

**The
Palestinian
Lie**

Shattering the Myths

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Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most polarizing topics in the world today. It's a subject shrouded in myths, half-truths, and outright lies—many of which are deliberately spread by pro-Palestinian advocates to distort history and vilify Israel. This book is not just a response to these claims; it's a methodical effort to dismantle them, one by one, using historical evidence, data, and common sense.

This book takes an eye-opening dive into the demographics, events, and decisions that shaped this contentious region. It's firmly rooted in indisputable evidence and backed by verifiable sources. Some of the facts may surprise you or seem counterintuitive if you're unfamiliar with the region's history. But every claim in this book is grounded in solid evidence. I encourage you to fact-check anything that feels doubtful—turn to credible sources and see for yourself.

We'll focus on three key periods:

- The Ottoman Occupation (1516–1917)
- The British Mandate (1917–1948)
- The period after Israel's creation (1948–Today)

We'll start with one of the most pervasive claims: that the land was “taken” from its native Arab inhabitants. Pro-Palestinian advocates often depict Jews as foreign invaders who arrived out of nowhere, displacing the indigenous population. But the evidence tells a very different story.

We're going to talk about the **Ottoman occupation** (1516–1917). Pro-Palestinian advocates argue that “Jews stole the land from native Arabs,” yet the facts show otherwise. Even under an oppressive Islamic regime, Jews still managed to outnumber native Muslims in the area destined to become Israel—long before the rise of Zionism and decades before Israel's establishment in 1948.

We're going to talk about the **British Mandate** (1917–1948). I'll present evidence showing that Arab immigration to Palestine far outpaced Jewish immigration from Europe. Jewish development of the land created economic opportunities, attracting waves of Arab migrants seeking jobs and better living conditions. Meanwhile, Britain actively restricted Jewish immigration, blocked Holocaust survivors, and even sent refugees back to Europe.

We'll also address the **creation of Palestinian identity**, a relatively modern phenomenon. While pro-Palestinian advocates falsely claim that a distinct Palestinian identity has existed for centuries, this “identity” wasn't an organic movement but a carefully crafted invention to serve broader Arab and Soviet interests. During the Cold War, the Arab League and the Soviet Union collaborated to create a Palestinian narrative with one primary goal: the destruction of Israel. This effort included appointing an Egyptian figurehead with no historical ties to the land, underscoring the fabricated roots of this identity.

Shocking Truths

Get ready to discover:

- ✓ How, even during the Ottoman occupation, Jews outnumbered native Muslims in the area destined to become Israel.
- ✓ Why Arab immigration to Palestine in the 19th and 20th centuries far exceeded Jewish immigration—and what drove it.
- ✓ How the Palestinian national identity was crafted during the Cold War to serve Soviet and Arab interests.
- ✓ How the world's focus on Palestinian refugees ignores an even larger group of Jewish refugees from Arab countries, whose stories have been erased.
- ✓ How the United Nations created a unique agency to maintain refugee status across generations—a practice unlike anything in history.
- ✓ How modern genetic research proves that Israel's Jewish population has the strongest genetic link to ancient Canaanites.

A Quick Note on Terminology

Before we begin, let's clarify an important point: There was never an independent Arab country in this region called Palestine. Since the Romans renamed Judea to Palestine nearly 1,900 years ago, it has been a province under various empires. From the Roman Empire to the Ottoman Empire, the area has always been under the control of external powers.

The British revived the name "Palestine" in 1920 when they took control of the region. Before this, the name had been out of official use for nearly two millennia. The Romans originally renamed "Judea" to "Syria Palaestina" in 135 CE following a Jewish revolt, aiming to erase the land's Jewish identity. The British chose the name "Palestine" for its familiarity to Europeans through ancient Roman maps and literature.

Throughout this book, when referring to the pre-1948 period, I'll use terms like Jews, Arabs, and Muslims to describe the population groups. During the British Mandate, the term "Palestinian" applied broadly to anyone living within the British Mandate for Palestine, regardless of religion or ethnicity. For simplicity, we will use the term "Palestine" to describe the land that became the British Mandate for Palestine in 1920.

