

Let's Make This Clear: Jordan is Palestine



by Matthew M. Hausman, (Originally published on Mar 30. 2012)

The “Jordan-is-Palestine” option for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict is an idea that, despite history and logic, was beaten into silence by Israel’s enemies and detractors. Critics denounced the concept as preposterous, reactionary and counterproductive.

And yet, the idea has been resurrected from within Jordan itself. There can be no dispute that Jordan was created in a sovereign vacuum on land that had comprised most of the Palestine Mandate. However, its creation as Transjordan in 1921 satisfied a geopolitical need unencumbered by a Palestinian national myth that had not yet been invented.

In contrast, the Oslo peace process was based on the false premise that an ancestral population was indiscriminately displaced by Israel’s establishment and now must be repatriated at her expense. Because Jordan embodies the concept of Arab self-determination as contemplated by the San Remo Conference and the Palestine Mandate, and because most

Jordanians already identify as Palestinian, it is high time to recognize it as the Palestinian homeland and scrap the current peace process.

The Oslo Process was heavily weighted against Israel from the start because it demanded validation of the Palestinian narrative and, thereby, the delegitimization of Jewish historical claims. After cajoling the country into accepting the farce of Oslo, the Israeli left made it politically incorrect to assert traditional Jewish claims or to mention that the Palestinians have no ancestral connection to the Land of Israel. The peace process was focused on resolving the plight of Arab refugees and perpetuating the artifice that they originated in ancient Israel while the Jews were merely colonial interlopers.

The truth – that Jews have the longest history of continuous habitation, that they preceded the Arab-Muslim conquest by thousands of years, and that the Palestinians are largely descended from an immigrant population that grew during the late Ottoman and British Mandatory periods – was suppressed under layers of Freudian self-denial.

One need look no further than the operational definition of “refugees” employed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (“UNRWA”) to see past the façade of Palestinian nationality. Unlike relief organizations that seek to ameliorate the condition of wartime refugees through resettlement, UNRWA’s sole purpose is to maintain the statelessness of Arabs who became refugees in 1948, regardless of whether they now live in Judea, Samaria, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon or Syria (and irrespective of whether their forebears came from Egypt, Algeria or elsewhere), and thereby to reinforce their stature as a people though they possess none of the ethnic, cultural or institutional hallmarks of nationality.

According to UNRWA, Palestinian “refugees” are those Arabs who

established residency within the Mandate between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost their homes and means of livelihood during Israel's War of Independence, and who now reside in areas where UNRWA services are available. To put this in perspective, no similar agency was created to serve the needs of the nearly 800,000 Jewish refugees who were summarily expelled from Arab-Muslim lands and dispossessed of whatever assets they owned in 1948, and who subsequently were taken in by Israel...

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