

THE ETHNIC CLEANSING OF PALESTINE BY THE JEWS

Lecture by Lars Adelskog to the Aguéli Study Group in Uppsala, Sweden, on June 2, 2012.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND HISTORY AND THE INITIAL STAGES

Introduction

Of all the crimes of the Zionist Jews against the Palestinians, none was committed on such a massive scale as the expulsion of the majority of the Palestinian people from their homes, cities, towns, and villages. An entire population was uprooted by forceful expulsion as part of an elaborate plan. When the British Mandate for Palestine came to an end in 1947–1948, more than 1 300 000 Palestinians – Muslims and Christians – were living in their country. By the time the Jews completed the first phase of their plan to ethnically cleanse Palestine, they had expelled nearly 800 000 Palestinians from their towns and villages. Eleven Palestinian cities and towns were emptied of their non-Jewish inhabitants, entire neighbourhoods were razed to the ground. 531 Palestinian villages were emptied of people, after which the houses were blown up, the villages destroyed.

Indeed, the Jewish ethnic cleansing of Palestine, which began in November 1947 and the first phase of which ended in 1949, has never ended. During the 1967 Six Days War, the Jews expelled another quarter of a million Palestinians from the West Bank. To this day, Jews continue their crimes against Palestinians in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. In East Jerusalem, the eviction of Palestinian families from their homes has become systematic. In the West Bank, new Jewish settlements and outposts are constantly expanding: there are now 163 settlements and 98 outposts. For these, the Jews have stolen the best soil and water resources. The State of Israel has connected these settlements with a network of excellent roads, which the Palestinians are not allowed to use. The Jews have stolen 61 percent of the West Bank and turned it into a no-go area for non-Jews. Of their entire land, historic Palestine, the Palestinians have been allowed to keep only 5 percent. The 95 percent was taken by the Jews.

Suppose the Zionist Jews had instead got the idea that they really wanted Sweden as their “national home”. Five percent of Sweden is, for example, Värmland and Närke. Something like these two provinces would be what we Swedes would have had left of our country today, if it had been us and not the Palestinians who had fallen victim to the Zionist Jews and their evil designs.

This first part of my lecture deals with the prehistory and initial stages of the Jewish ethnic cleansing of Palestine. This part is limited in time to April 1948. It is particularly important to emphasize this period because the Zionists claim, in their propagation of lies, that there was no expulsion of the Palestinians, but that they fled as an unfortunate consequence of Israel’s “war of independence”, which broke out on 15 May 1948. In fact, it is easy to show that the Jewish leaders in Palestine were making plans for this ethnic cleansing much earlier, and that these plans were concretized into orders issued to their military units at least two months before May 1948. Early actions against Palestinian villages and towns were carried out as early as November and December 1947. During this earliest period, from November 1947 to May 15, 1948, the Jews succeeded in displacing no less than a quarter of a million Palestinians.

Some Facts About the Early History of Zionism

Zionism arose in the 1880s in the Russian Empire shortly after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 and the subsequent intensification of the conflict between Jews and non-Jews in Russia. Initially, leading Zionists differed on where in the world the Jews should establish their own state, and Theodor Herzl in particular was not committed to Palestine alone.

After Herzl's death in 1904, however, Palestine became the sole and fixed goal of the Zionist movement.

Zionism can be defined as the more or less completely secularized variety of Judaism. To call it the nationalist variety of Judaism is misleading, since Judaism has never been separated from nationalism, a racially based one at that. In fact, the nationalist and racial elements of Judaism are more important than the religious ones. This is reflected, among other things, in the fact that it is perfectly possible to be a Jew and not care about religion, not go to synagogue, whereas the few Jews who reject Jewish nationalism and its product Israel are ostracized from the community, called "anti-Semites" and persecuted.

Or as Zionist official Gerhard Holdheim put it in 1930: "The Zionist program includes the concept of a unified, indivisible Jewishness on a national basis. The criterion of Jewishness is thus not the confession of a religion but the all-embracing feeling of belonging to a racial community, held together by the ties of blood and history and determined to retain national distinctiveness."