Buckle Up

This book is for those who want to know the truth, even if it's uncomfortable. I promise it will be worth your time. Prepare to have your understanding of this conflict turned upside down, and to see the evidence that has been buried beneath decades of propaganda, myths, and outright lies.

Chapter 1

The Ottoman Occupation (1516-1917)

The Ottoman Empire was one of the largest empires in history, spanning three continents and ruling over 30 modern-day countries. Within the Ottoman empire, there were no borders, no states and no countries. The empire was divided into administrative regions called *sanjaks*, which were part of larger provinces (*vilayets*).

For 400 years, from 1516 to 1917, the region now referred to as Palestine was under Islamic Ottoman rule. Yet, during this time, there was no political or administrative entity officially called “Palestine.” Instead, key regions of what was later called Palestine were included in the **Sanjak of Jerusalem**, which was part of the larger Vilayet of Damascus or the Vilayet of Beirut, depending on the period.

Let me set the stage here: the term “Palestine” was mostly a Western construct, used by European travelers or cartographers, and it didn’t represent any specific political or geographic reality under Ottoman administration. This is important because many of the modern claims about Palestine hinge on this supposed distinct identity that, frankly, didn’t exist between the Jewish Bar Kokhba Revolt (135 CE) and 1920.

The Beginning of Zionism

Our story begins in 1897, 51 years before Israel was created, the year of the first Zionist Congress. At the time, Palestine was under Ottoman rule.

Before I dive into the details, I want to address a common myth that claims that Zionism was a colonial project and that Jews “stole the land” from Arabs. This couldn’t be further from the truth. Zionism was not about colonization—it was a movement to reclaim the Jewish people’s ancestral homeland, the very land that had been central to Jewish identity for thousands of years.

When the Zionist movement began, the early pioneers often described Palestine as “**a land with no people.**” Critics like to dismiss this phrase as propaganda, but let’s examine the facts. Was the land really empty? Was it populated by a distinct Arab population? I’m about to show you mind-blowing historical evidence that proves that they were right.

The State of the Land: 80% Classified as *Dead Land* (“*Mawat*”)

I’m going to focus on the area that became the State of Israel in 1948. This area does not include the West Bank and Gaza, which were captured by Israel only 19 years later in the 1967 war. Between 1948 and 1967, the West Bank was under Jordanian occupation and Gaza was under Egyptian occupation.

Let’s talk about the land itself. Under Ottoman law, over 80% of the land in Palestine was classified as *mawat*, or “dead land.” These were areas deemed uninhabitable—swamps, deserts, rocky terrain, and regions without access to water, roads or infrastructure. The Ottomans considered these lands unsuitable for cultivation or settlement.

The early Zionists legally purchased the *mawat* land under the Ottoman Land Code of 1858. Organizations like the Jewish National Fund (JNF) worked tirelessly to transform these barren and Malaria-infused regions into thriving agricultural communities. Some of the major *mawat* regions they revived included:

- **The Negev Desert** (60% of modern Israel)
- **The Jezreel Valley**
- **The Hula Valley**
- **The Sharon Plain**
- **The Jordan Valley**
- **The Lower Galilee**
- **The Beit She’an Valley**
- **The Shfela Region**
- **Western Galilee**

- **The Lachish Region**
- **The Besor Region**

These areas were plagued by swamps, malaria, and infertile soil. But the Zionist pioneers drained the swamps, built irrigation systems, constructed roads, and turned these desolate lands into productive agricultural hubs. Their work literally brought the land back to life.

What about the remaining 20% of the land? Most of it was sparsely populated, with a few urban centers like Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, and Tiberias. Outside of these cities, the population was scattered across small villages. Living conditions were harsh, and the infrastructure was almost nonexistent.

In Jerusalem, however, something remarkable stood out: a significant Jewish majority. This was true long before the Zionist movement even began.

