

**JEWISH REFUGEES EXPELLED FROM ARAB LANDS HELP MAKE
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[Pearl Harbor: Seventy-Seven Years Later: Frederick Krantz, *CIJR*, Dec. 7, 2018](#) — We are remembering today the beginning of World War II for the United States, with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, “A date which will live in infamy”, as FDR put it...

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THE MIDDLE EAST'S MOST OVERLOOKED REFUGEES

Liat Collins

[Jerusalem Post](#), Nov. 29, 2018

As a teenager growing up in London in the 1970s I was completely swept up in the fight for Soviet Jewry, dedicating most Sunday afternoons to demonstrations

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outside the Soviet embassy and other sites to help promote the message “Let My People Go!” Much of the fight was personal, with campaigns focusing on certain figures who became well known as “refuseniks.” Decades later, seeing Natan Sharansky walking down a Jerusalem street on Shabbat still gives me a feeling of satisfaction.

The movements calling for the release of Soviet Jewry drew together Jews of different ages in different continents and in many ways served those of us in the Diaspora as a rallying point around which our Jewish identity gelled. It’s the sort of solidarity that is sadly lacking today, when Diaspora Jewish youth are as likely to be pitched against each other, in pro-Israel versus pro-Palestinian configurations, with the latter more interested in creating a Palestinian state than protecting the existing Jewish state, however they want to portray themselves.

At some point, I became aware of other distressed Jewish communities. While a broad spectrum of British Jews - like their co-religionists elsewhere - were fighting for Soviet Jews to be able to come out of the cold, few seemed aware that Jews in Damascus, Baghdad and other communities were literally dying to get out. It is sobering to recall that in those days, before the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iranian Jews were completely free and many Israelis lived and worked in Iran.

Demonstrators for Soviet Jews held all sorts of publicity stunts; I remember a rally with pet dogs; a vigil in silence; and sitting down to block rush-hour traffic in London’s Piccadilly Circus. A few years ago I had the opportunity to show Sharansky some photos of me demonstrating on his behalf which he signed to my lasting pride “Thanks for marching for me. It worked. *Am Yisrael Hai!* [The People of Israel Live!]”

The work on behalf of Sephardi Jewry was much more low-key. I discovered a group called The Jews in Arab Lands Committee headed by the late Percy Gourgey MBE. Gourgey, born in India to an Iraqi-Jewish family, eagerly harnessed my youthful enthusiasm and together with a band of teenage friends I founded a student branch of the committee to help draw attention to the plight of our brethren and interest politicians and opinion makers in this little-known cause.

In many ways the fate of the remaining Jews in Arab lands was worse than that of Soviet Jewry. Drawing attention to a refusenik made the Soviet authorities realize there were international eyes following what they were doing and conditions might be improved as a result; drawing attention to a specific member of the

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Jewish community in Damascus was more likely to result in that person's disappearance. Still, with a huge amount of dedication and daring, many of the Jewish community were ultimately able to escape to freedom. When a couple of years ago I met a man who had fled from Syria as a teen I felt the same sort of satisfaction as I had meeting Sharansky and Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein.

Today, I live in an area of Jerusalem's Katamonim neighborhood fondly referred to as the "Kurdish enclave" thanks to the Kurdish and Iraqi Jews who compose the bulk of the local population. Further down the road there is a large pocket of Moroccan and Tunisian Jewish families, with more French-speakers moving in. Anyone who thinks that Israel is some kind of Woody Allen-style, Yiddish-dominated culture planted in the Middle East is in for a surprise on their first visit. The descendants of Jews from Arab lands now make up more than 50% of the Jewish Israeli population and when Israelis talk of "mixed marriages" they are usually (jokingly) referring to Ashkenazi-Sephardi ties.

There are plenty of Sephardi (and Yemenite) families who have lived in the Land of Israel for centuries, but the majority of Sephardim arrived after the creation of the state in 1948 - the non-Palestinian refugees who are largely overlooked. On November 29, the date that the UN in 1947 accepted the Partition Plan that would lead to the establishment of the State of Israel, the world body now cynically marks "International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People."

Symbolically, on November 30 Israel commemorates the expulsion of more than 800,000 Jews from Arab lands who came to Israel, started new lives in harsh conditions, and helped make the country the success it is today. Jews first settled in future Arab lands following the Babylonian conquest of the Kingdom of Judea, more than 2,500 years before Judea would be known as "The West Bank" - when its Jewish communities had more formidable enemies than pro-boycott advocates at Airbnb.

