

# Foreword

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THIS PUBLICATION is not meant to be a study of the land situation in Palestine as it existed during the period of the Mandate.<sup>1</sup> Its purpose is merely to reproduce the important yet little known detailed data which the Palestine Government had put out during the latter years of the Mandate in the form of *Village Statistics*, giving the names of the towns and villages comprising Palestine, figures of the population by community, the classification of the soil for fiscal purposes, and the ownership holdings of the land as between Arabs, Jews, Public and Others as on 1 April 1945. This study is also intended to draw attention to certain defects in the 'Village Statistics' publications of the Palestine Government and to explain their effect on Arab rights and interests, particularly in view of the situation which has arisen after 1948 as a result of the creation of the state of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The original document had limited circulation when it was first published, and with the termination of the Mandate, the last edition ceased to be available. Hence, public opinion remained largely ignorant of the facts, thereby giving a semblance of authenticity to the extreme form of Zionist propaganda allegations that Palestine was a Jewish country and that the Arab inhabitants constituted an insignificant minority of nomads who roamed the countryside.

The reproduction of this official material, despite its inaccuracies, should help to set the record straight and ensure that the Arab personality of Palestine is not lost upon serious researchers. Its availability will also serve three other objectives:

- (1) Enable world opinion to realize the magnitude of the material losses of the Palestine Arabs in land alone;
- (2) Rebut Zionist claims that the lands of Palestine were owned by the Jews through purchase;
- (3) Dispel the unwarranted accusations which have been circulating since 1948 that the Palestine Arabs, having sold their lands to the Jews, must bear responsibility for their present predicament.

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(1) For a detailed study of the classification of land and area ownership, see *Palestine: Loss of a Heritage*, by Sami Hadawi.

(2) As the Official Land Valuer and Inspector of Urban Tax Assessments of the Palestine Government during the years 1935 to 1948, and the officer who was entrusted with the task of compiling the figures on classification of land and area ownership, this writer feels competent to comment on the accuracy of the contents of the 'Village Statistics 1945.'