A Look at Jerusalem: A Clear Jewish Majority

Historical records consistently show that Jews were the largest population group in Jerusalem during the 19th century. Here are some key figures:

- **1905 (Ottoman Census of Jerusalem):** Inside the Old City of Jerusalem, there were 13,400 Jews, 8,000 Muslims, and 5,000 Christians. Including areas outside the city walls, the district had 45,000 Jews, 12,000 Muslims, and 11,000 Christians—three times as many Jews as Muslims.
- **1896 (Vital Cuinet):** French geographer Vital Cuinet confirmed Jews were the largest population group in Jerusalem.
- **1874 (British Consul W.H. Young):** Reported 10,000 Jews, 5,000 Muslims, and 5,000 Christians in Jerusalem.

- **1866 (John Murray Travel Guide):** Noted 8,000 Jews, 4,000 Christians, and 4,000 Muslims in Jerusalem.
- **1844 (first Ottoman census of Jerusalem):** 7,120 Jews, 3,390 Christians, and 4,200 Muslims in Jerusalem.
- Similar numbers were reported by the **British Consulate** in 1864, **James Finn** in 1853, **César Famin**, a French diplomat, in 1853, **Titus Tobler**, a Swiss explorer, in 1846, **Ernst-Gustav Schultz**, the Prussian consul, in 1844, and others.

These records make one thing clear: Jerusalem was a predominantly Jewish city for many decades before Zionism.

Accounts from Travelers: A Desolate Land

Now let's take a look at the other areas of Ottoman Palestine. I'm going to show historical evidence proving that the rest of the non-Mawat land outside of Jerusalem was sparsely populated with a few small villages due to the harsh living conditions.

Since the official Ottoman records were only limited to Jerusalem, we are going to rely on accounts from travelers and geographers. Here's what some notable travelers had to say:

Mark Twain (1867), in *The Innocents Abroad*:

“There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent—not for thirty miles in either direction. There are two or three small clusters of Bedouin tents, but not a single permanent habitation. One may ride ten miles, hereabouts, and not see ten human beings.... A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action... We never saw a human being on the whole route.” On Bethlehem: “There is no hum of life. There is no human activity of any kind.”

Laurence Oliphant (1887):

“The country is a considerable degree empty of inhabitants and therefore its greatest need is that of a body of population.”
“A region more desolated than this could scarcely be conceived.”

M.W. Thomson (1859):

“It is a fact that we may not ignore, that Palestine is now almost a desert.... The country is in great measure empty of inhabitants... There are no trees, no verdure, no flowers, no streams, and, therefore, no inhabitants.”

Alphonse de Lamartine (1832):

“...outside of the gates of Jerusalem we saw nothing living. We heard no living sound. We found the same emptiness, the same silence as if nature itself had withdrawn from the borders of the Holy City... This land is now a solitude.”

Karl Becker, a German geographer, described the same experience in 1876. So did the French historian **Victor Guerin** in 1850, **Edward Robinson** (1838), **Alexander Keith** (1843), **John Lloyd Stephens** (1830s), **James Finn** (1850s), **Carsten Niebuhr** (1766-1767), **Volney** (1783-1785), **Richard Pococke** (1738), **Thomas Shaw** (1730s), and many other geographers and world travelers.

Arab Population in the West Bank

During Ottoman and British rule, the majority of the Arab population concentrated in the West Bank, which, as you may recall, was not part of Israel between 1948 and 1967.

But even in the West Bank under Ottoman Rule the population was very thin. Historians who analyzed Ottoman tax records estimate that in the district of Hebron, now home to 700,000 people, only 3,000-5,000 people

lived. In the district of Nablus, now home to 440,000 people, Ottoman tax records show only 9,000-10,000 people lived.

These descriptions paint a vivid picture of a land that was far from thriving. On top of these struggles was the near-total absence of healthcare infrastructure during Ottoman rule, which further hindered population growth and survival in the region.

Healthcare During Ottoman Rule

In addition to harsh living conditions, widespread disease, and poor sanitation, the near absence of healthcare infrastructure was likely a key reason why Palestine remained sparsely populated during Ottoman rule. Healthcare in the region was almost nonexistent. The region had only a handful of tiny hospitals (10-15 beds in each), most run by missionaries whose main goal was to convert people to Christianity. By the early 20th century, there were fewer than **200 hospital beds** in the entire region of Palestine. Jerusalem had the most, with about **125–135 beds**, while the rest of Palestine, including cities like Jaffa, Haifa, and Nazareth, had a total of **70–85 beds combined**. Rural areas had no hospitals at all.

