

ARAB REFUGEES

The United Nations now face a new problem, one caused by recent developments in Palestine. Almost the entire Arab population in the part of the country assigned to the State of Israel left their homes to escape the horrors of war. It is estimated that close to 400,000 people of Arab origin — men, women, and children — are now living as refugees, without shelter, adequate food, or medical supplies. These people wish to return, provided the Government of Israel will permit them to go back to their former homes.

For more than two thousand years the appalling plight of exile and homelessness was too often the fate of the Jews, wherever they might have dwelt. Anti-Semitism, discriminatory practices, and almost every war in history added to the number of displaced Jews. During World War I, the Czarist regime of Russia forcibly deported many hundred thousands of Jews. During World War II, Hitler's henchmen deported the Jews from all countries subjugated by the Germans' military might. 200,000 Jews, victims of the war, are held even now, three years after the end of hostilities, in the former concentration camps of Europe as D.P.'s,

exposed to all the suffering and humiliation of their uncertain status.

For the first time in two thousand years the Jews themselves now have to handle the problem of displaced persons of non-Jewish faith. Yet it appears that 2,000 years of suffering and of untold hardships caused by the misery of numerous deportations were entirely forgotten as soon as circumstances caused a fraction of the Jewish population to be placed in a position of self-government. True to its Zionist self, the Jewish Government of the State of Israel appears ready to forfeit the moral rights of the Jewish D.P.'s in Europe and elsewhere by refusing to permit the Arab refugees to return to their homes in Palestine. Nationalism is short-sighted, and Jewish nationalism is not excepted from this affliction. In the long run, the future of the Jews in Palestine depends upon the establishment of peaceful relations with the Arab population and with the neighboring Arab states. What could contribute more to the establishment of these peaceful relations than a humane approach on the part of the Israeli Government toward the Arab displaced persons craving to return home?