The first Zionist invaders in Palestine arrived in 1882. They viewed the land not as already occupied but as "empty". They saw the Palestinians as not fully human, much like a farmer looks at boulders in the field or a city planner at old, dilapidated houses – obstacles in the physical environment that must be removed to make a truly human existence possible.

This seems to be related to the notion, deeply embedded in the Jewish Talmud, that only Jews are fully human:

"The property of the non-Jew is like a wasteland, like abandoned property. The Jew who first seizes it owns it." (Talmudic tractate Baba Bathra, fol. 54 b) "This is perfectly fair," says Rabbi Albo, "since God has given the Jews power over the property and lives of all other nations." (Sepher ha-Ikarim III, 25)

Until the British occupation of Palestine in 1918, Zionism was a combination of nationalism and colonialism: nationalism was the ideology and colonialism the practice. Jews made up no more than five percent of the population of the country. They lived in colonies and barely influenced the Palestinians, were almost unnoticed by them. However, the danger of Jews taking over the entire country was clear to some Palestinian leaders even before the First World War.

For example, the Palestinian member of the Ottoman Parliament, Said al-Husayni, warned on May 6, 1911: "The Jews intend to create in the region a state which will include Palestine, Syria and Iraq."

Christian Protestant missionary societies and the governments of European states competed to create a "Christian" Palestine, which they would wrest from the Muslim-dominated Ottoman Empire. An opportunity seemed to present itself after the defeat of the Turks in the First World War. It was at the end of the war, in November 1917, that the British Foreign Minister, Lord Arthur Balfour, promised the British Zionist leader, Lord Rothschild a "Jewish national home" in Palestine. Prime Minister Lloyd George was even more committed to the Zionist cause because of his Christian faith and deep distrust and contempt for the "Arabs" and "Mohammedans", as he called the Palestinians.

Many Marxist leaders also praised Zionism, seeing it as an effort to bring the socialist revolution to what they perceived as the backward Arab world. However, socialism was merely a protective colour painted over the base colour of Zionism: Jewish racial nationalism. This was evidenced by the fact that when Zionism moved into the active phase of cleansing Palestine of non-Jews in 1947–1948, it was the labour movement within Zionism, the Mapai Party and its leader David Ben-Gurion, who took the lead.

The Zionist plan to make Palestine a "Jewish national home" is inextricably linked to the plan to expel the non-Jewish indigenous population. A few quotes from early Zionist leaders will illustrate this.

Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, wrote in his diary in 1895: “We will try to drive the poor population across the border imperceptibly and create work for them in the transit countries but deny them any kind of work in our own country.”

In 1897, the first Zionist Congress was held in Basel, Switzerland. It established the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and called for the establishment of “a home for the Jewish people in Palestine”. At the same time, the founder of socialist Zionism, Nahman Syrkin, made it clear in a pamphlet that the establishment of this “Jewish national home” meant the expulsion of the indigenous population: Palestine “must be vacated for the Jew”.

In 1901, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) was established. Its purpose was to acquire land in Palestine on behalf of the World Zionist Organization. This land was to be used exclusively by Jews. The Jewish National Fund still exists today. In fact, 92 percent of the land of modern Israel is state property, administered by the Israel Land Authority according to regulations issued by the Jewish National Fund. These regulations prohibit non-Jews from living, working or starting businesses on this land.

In 1905, the American Jew and Zionist activist Israel Zangwill declared that the Jews must drive out the Arabs or else “wrestle with the problem of a large alien population”.

In 1917, Zionist theorist Leo Motzkin wrote: “Our idea is that the colonization of Palestine must proceed in two directions: Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel and the transfer of the Arabs in Eretz Israel to areas outside the country. The relocation of so many Arabs appears at first sight to be economically unacceptable but is nevertheless practicable. It does not take much money to move a Palestinian village to another country.”