Life in Palestine was tough. Infectious diseases like cholera, malaria, and typhoid were everywhere, and poor sanitation made things worse. Infant mortality was sky-high—up to 300 babies per 1,000 births didn't survive—and life expectancy was just **35–40 years**.

One exception was the Jewish **Shaare Zedek** Hospital in Jerusalem (founded 1902), which means “**Gates of Justice**” in Hebrew. The name reflects the hospital's mission to provide care with compassion and justice for all people, including Muslims and Christians. Most other facilities were small and focused on converting patients, not providing widespread healthcare.

With high death rates and constant disease, Palestine's natural population growth rate was **less than 1% a year**. Keep this low figure in mind—we'll revisit it in the next chapter.

Muslim Immigration During Ottoman Rule

Now let's address the claim that the Arab population was indigenous. The reality is that much of the Arab population in Palestine arrived during the late Ottoman period as part of government-driven resettlement programs and economic migration.

Let's examine the major migration waves during the late Ottoman period, focusing specifically on the population that settled within the borders of Israel as established in 1948 and around Jerusalem. This analysis relies on the expertise of leading scholars such as **Justin McCarthy**, **Kemal Karpat**, and **Alexander Scholch**, who are widely recognized as authorities on Ottoman history and demographics. Their extensive research, based on Ottoman census records, tax registries, and archival materials, is considered some of the most reliable in the field.

1. Bedouin Migration (1914 and earlier)

The Ottoman government relocated Bedouin tribes from the Hejaz region of the Arabian Peninsula to Palestine, particularly in the Beersheba area. This was part of a broader resettlement policy to populate underutilized land and bolster Ottoman influence. In 1914, Ottoman authorities estimated the Bedouin population in Beersheba at **55,000**. By 1922, the Bedouin population had risen to **74,910** due to natural growth and subsequent waves of migration.

2. Egyptian Migration (1831–1840)

During the rule of Muhammad Ali of Egypt and his son Ibrahim Pasha, thousands of Egyptians were brought to Palestine. These migrants were tasked with agricultural work, bolstering local governance, and strengthening Egyptian control over the region. Many others fled to Palestine to escape Muhammad Ali's conscription policies. The Egyptian migrants settled in areas such as Jaffa, the coastal plains, and Wadi Ara. The total number of Egyptian migrants is estimated at **20,000-25,000**.

3. Algerian Migration (1850s)

After the French colonization of Algeria, thousands of Algerian refugees were displaced. The Ottoman authorities resettled them in sparsely populated areas of Palestine, particularly in the Galilee region and cities like Safed and Jaffa. Estimated number of Algerian migrants: **8,000-10,000**.

4. Haurani Migration

The Hauran region, located in modern-day southern Syria, experienced economic pressures that pushed migrants into Palestine. Many established villages in southern areas, such as al-Masmiyya al-Kabira and al-Masmiyya al-Saghira as well as in the Jezreel Valley and the Galilee, where they worked in agriculture. Estimated number of Haurani migrants: **18,000-20,000**.

5. Circassian and Chechen Migration (Post-1864)

The Russian Empire's conquest of the Caucasus forced over 1.5 million Muslims, primarily Circassians and Chechens, to flee their homelands. Many found refuge in the Ottoman Empire, with thousands resettled in Palestine. They settled in the Lower Galilee building villages such as Kafr Kama, Rehaniya, and Abu Ghosh. Estimated number of Circassian and Chechen migrants: **10,000-12,000**.

6. Druze Migration (1860s)

The 1860 civil war between Druze and Maronites in Mount Lebanon led to significant unrest, prompting some Druze to migrate south into the Galilee area. Although the Druze are not Muslim, their faith has Islamic roots, and they were counted under the "Muslim" category in the 1922 census, which we will cover soon. Estimated size: **12,000-15,000**.

7. Turkish Migration (1850s–1890s)

During the mid-19th century (1850s–1860s), the Ottoman Empire began resettling Turkish families and officials in Palestine as part of the Tanzimat reforms to strengthen governance. This continued in the late 19th century (1870s–1890s) under Sultan Abdul Hamid II, with Turkish settlers moving to cities like Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Acre to consolidate Ottoman control. Estimated size: **8,000-10,000**.

