar Hanassi) - Mansurat al Kheit - July 1948
14 Yesodot - Umm Khalka - July 1948
15 Regavim - Buteimat (Jule 1948), moved to Qannir - 1949
16 Yizra'al - Zir'in - August 1948
17 Gilbo'a - Zir'in - July 1948

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18 Sa’ar – Al Zib – August 1948
19 Be’erot Yitzhak – Wilhelma – August 1948
20 Bnei Atarot – Wilhelma – August 1948
21 Mahane Yisrael – Wilhelma – August 1948
22 Yiftah – near Jahula – August 1948
23 Nordiya – Khirbet Beit Lid – August 1948
24 Udum – Wadi Faliq – August 1948
25 Gazit – Al Tira – September 1948
26 Azariya – Al Barriya – September 1948 (re-established 1949)
27 Hagoshrim – Al Mansura – September 1948
28 Lehagshama (Beit Meir) – Beit Mahsir – September 1948 (re-established 1950)
29 Amellim – Abu Shusha – September 1948
30 G’aton – Khirbet Jiddin – October 1948
31 Kesalon – Kasla – October 1948 (re-established 1952)
32 Tsova – Suba – October 1948
33 Harel – Beit Jiz – October 1948
34 Tal-Shahar – Khirbet Beit Far – October 1948
35 Revadim – Al Kheima – November 1948
36 Bustan Hagali – Al Sumeiriya – December 1948
37 Mishmar-David – Khulda – December 1948
38 Tzo’a – Sar’a – December 1948
39 Nurit – Nuris – 1948
40 Ramat Raziel – Beit Umm al Meis – 1948
41 Ge’alya – north of Yibna – 1948
42 Beit Elazar – south of ’Aqir – 1948
43 Kfar Eqron – ’Aqir – 1948
44 Shoresh – Saris – 1948
45 Beit Ha’emek – Kuweilat – January 1949
46 Netiva – Al Mukheizin – January 1949
47 Yas’ur – Al Birwa – January 1949
48 Betset Bet (Kfar Rosh Hanikra) – near Al Bassa – January 1949
49 Sifsufa – Safsat – January 1949
50 Makvi’im – Barbara – January 1949
51 Sasa – Sa’a – January 1949
52 Kibrit (Kabri) – Al Kabri – January 1949
53 Lohamei Hageta’ot – Al Sumeiriya – January 1949
54 Beit Ha’arava (Gesher Haziv) – Al Zib – January 1949
55 Igur Kaplan (Meggid) – Lajjun – January 1949
56 T’kumah – Al Muharraqa – 1949
57 Migdal-Gad (Ashkelon) – Al Majdal – 1949
58 Beit Nettef (Netiv HaLamed-Heh) – Beit Nattif – 1949
59 Al Qubeiba – Al Qubeiba – 1949 (re-established in Lachish, 1955)
60 Ge’a – Al Jiyaa – 1949
61 Hodiya – Julis – 1949
62 Ein Tsurim (Deganim) – Sawafir al Gharbiya – 1949
63 Massu’ot Yitzhak (Ein Tsurim) – Sawafir al Sharqiya – 1949
64 Shafir (Massu’ot Yitzhak) – Sawafir al Shamaliya – 1949
65 Giv’at – Beit Daras – 1949–50
66 Arugot – Tall al Turmus – 1949
67 Nehalim – southeast of Petah Tikva – 1948
68 Ginaton – east of Lydda – 1949
69 Azrikam – Batani Gharbi – 1949–50
70 Yehiel (Kfar Ahim) – Qastina – 1949
71 Kerem-Re’em (Bnei Re’em) – Masmiya al Kabira – 1949
72 Masmiya Bet (Masmiya Shalom) – Masmiya al Saghirah – 1949
73 Kfar Daniel – Daniyal – 1949
74 Ganei Yona – east of ’Aqir – 1949
75 Yavne – Yibna – 1949
76 Kidron – Qatara – 1949
77 Netivot – ’Arab Sukreich – 1949
78 Eshta’ol – ’Isfin/Isawa – 1949
79 Benaya – north of Bash-Shit – 1949
80 Beita Nekoba – Beita Naqubba – 1949
81 Orat – Al Jura – 1949–50
82 Manahat – Al Maliha – 1949
83 Beit Zayit – Khirbet Hureish – 1949
84 Mishan (Mishmar Ayalon) – Al Qubab – 1949
85 Kefar Hanaggid – Al Qubeiba – 1949
86 Hatsofim Dalet – Al Nabi Rubin – 1949
87 Siteriya – Abu al Fadil – 1949
88 Hadid – Al Haditha – 1949
89 Nubelat (Beit Nehemia) – Beit Nabal – 1949–50
90 Tsafrira – north of Al Safriya – 1949
91 Beita Dagin – Beita Dajan – 1948
92 Azor – Yazur – 1948
93 Abu Kabir – Abu Kabir – 1949
94 Beita Arif – Beit Tarif – 1949 (re-established 1951)
95 Tirat-Yehuda – Al Tira – 1949