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SPECIAL ISSUE ON RESETTLEMENT IN ISRAEL

Refugee Settlement and Resettlement in Israel

Settlement and resettlement of refugees in Israel has been a function of waves of forced migration. In the early 1930s, at a time when Jews could still flee Nazi Germany, waves of migrants made their way to Israel, then called Palestine. Britain, which ruled over Palestine, had only a small quota for visas, however, and in practice refused visa entry to many would-be immigrants in the late 1930s and the 1940s; this led to illegal migration that continued until Israel became a state in 1948.

In the first several years of its existence, Israel absorbed more than one million refugees, Arab Jews (Jewish migrants from neighbouring Arab countries) as well as American and European Jews (Lova Eliav). The melting pot process was slow, but although many mistakes were committed, there was a genuine attempt to absorb all refugees. In the late 1940s and the early 1950s the problem of Arab refugees, Palestinians and Bedouins, attracted international attention (Abu-Rabia, and Bligh). The problem of integrating the most recent large wave of refugees (Jews from the former Soviet Union) is discussed by Shuval. Significant atten-

tion is also given to psychological aspects of integration, an issue which the Israeli experience may help to illuminate. However, cultural, political, and national differences have also played an important role in the integration process. In the 1950s, problems of integration stemming from cultural and political discrimination, particularly against Arab Jews, were commonplace in Israel, but such problems have since

been overcome, and now play only a minor part in the culture. The richness and plurality of the Israeli experience can serve as series of lessons in integration policy.

This collection of articles touches upon potential further areas of research, such as the settlement of Arab Jewish refugees in Israel, resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Israel, resettlement of Palestinians in the context

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