8. Balkan Migration (1878)

The Russo-Turkish Wars and other conflicts displaced large numbers of Muslims from the Balkans, including Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Macedonia. The Ottomans resettled many of these refugees in the Galilee and coastal plains. Estimated number of Balkan migrants: **13,000-16,000**.

9. Economic Migrants

Thousands of migrants from Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt were drawn to Palestine for economic opportunities. Fertile lands and Ottoman incentives such as tax exemptions, financial aid, and agricultural tools encouraged this migration. Estimated number of economic migrants: **20,000-25,000**.

10. Smaller Migration Waves

Several smaller groups also migrated to Palestine during the Ottoman period: For example, African Pilgrims: Many came from Sudan and West Africa as part of Muslim pilgrimage routes and settled in Jerusalem. Muslims from India, Afghanistan, and Central Asia often stayed in Palestine after performing the Hajj. Estimated total from these smaller waves: **8,000-10,000**.

By adding up these numbers, we can estimate that **172,000 - 198,000** Muslims migrated to Palestine during the late Ottoman rule.

Estimating Native Muslim Population

The data I'm about to present will challenge everything you thought you knew. I'm about to estimate the size of the native Arab population within the 1948 borders of Israel and show that the Jewish population in the late Ottoman period was much larger than the native Arab population.

When Ottoman rule ended in 1917 and Britain took over, they conducted the **first-ever complete census of Palestine**, which was published in 1922. We'll dive into this fascinating census in the next chapter.

To start, we'll use the 1922 British census to calculate the Muslim population within the 1948 borders of Israel, including Jerusalem, at the end of Ottoman rule. Then, we'll subtract the Muslim immigration during the late Ottoman period from the total Muslim population. This will provide us with an estimate of the **native Muslim population**, which we can then compare to the Jewish population.

First, let's estimate the Muslim population only within the 1948 borders of Israel and Jerusalem using the 1922 British Census. The British census recorded a total of **590,890 Muslims** in all of Palestine, including the West Bank and Gaza. By subtracting the Muslim populations of the West Bank and Gaza districts, we can estimate the Muslim population within the 1948 borders of Israel, including Jerusalem:

- **District of Samaria:** 132,453
- **Southern District**
 - Sub-District of **Gaza:** 70,950
 - Sub-District of **Hebron:** 53,068
- **District of Jerusalem-Jaffa**
 - Sub-District of **Ramallah:** 24,168
 - Sub-District of **Bethlehem:** 14,428
 - Sub-District of **Jericho:** 1,800

Adding these figures together gives us a total of **296,867** Muslims who, in 1922, lived in the West Bank and Gaza.

Subtracting this figure from the total of **590,890** Muslims in the entire region of British Palestine, leaves **294,023** Muslims in the areas excluding the West Bank and Gaza. This area includes the territory that became Israel in 1948 as well as the sub-district of Jerusalem, which was liberated from Jordanian occupation in 1967.

To estimate the native Muslim population within the 1948 borders of Israel and Jerusalem, we first need to calculate the migration population size as of 1922. Using a 1% annual natural growth rate, we can project forward from the late Ottoman period when these migration waves occurred. Note that historians agree that very few Muslims migrated out of Palestine during this time, with an annual rate of just 0.05–0.1%.

Migration Wave	Migration Size	Years	Median Year	Estimated Size in 1922
Bedouin	55,000	Pre-1914	1890	74,910 ¹
Egyptian	20,000 - 25,000	1831-1840	1835	33,273 - 41,591 ²
Algerian	8,000 - 10,000	1850s	1855	15,582 - 19,477
Haurani	18,000 - 20,000	1880s-1910s	1900	22,405 - 24,894
Circassian/ Chechen	10,000 - 12,000	1860s	1865	17,633 - 21,159
Druze	12,000 - 15,000	1860s	1865	21,159 - 26,449
Turkish	8,000 - 10,000	1850s-1917	1885	11,561 - 14,451
Balkan	13,000 - 16,000	1878-1900s	1890	17,874 - 21,999
Economic	20,000 - 25,000	1880-1920	1900	24,894 - 31,118
Smaller Waves	8,000 - 10,000	1880-1920	1900	9,958 - 12,447
Total:	172,000 - 198,000			249,248 - 288,496

¹ Taken directly from the 1922 British Census, which included a specific category for Bedouins, not calculated using the 1% growth rate.

