

ARAB HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS TO ISRAEL/PALESTINE

It is not true that the majority of Arabs living in Israel at the time of the partition were descended from those who had lived in the area for centuries prior to this. Precise demographic figures will never be known, but it is clear:

- i) At least a quarter of Muslims who lived in Palestine in 1882 had arrived, or their ancestors had arrived, following the Egyptian conquest of the area in 1831.
- ii) There has been a considerable immigration of Turks, Greeks, Algerians, Sudanese, Syrian and Lebanese migrants, who settled in the current boundaries of Israel during 1830-1945
- iii) In the early 19th Century, when Jewish immigration began gaining momentum, there were only about 200,000 Arabs living in all of the land, mainly in the countryside of the West Bank and Galilee, and mostly lacking in national sentiment.
- iv) Many Arabs immigrated to the areas of Jewish settlement [comprising most of today's Israel] only after 1880, attracted by the increased economic opportunities created by Jewish resettlement.
- v) Jews were mistreated under Muslim colonial rule. Even before the big Jewish influx from the end of the 19th Century, the indigenous Jewish population was subjected to religious-inspired persecution by the ruling Muslim administration, including massacres (e.g. Hebron, 1834) and restrictions on praying.