There has been a significant Palestinian refugee problem for the last fifty years. It started during the fighting in 1948-49 between Israel and neighbouring Arab states, when around 700,000 Arabs fled from their homes in Palestine. Most of them went to the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Large numbers also went to Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. It is estimated by the United Nations that today there are about 2,500,000 Palestinian refugees. In this essay I am going to assess who or what is to blame for the Palestinian refugee problem.

Source A (written by the PLO in 1984) explicitly blames Israel. It says that the Jewish government deliberately murdered the population of Deir Yassin in order to scare Arabs into leaving their homes. It names the groups that were involved and their leaders; the Irgun lead by Menachim Begin, the Stern gang lead by Yitzhek Shamir and the Haganah. The source is reliable because it includes facts and is a secondary source (so it's taken from a wider scope and perspective). It is also reliable because it's from an official spokesperson and appears to have a logical sequence of events so isn't suspicious. The source is unreliable because it has extreme partisan towards the Israelis, and leaves us wondering whether the intention of the source is to question Israel's rights to the state considering they are being accused of war-crime. The Source is useful because it includes true facts, gives names of groups and leaders and says WHY they did it. The source is not useful because of its obvious bias and limitations in that it has no reference to the wider scope (eg. Arab invasion). This source could help us to reach a conclusion about who is responsible for the refugee problem because it tells us about Deir Yassin and the people who were involved, and these facts can be proven. However, the source only mentions Deir Yassin and doesn't discuss other aspects of the problem such as the Arab invasion.

Source B (from a speech by Golda Meir, Israel's foreign minister in 1961) blames Arab leaders for the Arabs leaving their homes. It says that the leaders were telling Arabs to leave their homes so that their armies could enter. It also mentions Deir Yassin, saying that Jewish dissidents were responsible and that it was nothing to do with the government (which goes against what Source A said about the numerous groups involved). The source is seen as being reliable because it's a secondary source and is spoken by an official spokesperson who is talking to the world and her facts are definitely going to be checked. The source is not reliable because Golda Meir is obviously making excuses for Israel because she is embarrassed by the refugee situation. The source is useful because it says WHY the Arabs are in the wrong, but also admits that some Jews are responsible. The source is not useful because she claims that it is "historically incorrect" to blame Deir Yassin but doesn't say why. Also there is an extreme bias towards the Arabs and there are limitations in that she doesn't say much about why Deir Yassin happened. This source could help us to reach a conclusion about who is responsible for the refugee problem because it tells us about the Arab invasions and that refugees left as a consequence of war. However, as you will see when you read on, Golda Meir's argument has been proven wrong by Source C so we cannot trust it. This leaves us wondering why she has lied and could it be because Israel has a guilty conscience and something to hide?

Source C (written by Erskine Childers, an Irish journalist) doesn't really blame anyone. It implicitly says that Israel has lied about Arab leaders telling Arabs to leave their homes, so they may have something to hide. This is against what Golda Meir has said in Source B. The source is very reliable because it includes no opinions, only

facts, and Childers tells us exactly where he got his facts from and how they can be checked. Also, being an Irish citizen, Childers isn't a participant in the war so there is no obvious reason why he would have a bias, although he could be a Palestinian supporter, which would make the source unreliable. The source is useful because he doesn't just give his argument; he backs it up with evidence so there is no way he could be accused of lying. The only limitation is that he doesn't really say who was responsible. This source could help us to reach a conclusion about who is responsible for the refugee problem because it proves Source B to be wrong (with evidence) which leads us to wonder WHY source B has lied. It shows that Israel may have something to hide regarding Deir Yassin and the refugee problem. However it doesn't clearly state who was responsible it only disproves an allegation against the Arab government in Source B.

Source D (Written by a Palestinian refugee) blames Palestinian implicitly. The refugee in question is saying that Palestinians "continued to refuse houses and compensation offered by the UN to settle us in our host countries. We wanted nothing short of return to our homeland." This is a very uncompromising comment and also a very ungrateful comment towards the UN for the housing that they have offered the refugees. However, the refugee isn't trying to hide anything (like the government may do) he just wants his home back. He also implicitly blames the Israelis for taking the Palestinian's homes in the first place. The source is reliable because it is a first-hand experience from someone who's actually there. He's giving a fair argument stating why both sides are in the wrong so there is little bias. The source is unreliable because it's only the opinion of one refugee. The source is useful because it gives us the point of view of an actual refugee (not just government propaganda) and disproves elements of Source E. There are limitations in that he doesn't go into much detail, such as where the homes are being offered from. This source could help us to reach a conclusion about who is responsible for the refugee problem because it tells us that the refugees won't accept anything other than their homes back. However, the Palestinians cannot simply be blamed based on this source alone; there must be a reason WHY the refugees are being defiant which isn't shown here. Also, we can't be sure of how many refugees are being spoken about in this source.