Early Preparations for the Ethnic Cleansing Process

By the late 1920s it was clear to many observers that Zionism had the potential for violence. Until 1928, the British had treated Palestine not as a colony but as a separate state within the British sphere of influence, a state whose inhabitants would in due course be allowed to govern themselves on a democratic basis. In other Arab countries within the British sphere of influence, the principle was applied that different ethnic groups should have political influence according to their respective percentages. In Palestine, however, the British made a challenging exception: they wanted to give Jews and Palestinians equal influence, even though, according to the 1922 census, Jews made up only 11 percent of the population.

Thus the British did not apply democratic principles to the Palestinians, but Judeocratic principles.

It is necessary to recall that since then, the leaders of the West have always done so: always applied the principle “Judeocracy trumps democracy”.

When the Palestinian leaders then declared themselves willing to renounce their democratic rights and embrace the principle of sharing half of the power with the small group of Jews, the British proved unwilling even to concede this but instead favoured the Jews, who would have a majority in the Palestinian legislature and be connected to the members appointed by the British administration.

That was the last straw, and the Palestinians rose in revolt in 1929. After the rebellion was put down, the Labour government in London seemed inclined to meet the Palestinian demands. But the Jewish lobby soon succeeded in getting the British government back on the Zionist track. Thus, a new Palestinian uprising became inevitable. It broke out in 1936 and was fought with such determination that it forced the British to station a larger military force in Palestine than they had in all of India. Only after three years of brutal and ruthless warfare against the Palestinian villagers did the British succeed in putting down the rebellion. The British killed many of the active Palestinians, and leaders who survived the fighting were expelled by the British from their own country. Afterwards, the British disbanded the remaining Palestinian military units.

By killing or exiling Palestinian freedom fighters and disbanding their military units, the British rendered the Palestinians defenceless against the coming Jewish military takeover of their land.

By 1920, the Jews had formed their own army, the Haganah. During the second Palestinian uprising, the British military leadership allowed units from this army to participate with British forces in the fighting against the Palestinians. Orde Charles Wingate was a British officer whose religious beliefs made him an ardent Zionist. He trained Haganah units and led them in attacks on defenceless Palestinian villages or, as he said, “dirty Arabs”.

The Haganah also gained useful military experience as many of its members participated in World War II on the side of the British.

However, the Jews’ main vehicle for the ethnic cleansing and takeover of Palestine at this time was not the Haganah but the Jewish National Fund. It had been established by the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1901. Its first task was to buy Palestinian land on behalf of Jewish settlers.

Palestine was a traditional peasant society. The landowners often had large landholdings and therefore could not use all the land themselves but leased it out. When the land changed hands, the same tenants remained, as the new owner also needed them.

With the Jews, however, things were different. One of the most important leaders of the JNF was Josef Weitz, the head of the settlement department. His main goal was to evict Palestinian tenant farmers who were still living on and using land purchased by the JNF from absentee landowners.

Marxists have tried to describe Zionism as an offshoot of colonialism. However, this is far from the truth. Colonialism is not about displacing the indigenous population but about exploiting it. From the very beginning, however, Zionism sought to build a pure Jewish economy, pure in a racial sense. Jewish farmers, fruit growers, craftsmen, workers, etc. would make their Palestinian counterparts redundant, and as they became redundant, they would be expelled from the country.

The question remains whether one can understand Zionism or any Jewish movements at all by equating them with non-Jewish equivalents. One should not forget what the high priest of the Holocaust religion, Elie Wiesel, said: “We are different in everything. The Jews are ontologically exceptional.”

The Village Files

However, the impact of legal land acquisition by the Zionists remained limited. By the end of the Mandate in 1948, less than 6 percent of Palestine’s land was legally owned by Jews. Of course, the Zionists realized this long before. They therefore made long-term plans for an illegal and violent takeover of Palestinian land. An important tool for this was the village files.

For several years, a team of JNF officials studied all 1200 Palestinian villages. They photographed, including from the air, drew maps, sent Arabic-speaking agents to the villages, where they took advantage of traditional Arab hospitality and visited leading villagers in their homes, pumping all kinds of information out of them.