² Estimated size in 1922 accounts for 30% migration back to Egypt after Muhammad Ali's rule, per historians' estimates.

We've established that, as of 1922, approximately **250,000 to 290,000** Muslims can be attributed to migration waves that occurred during the late Ottoman period. Subtracting this from the roughly **294,000** Muslims who lived within the 1948 borders of Israel, including Jerusalem, leaves an estimated native Muslim population of only **4,000 to 44,000**.

To summarize, assuming the lower end of the Muslim immigration size at 250,000, subtracting this from the 294,000 Muslims recorded in 1922 leaves an estimated native Muslim population of **44,000**. On the other hand, if we use the higher end of immigration at 290,000, the native Muslim population drops to just **4,000**.

591,000 Muslim population in all of British
Mandate for Palestine in 1922

- **297,000** Muslims who, in 1922, lived in the
West Bank and Gaza

- **250,000**
to
290,000 Muslims who, during the late
Ottoman period, migrated to the
region

4,000
to
44,000 Native Muslim population within the
1948 borders of Israel, including
Jerusalem, in 1922

Given that additional Muslim immigration to Palestine occurred between 1918 and 1922, largely driven by employment opportunities under the British administration, it is reasonable to estimate that the native Muslim population fell within the middle of the calculated range—approximately **20,000 to 25,000**. In contrast, the Jewish population within the same borders, as recorded in the 1922 census, stood at **83,794**. However, this figure includes Jewish immigration, which began with the First Aliyah in 1882.

Now let's estimate the **native Jewish population** in 1922, excluding immigration. To do this, we'll use data from the mid-1800s, roughly 50 years before Zionism began:

- **Jerusalem** (1844): **7,120** Jews, according to the first-ever Ottoman census conducted in Jerusalem in 1844.
- **Safed** (1850s): **4,000** Jews, based on Ottoman tax records, British Consular Reports, and accounts from Laurence Oliphant.
- **Tiberias** (1840s): **1,500** Jews, as noted in Ottoman tax records, Missionary Reports, and accounts from Sir Moses Montefiore.
- **Hebron** (1850): ~ **1,000** Jews, as reported by British Consular Reports, Moses Montefiore (1839), William McClure Thomson (1859), and Ottoman tax records.
- **Smaller Jewish communities**: ~**3,000** Jews in total, living in towns such as Jaffa, Acre, Haifa, Beersheba, Ashkelon, Zichron Ya'akov, Shfaram, Peqiin, Lydda, Rosh Pina, and Tzfat, per Ottoman tax records and travelers' accounts.

This adds up to a total of **16,620** native Jews living in Palestine in the mid-1800s. Factoring in a 1% natural growth rate, by 1922, this number is estimated to have reached ~**34,000 native Jews**—a significantly larger figure than the **20,000–25,000 native Muslims**.

This overwhelming native Jewish majority over the native Muslim population could have been far greater if not for the **Jewish exodus** caused by discriminatory Ottoman policies against Jews.

Jewish Exodus During Ottoman Rule

While Palestine saw an influx of Muslims during the Ottoman period due to resettlement programs and migration, it simultaneously experienced an exodus of Jews. This departure was driven by a combination of economic hardships, systemic discrimination, and violent events that destabilized Jewish communities. Here are the primary causes behind this trend:

1. Heavy Taxation

The Ottoman Empire imposed discriminatory taxes on non-Muslims, including Jews and Christians. Two major taxes were particularly burdensome:

- **Jizya:** A head tax that non-Muslims had to pay simply for existing under Ottoman rule. This tax was both a financial strain and a symbol of subjugation.
- **Kharaj:** A land tax disproportionately targeting non-Muslim landowners, making it challenging for Jews to sustain agricultural livelihoods.