Source E (Written by Abba Eban, Israeli ambassador to the UN) blames other Arab countries explicitly. He says that Arab countries are rich but won't help the refugee crisis because of political motives (to make Israel look bad). The source is reliable because it includes true facts for example it can be proven that Arab countries are rich. Also it's written by an official spokesperson that will be cautious about giving false accusations. The source is unreliable because there is a clear partisan – Abba Eban is trying to shift the blame from Israel to other Arab countries (could the fact that he's not blaming the refugees themselves mean that they are innocent and a guilty Israel is trying to blame anyone they can find?). The source is useful because it says why the Arab countries aren't giving the refugees homes (political motives). The source is not useful because it is disproved by Source D, which says that the refugees are being offered homes but they're turning them down because they want their own homes back, and that being offered more homes will not solve the problem. There are limitations in that he doesn't seem too sure of himself to give factual evidence of his points. This source could help us to reach a conclusion about who is responsible for the refugee problem because it tells us that surrounding Arab countries could find homes for the refugees but are not doing so for political motives (to make Israel look

bad). However, Abba Eban's point that other Arab countries should help is possible irrelevant because as Source D says, refugees would turn these down as they want their homeland back.

Source F blames the Israeli government's policy that any Jew in the world can move to Israel but Palestinian Arabs have no right to their homeland. The source is basically saying that it's unfair that Palestinians are being kicked out of Israel so that Jews with homes elsewhere can move their. It shows two images, both 20 years apart. The images show the same two women standing next to each other, one is an American Jew and the other is a Palestinian. They are demonstrating against the Israeli policy. The source is reliable because the American has no reason to be biased – in fact she is more likely to be in favour of the policy. The source is unreliable because the Palestinian would clearly be biased and the two women aren't necessarily sharing the views of other Palestinians and Jews as they are committed activists at a demonstration against Israel. The source is useful because it shows that in 20 years nothing has changed. The only limitation is that the source doesn't look at the wider concept (why have Israel made this policy?). This source could help us to reach a conclusion about who is responsible for the refugee problem because it shows us why the policy is ridiculous; even an American Jew who should be in favour of the policy disagrees with it. Also it shows that in a 20 year difference, nothing has changed these women's views. However, the source doesn't go into much detail and there would clearly be a bias because the photos are taken from Palestinian demonstrations. Only the opinion of two people is shown here.

Source G is a BBC 2 documentary made in 2002 called *'Palestine is Still the Issue, a Special Report by John Pilger,'* The filmmaker's opinion is obviously that Israelis are to blame for the Arab exodus, using arguments like, "Despite the acts of terror by Palestinians," and, "Few people have been betrayed so often as the Palestinians." He also compares Palestinian life as living in an open prison. This already puts a bias against the Israelis making the video a propaganda video as the viewers are being told who is to blame rather that being given both sides to the argument.

Out of the 10 people interviewed by John Pilger, 7 agree with his viewpoint shoing that he has a very selective method of choosing people to interview. Also he has carefully chosen to interview only 4 Palestinians and 6 Israelis. This shows Israelis backing up Palestinians and makes John Pilger's audience anti-Israeli. The people who didn't agree with him had their own reasons for supporting the Israelis, such as David Reisch, who is an Israeli settler and is unlikely to blame the people who gave him a home. Also his opinion could be manipulated, because he can't have had any experience of the suffering that the Palestinian have. In addition to that, anyone who disagrees with John Pilger's partisan view is made out to be a political or religious extremist and to sound crazy.

The images that John Pilger uses in the documentary are very strong images, such as Israeli soliders breaking bones of Palestinian refugees and killing them, destruction of Palestininan buildings and apartments, dead Palestinians and pregnant Palestinian women who are in labour and are being told that they cannot use the road to get to hospital, consequently leading to death in their child. However, it fails to show any acts of terrorism or reasons why these things have happened. The video does briefly mention that an Israeli school bus was blown up by an act of terrorism, but an acts of

Palestinian terrorism are said to be “desperate” and provoked. Other images that have deliberately been left out are Palestinian wealth and Israeli poverty. All of the images shown are only to back up his point and he has left out any of the other side of the argument. This is why the images are unreliable.

This source could help us to reach a conclusion about who is responsible for the refugee problem because it gives us a huge insight into the situation. It includes real images and footage and interviews with eyewitnesses who know what’s going on. Examples of Israelis blaming Israel add to the many other aspects making it an excellent source to look at for a Palestinian point of view. However, the interviewees were clearly carefully selected to support Pilger’s biased opinion. It leaves us wondering what the motives of the eyewitnesses were and why no supportive images to Israel were shown. Even points given by people supporting Israel were made to look unjustified. There is too much left unseen for this source to lead us to a firm conclusion.