By the late 1930s, the village files were almost complete. Precise information on each village, its location, access to roads, the quality of the cultivated soil, water sources, main industries, socio-political composition, religion, the names of the mukhtars (the male leaders of the village), the relationship to other villages, the age distribution of the men in arms. Particularly important were data on the villagers’ degree of hostility to the Zionist project, that is, the extent to which they had participated in the 1936–1939 uprising.

Towards the end of the mandate, the collection of data became increasingly military-oriented.

Lists were drawn up of all Palestinians who had taken part in the uprising and of families who had lost a relative in the fighting. Particular attention was paid to those who allegedly killed Jews. The latter information was then used by the Jews in the ethnic cleansing of 1947–

1948 when they perpetrated mass killings in Palestinian villages.

The Jews even set up an Arab training village, where Jewish agents walked around in Arab dress, spoke Arabic, and behaved in ways they considered to be typically Arab. It was sort of a precursor to the Cold War spy villages, where Russian and American agents were trained to behave properly in the enemy's society.

The village files were finally updated in 1947 with lists of all "wanted persons". To qualify as a wanted person, it was enough to be a member of the Palestinian national movement, to have participated in actions against the British or the Jews, or to have a connection with al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the exiled Palestinian leader. When the ethnic cleansing was then carried out, such people were seized and killed immediately after Jewish forces entered the villages.

In total, about 2 percent of the inhabitants of the 1200 Palestinian villages were thus included in the "wanted" list, or 30 people out of a village of 1500 inhabitants.

For the whole of the Palestinian population expelled in 1947–1948, that is, between 750 000 and 800 000 people, the Jews planned to murder about 15 000 Palestinians in this way and then, to a large extent, actually murdered them in addition to the indiscriminate killing perpetrated when the villages were emptied of their inhabitants.

Yigael Yadin later stated that it was this detailed knowledge of each individual village that led the Jewish military command to conclude in November 1947 that the Palestinians had no one to organize their resistance. For the Jews, the British were the only problem. Were it not for the British, they could have crushed Arab resistance to the UN partition plan in a month, as one of them later boasted.

David Ben-Gurion's Statements on the Need to Expel the Palestinians

The intention of the Zionist Jews to completely expel the Palestinians is also evident from statements made by their supreme leader Ben-Gurion on several occasions.

David Ben-Gurion, born as David Grün in Płońsk in 1886 in the Russian Empire (Poland), arrived in Palestine in 1904, was Prime Minister of Israel from 1949 to 1954 and from 1955 to 1963. Ben-Gurion began as a trade union leader but soon assumed the leading role of the Jews in Palestine through his complete control of the Jewish military and security organs in Palestine. Not only was he the leader of the Mapai Labour Party, but from 1935 to 1948 he was also the chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and thus the leading Zionist in Palestine.

The supreme body of the Mapai, which was at that time the leading political party of the Jews in Palestine, held a congress of its supporters in Palestine and other countries in Zurich from July 29 to August 7, 1937. At this congress the expulsion of the Palestinians, euphemistically called "transfer", became the official policy of Mapai, which thereafter most of the party's top leaders planned and supported and none of them opposed on moral grounds.

That expulsion and transfer meant one and the same thing is evident from David Ben-Gurion's private remarks in a letter he wrote in the same year, 1937, to his son. In this letter, he wrote this about what would happen when the Jewish state was established in the future: "We will expel the Arabs and take their place."

In 1942, at a Zionist meeting at the Biltmore Hotel in the United States, David Ben-Gurion outlined his plan for Jewish rule over all of Mandate Palestine. From now on, the Jewish focus was on driving the British out of Palestine. The result was widespread Jewish terror, including outrageous bombings such as the one at the King David Hotel on July 22, 1946, which killed 91 people and injured 46. By the way, it was on the 65th anniversary of this terror attack that Norwegian pro-Zionist terrorist and mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik committed his atrocities.

On April 4, 1946, Ben-Gurion told a delegation from his party: "We will enter the empty villages and settle them."

On December 19, 1947, David Ben-Gurion wrote: "In every attack a decisive blow should

be struck, so that homes are destroyed and the population is displaced.”

