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SPECIAL ISSUE ON RESETTLEMENT IN ISRAEL

Refugee Settlement and Resettlement in Israel

Settlement and resettlement of refugees in Israel has been a function of waves of forced migration. In the early 1930s, at a time when Jews could still flee Nazi Germany, waves of migrants made their way to Israel, then called Palestine. Britain, which ruled over Palestine, had only a small quota for visas, however, and in practice refused visa entry to many would-be immigrants in the late 1930s and the 1940s; this led to illegal migration that continued until Israel became a state in 1948.

In the first several years of its existence, Israel absorbed more than one million refugees, Arab Jews (Jewish migrants from neighbouring Arab countries) as well as American and European Jews (Lova Eliav). The melting pot process was slow, but although many mistakes were committed, there was a genuine attempt to absorb all refugees. In the late 1940s and the early 1950s the problem of Arab refugees, Palestinians and Bedouins, attracted international attention (Abu-Rabia, and Bligh). The problem of integrating the most recent large wave of refugees (Jews from the former Soviet Union) is discussed by Shuval. Significant atten-

tion is also given to psychological aspects of integration, an issue which the Israeli experience may help to illuminate. However, cultural, political, and national differences have also played an important role in the integration process. In the 1950s, problems of integration stemming from cultural and political discrimination, particularly against Arab Jews, were commonplace in Israel, but such problems have since

been overcome, and now play only a minor part in the culture. The richness and plurality of the Israeli experience can serve as series of lessons in integration policy.

This collection of articles touches upon potential further areas of research, such as the settlement of Arab Jewish refugees in Israel, resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Israel, resettlement of Palestinians in the context

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of the Peace Accord, settlement of Ethiopian refugees in Israel, settlement of World War II refugees in Israel, and cultural conflict and integration problems in refugee resettlement.

Fifty years of Israeli experience on refugee settlement and resettlement is unique in the post-World War II society—and a perspective on it is bound to enrich the study of resettlement of refugees.

Absalom M. Adam, Ph.D., is a researcher at the Department of Philosophy and History of Science, Geneva University, Switzerland.

Population Displacement and Resettlement: Development and Conflict in the Middle East

Edited by **Seteney Shami**

ISBN 0-934733-82-1. 1994. U.S. \$17.50

This new groundbreaking volume contains ten long case studies and fourteen short case studies of displacement and resettlement in the Middle East resulting from various forces such as political conflict, environmental degradation, urban renewal, and agrarian policies.

The introduction reviews the literature on this topic which has long been reflected in Middle East studies. A comprehensive annotated bibliography provides a valuable reference and research tool.

The Middle East as a region has been underrepresented in comparative and survey work on forced migration. These case studies attempt to show the complexity of forces that give rise to population displacement in this region.

The multidisciplinary focus on long-term implications of forced migration is a novel approach. Displacement in the Middle East has tended to be studied only in terms of war refugees. This book, which covers the different types of displacement in the region, originated from workshops sponsored by the Population Council, and research conducted in the region by indigenous scholars. It reflects concerns arising directly out of phenomena in the region rather than the concerns of outside observers.

The book will be of interest to scholars working on forced migration. It could also be used as a textbook for courses on the Middle East as well as for cross-cultural survey courses. *Population Displacement and Resettlement* is recommended to all those interested in gaining a unique insight into one of the most complex and significant regions of the world.

Seteney Shami is Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan. She has also taught at the University of Chicago, University of California-Berkeley, and Georgetown University. Professor Shami is co-author of a book on Women in Arab Society (Beig 1990) and has written various articles published in scholarly journals.

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