As Lyn Julius noted in an opinion piece in *The Jerusalem Post* this week, "More Jews (850,000) fled Arab countries than Palestinian refugees (approximately 711,000), and their exodus was one of the largest movements of non-Muslims from the region until the mass flight of Iraqi Christians... Mizrahi Jews, whose communities predate Islam by 1,000 years, have been written out of history." In world opinion, the Palestinians alone are the victims. And the Palestinians spend more effort on perpetuating this status, with the very willing help of bodies like the UN, than in building a state of their own - a state the Arab world turned down

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in 1947, opting instead to try to wipe Israel off the map.

The Arab world also took revenge on the Jews living among them with devastating riots and anti-Jewish measures. According to Israeli Foreign Ministry statistics, since 1948: “In the North African region, 259,000 Jews fled from Morocco, 140,000 from Algeria, 100,000 from Tunisia, 75,000 from Egypt, and another 38,000 from Libya. In the Middle East, 135,000 Jews were exiled from Iraq, 55,000 from Yemen, 34,000 from Turkey, 20,000 from Lebanon and 18,000 from Syria. Iran forced out 25,000 Jews.” Today, only some 4,000 Jews remain in Arab countries. In other politically incorrect words, the Jews are the victims of ethnic cleansing...

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**PUTTING JEWISH REFUGEES FROM
ARAB COUNTRIES ON THE GLOBAL AGENDA**

Ashley Perry

[JNS](#), Nov. 20, 2018

Do you know what we commemorate on Nov. 30? Sadly, for most Israelis and Jews around the world, it is just another day. However, according to a law passed in 2014 by Knesset member Dr. Shimon Ohayon (with the assistance of this author), this is now the date of the official day of commemoration for Jewish refugees from Arab countries. It should be an important day on the official global Jewish calendar because the Jews of the Middle East and North Africa are an essential part of Jewish history, even for those whose ancestors did not come from there.

One of the issues I was able and proud to raise during my time in government was of the ethnic cleansing of almost a million Jews from the Middle East and North Africa—communities massively predating Islam and the Arab conquest of the region in the seventh century, and the appropriation of their assets estimated in today’s prices to be many billions of dollars. Unfortunately, this history—the

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forced exodus of Jews who, along with their descendants, constitute the majority of Jews in Israel—is barely studied, mostly ignored and seemingly of little interest to the general population and even to Diaspora Jewry.

Apart from the great work of organizations like Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa, Justice for Jews from Arab Countries and Harif, I was amazed that the issue had only seldom been raised in any meaningful way around the world. Growing up in a thriving Jewish community, attending a Jewish school, and being involved in the Jewish community and Zionist organizations, I am astounded now, thinking back, how little was taught about the long and illustrious history of the Jewish communities of the Middle East and North Africa, and their subsequent expulsion. How many are taught about the Jewish communities of Algeria, Egypt, Syria and Yemen—to name but a few of many nations now completely without a Jewish presence?

While in government, we often raised this issue on the international stage and at the foreign ministry under the leadership of then-Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and even initiated a now annual event at the United Nations solely devoted to the issue of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries with our partners in the World Jewish Congress and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. However, the more we pressed the issue, which by international, U.S. and Israeli law must be part of any resolution to our conflict, the more I understood that Jews in Israel and abroad are not even aware of it...

It is rarely part of any high-level Jewish or pro-Israel conference, barely touched in any pedagogic or educational syllabi, or addressed by any mainstream Jewish or pro-Israel organizations. Before we ask the world to recognize and address their moral, legal and historic rights, we should inform ourselves about the history of the communities, as well as their cleansing and extinction during the 20th century. For many around the world, Jewish history and culture is largely defined by the Jews of Eastern and Central Europe. Still, the Jewish communities of the Middle East and North Africa bestowed great scholarship, cultural and economic successes on many occasions without parallel anywhere in the world.

It is an uphill battle and one our opponents do not want to become widely known because it flips on its head all standard notions about the conflict, including conquest, oppression and indigeneity. I know of an academic who tried to hold a purely historical conference on the history of the Jews of the Middle East and North Africa, and was turned away by dozens of American universities, even

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Jewish-studies departments, because the subject matter was considered “too controversial.”

Digest that for a moment: the 2,000- to 3,000-year history of Jewish communities—their achievements, their successes, their suffering. We should not allow the suffocation and extinction of these historic communities to be erased from the pages of history. We should share their stories and keep their memories alive, especially their destruction, which was largely ignored around the world. Please join us in making Nov. 30 not another day, but a vital date in our calendar where we are free to talk about history, rights, redress and justice.