These taxes placed significant financial pressure on Jewish communities, forcing many to leave the region in search of better opportunities.

2. Restrictions on Employment

Non-Muslims faced restrictions on the types of jobs they could hold under Ottoman policies. Jews were barred from government positions, military roles, and many high-paying professions. They were often confined to small-scale trades, crafts, or moneylending, limiting their economic mobility and prospects for growth.

3. Episodes of Violence and Pogroms

Waves of violence targeted Jewish communities, further driving them from Palestine. Some notable incidents include:

- **1834 Hebron Massacre:** During an uprising against Egyptian rule, Jewish homes were looted, many residents were murdered, and others were left destitute.
- **1834 Safed Massacre:** Violent mobs ransacked Jewish homes, killed residents, and destroyed property.
- **1838 Hebron Massacre:** A devastating attack where Jewish synagogues and homes were destroyed, and lives were lost.

These episodes of violence left Jewish communities in a state of constant vulnerability, prompting many to flee for their safety.

4. Social and Legal Discrimination

As second-class citizens (*dhimmis*), Jews faced systemic discrimination under Ottoman rule. They were excluded from political representation and subjected to arbitrary treatment by local authorities. Such marginalization eroded their ability to thrive in the region.

5. Forced Labor

Although Jews were usually exempt from military conscription, they were often conscripted into forced labor by Ottoman authorities. This disrupted community life and imposed additional physical and economic burdens.

6. Jewish Expulsions During World War I

During World War I (1914–1918), the Jewish population in Palestine suffered severe losses due to Ottoman policies and wartime conditions. Thousands of Jews were expelled from cities like Tel Aviv and Jaffa by Ottoman authorities, who accused them of supporting the Allies.

Debunking the Myth of a Historically Populous Palestine

The claim that Palestine has always been populated with native Muslims is simply not true. When the Crusaders invaded the region in 1099, they left a trail of devastation in Jerusalem and across the entire land. Both Jews and Muslims were targeted in one of history's most brutal campaigns, and the result was the near-total depopulation of the region.

In Jerusalem, the brutality was unimaginable. **The entire Jewish population was slaughtered**, with many burned alive in synagogues where they had sought refuge. There is no evidence of any survivors among the city's Jews. The Muslim population wasn't spared either—entire neighborhoods were destroyed, and thousands were slaughtered. And it wasn't just Jerusalem. The Crusaders attacked towns and villages across Palestine, leaving behind a desolate, depopulated land.

For the nearly 200 years that the Crusaders ruled, Palestine remained a ghost of its former self. Both Jews and Muslims were largely absent, and the land fell into complete neglect. The Crusaders had no interest in rebuilding or encouraging population growth. Instead, Palestine became a wasteland of abandoned towns, uncultivated fields, and broken communities.

By the time the Ottomans took over in 1516, the entire region was mostly empty of both Jews and Muslims. Palestine wasn't some bustling land full of native Muslim inhabitants as some narratives suggest—it was barren, underdeveloped, and waiting to be revived. This reality shatters the myth of a historically crowded Palestine and shows just how much work was needed to bring the land back to life in later centuries.

Conclusion: Zionists Revived a Desolate Land

The historical evidence couldn't be clearer: Jews were not strangers to Palestine—they were its native population. Contrary to pro-Palestinian myths, Jews were the majority in Jerusalem for decades before Zionism began, as countless historical records confirm. And it wasn't just Jerusalem. Within the borders of what became Israel in 1948, native Jews outnumbered native Muslims—even during the repressive Ottoman Islamic rule, long before the waves of Zionist immigration.

This was not a land teeming with people. It was barren, largely uninhabited, with much of it officially classified as 'dead land' under Ottoman law—malaria-infested swamps, deserts, and rocky terrain left uncultivated. The Zionist pioneers legally purchased this neglected land and transformed it through sheer determination and hard work. They drained swamps, cultivated deserts, and built thriving communities where nothing had existed before.

Zionism wasn't just a political movement—it was an act of renewal and justice. It was about reclaiming what had been taken, rebuilding what had been destroyed, and restoring a homeland that had always been central to Jewish identity. The pioneers didn't just bring the land back to life—they rebuilt the future of an entire people.