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AMERICAN JEWRY’S HANUKKAH HYPOCRISY?

Jonathan S. Tobin

[Jewish Press](#), Dec. 6, 2018

The *New York Times*’s coverage of Jewish topics has long been fodder for those who study both media bias and the complicated relationship between the newspaper and the members of the tribe that are among its most loyal readers. An article published the week before Hanukkah about the health risks associated with eating fried potatoes set off a debate as to whether the feature was a not-so-subtle dig at a holiday tradition. But whether you think the piece (which actually never mentioned Hanukkah or latkes) really was proof of anti-Semitism or just an unfortunate coincidence that should remind us that sometimes a fried potato is just a fried potato, the discussion was indicative of the suspicions that many Jews hold about the Times.

But there was little doubt that a *Times* op-ed published in its Sunday edition—the day the holiday began this year—would set alight the debate about its attitude to Jewish sensitivities. In the piece, novelist Michael David Lucas made a couple of accurate observations while attempting to pour cold water on Hanukkah celebrations, while also promoting a misunderstanding of both Jewish history and the struggle to preserve Jewish identity in our own day.

Lucas, who identifies as a “assimilated Jew,” was absolutely right about two

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things. One is that for many Jews, Hanukkah's sole significance is as a counterweight to the dominance of Christmas in American popular culture. The other is that many of the otherwise non-observant Jews who embrace it—either on its own or as part of a “Chrismukkah” conflation of the two winter season holidays—know little or nothing about the history of the festival or what the conflict it discusses meant.

But he's wrong to assert, even obliquely, that it is hypocritical for non-Orthodox or predominantly secular Jews to join in the Hanukkah fun. Lucas is right that Hanukkah is more important to American Jews than other more important religious observances. A survey published by the Jewish People and Policy Institute last week claimed that as many as 60 percent of American Jews light candles on Hanukkah, which is more than the 53 percent who fast on Yom Kippur or the 23 percent who light Shabbat candles, according to the 2013 Pew Survey on Jewish Americans. It's also greater than the 32 percent of those identifying as Jews who have a Christmas tree.

He is also correct to point out that the main significance of Hanukkah to many Jews is that it is a Jewish answer to Santa Claus. That doesn't just mean providing Jews with an excuse for taking part in the national obsession with December consumer spending. It also gives them a holiday for which they can demand equal time at public-school assemblies and municipal ceremonies in protest against the annual reminder that Jews are in the minority. For others, it is, merely as Lucas says of himself, an answer to the pleas of their children for Christmas...

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PEARL HARBOR: SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS LATER

Frederick Krantz

[CIJR](#), Dec. 7, 2018

“And some there be which have no memorial, who are perished as though they had

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never been.”

Ecclesiasticus 44:9

We are remembering today the beginning of World War II for the United States, with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, “A date which will live in infamy”, as FDR put it.. Followed by its final termination four years later in the Pacific, World War II was the most destructive conflagration in the history of the world, then and since.

While many people think it began in 1939, with Hitler’s invasion of Poland, it in fact began many years before, with Japan’s aggression in 1931 (Manchuria) and 1937 (China). And while the fighting and bloodshed finally ended in 1945 (in Europe with the Allies on the Elbe, the fall of Berlin to the Red Army, and in the Pacific, in August, after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Tokyo’s final, formal surrender on the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Harbor, in September), the war’s consequences, with and after the Cold War, are with us still.

The titanic struggle between the Allies, led by Great Britain and the US after the defeat of France and (as is often forgotten), by China in Asia, and the Axis, led by Germany and Japan (with Mussolini’s fascist Italy a subordinate player) would cost humanity well over 60,000,000 military and civilian deaths. These included over 6 million Jews, exterminated by the German Nazis as an integral part of their racial plan to impose an “Aryan” 1,000-Year Reich on first Europe and then the world).

While all the figures given here are approximate, and some vary according to the source, across WWII civilian casualties far exceeded military. Of some 70 million combatants on all sides, about 17 million were killed. The Soviet Union suffered the most civilian deaths, more than 21.5 million; China ca.15 million; Germany 4 million, Japan 2 million; Poland, with the highest per capita death rate, over 6 million dead (50% Jews), equal to 15% of the population.

France lost 600,000, the United Kingdom 65,000, Italy 800,000. Belgium, Holland Greece and Yugoslavia,; the Scandinavian countries; Finland, Romania, and Hungary (German allies); Bulgaria and Albania and others—all suffered grievous civilian (and in some cases military) casualties. Ca. 8 million Soviets (including partisans) and 3 million Germans, died on the Eastern front. British armed forces lost 380,000 men, Commonwealth and Imperial allies over 100,000 [Canada, 37,000], the USA 300,000 servicemen. And over 1 ½ million Jews fought in all the

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Allied armies.

And millions more people suffered as refugees, forced laborers, oppressed and exploited or sacrificing, populations, in population transfers, and so on. The cost of the massive destruction of cities, roads, rail-lines, buildings, churches, industrial plants, harbors, bridges, dams, and of the millions of tons of shipping destroyed (true of China, Philippines and other Pacific theater countries as well) is estimated at over \$1.5 trillion, probably a very low figure.

The numbers of dead, military and civilian, are staggering and unimaginable (and far outweighed, it should be noted, by those wounded, physically and emotionally). World War II, counting only from 1939 (and not from the beginnings of Japanese aggression in Asia in 1931) lasted 2,174 days; deaths averaged 23,000 lives a day, 15 people were killed [many brutally and senselessly murdered] a minute, for six long years. * Each death was in its own way a tragedy—multiply each by 60 million to begin to get a sense of the unimaginable human cost of this catastrophe. Europe still has not recovered from the demographic ravages of 1939-1945.

Why did Hitler lose? There are of course many intersecting reasons—Churchill's leadership and the resilience of Great Britain's then Empire, with its Commonwealth reinforcements (including Canada); Roosevelt's pre-December 7, 1941 Lend-Lease aid; Germany's two-front war after June, 1941, radicalized after the Allied landings in No. Africa and then Italy after November, 1942 and in Normandy in June, 1944 (four of every five Germans who died in combat in WWII died on the Eastern front).

The lack of cooperation between Germany and Japan was a key factor; Allied victory by late 1943 in the Battle of the Atlantic (aided by the breaking of the Germans' Enigma code), the key role of America's immense industrial power and production (including large-scale transfers of war materiel to the Soviet Union), and the massive Allied strategic bombing campaign against Germany, were other elements. The flight of Jewish and German emigré nuclear physicists to Britain and the U.S. precluded rapid German development if an atomic bomb, and the obstinate endurance, courage and sacrifice of millions of ordinary Russian soldiers and civilians (see Vasily Grossman's great Stalingrad novel, Life and Fate), reinforced by superb (and plentiful) equipment like the T34 tank, Stormovik attack-fighter, and Katyusha rocket artillery, also played key roles.

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But as Andrew Roberts concludes in his magisterial *The Storm of War. A New History of the Second World War*, while stressing Hitler's misplaced confidence in his own will and military genius and the German racialists' disinterest in rallying "inferior" conquered peoples, "The real reason why Hitler lost the Second World War was exactly the same one that caused him to unleash it in the first place: he was a Nazi."*

And so the Age of Global War, which began in fire, smoke and terror in China, Poland and Pearl Harbor ended in triumph in Berlin and Tokyo Harbor four years later, with the dropping of the first atomic bombs and the beginning of the Cold War. Let us never forget the heroes, civilian and military, who, in their millions, made the ultimate sacrifice that we might be free.

*Andrew Roberts, *Storm of War* (New York, Harper Collins, 2011), pp.579; 608.

*(Prof. Krantz is Director & President of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research,
Editor of the Daily Isranet Briefing and the Israfax quarterly,
and a Professor of History at Liberal Arts College, Concordia University.)*

CIJR Wishes All Our Friends & Supporters: Chag Sameach and Shabbat Shalom!

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[Jews from Islamic Countries are Migrants of the Clash of Civilizations: Giulio Meotti, Arutz Sheva, Dec. 3, 2018](#)—Every year, on 30 November, Israel and the Jewish world remember the 850,000 Jews expelled from Arab-Islamic countries.

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Many of them live among us in Europe, in Rome as in Paris, in Milan as in Brussels.

[Why is the Story of the Jewish Refugees so Little Known?](#): **[Lyn Julius, Jerusalem Post, Nov. 24, 2018](#)**—Seventy years ago, the newly-established State of Israel opened the floodgates to hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees. Many were Holocaust survivors from the displaced persons camps or remnant communities of Eastern Europe, but the biggest contingent seeking refuge in Israel came from Arab and Muslim countries.

[10 Awesome Hanukkah Menorahs](#): **[Aaron S., Jerusalem Online, Dec. 5, 2018](#)**