On November 2, 1947, barely a month before the adoption of UN Resolution 181, Ben-Gurion told the Executive Committee of the Jewish Agency: “The Palestinians within the Jewish state could become a fifth column, and if so, one can either seize them en masse or expel them. It is best to expel them.”

After Israel’s declaration of independence on May 14, 1948, Ben-Gurion fulfilled the evil intention of expelling the Palestinians, saying: “We must do everything in our power to ensure that they never return.”

The Partition of Palestine

The partition of Palestine was originally a British invention. In 1937, it also became the official Zionist position. Secretly, they had quite different plans, as evidenced by what David Ben-Gurion wrote that year in a letter to his son: "The Arabs must go, but you need a suitable opportunity to make it happen, such as war."

To say that Palestine had a 'mixed population' is misleading. Even after decades of Jewish immigration, the country had a very clear non-Jewish majority: at the end of the mandate, 69 percent or 1 356 000, while Jews amounted to only 31 percent or 609 000, not even a third. Jewish legal ownership of Palestinian land was even less, not even 6 percent (5.8 percent).

When the British decided to leave Palestine in February 1947, they handed over the fate of the country to the United Nations, which in its turn handed it over to a committee, UNSCOP, which was just one of those incompetent committees which would follow the UN’s tragicomic path during its more than 65 years of existence. None of UNSCOP’s members had any knowledge of Palestine or any understanding of the nature of Judaism and Zionism. UNSCOP advocated partition, just like the British and the Jews. Palestine would be divided into two states, which would be connected in a kind of federation. Jerusalem would have a special status as a *corpus separatum* under international governance administered by the UN. Both states were expected to adhere to liberal democratic principles. On November 29, 1947, this plan was adopted by the General Assembly as Resolution 181.

According to the proposal presented by the United Nations in November 1947, Palestine would be divided into three parts. 42 percent of the land would belong to 818 000 Palestinians, who would establish a state containing 10 000 Jews. The envisaged Jewish state, on the other hand, would cover almost 56 percent and contain 499,000 Jews along with 438,000 Palestinians. The third part would be Jerusalem with 200 000 inhabitants, about half Jews and half Palestinians. Jews: 609 000 (31 percent); Palestinians: 1 356 000 (69 percent).

It was a gross injustice perpetrated by the United Nations against the Palestinians: giving away more than half of their land to the Jews, who made up less than a third of the population, as well as the vast majority of recent immigrants.

Moreover, the near-ethnic balance that would prevail in the Jewish state envisaged by the UN – 60 percent Jews and 40 percent Palestinians – was such that it would never be accepted by the Jewish leadership and would have been rejected by them. Instead, this ethnic balance was a sure recipe for ethnic cleansing. After all, Ben-Gurion himself had said, in a speech he gave to Mapai’s leading members on December 3, 1947: “There are 40 percent non-Jews in the areas designated for the Jewish state. This composition is not a firm basis for a Jewish state. And we must face this new reality with all its rigour and determination. Such a demographic balance jeopardizes our ability to maintain Jewish sovereignty ... Only a state with at least 80 percent Jews is a viable and stable state.”

If the UN had decided to give the Jews the territory they settled in Palestine, they would have received no more than 10 percent of the land. But the UN fully endorsed the nationalist demands of the Jews and also sought to compensate them for the so-called Holocaust.

The indigenous population of Palestine, like all other indigenous populations in the Arab

world, Africa and Asia, refused to share their land with a Western settler community. This demand for decolonization was accepted by the UN in an increasingly consistent manner since the organization was founded in 1945. Palestine remained the exception. Judeocracy trumps not only democracy but also international law since 1948.

Several Palestinian leaders at the time called for the International Court of Justice in The Hague (founded in 1946) to review the legality of the partition decision. This never happened. You do not need to be very advanced in legal studies to figure out how an unbiased court would have assessed the move to impose a solution on a country that the people of that country overwhelmingly and violently opposed.

Within the borders of the state granted to the Jews by the UN, they owned only 11 percent of the land and were a minority in every district. In the Naqab (Negev) they were only one percent of the population.

The injustice and illegality of the partition plan is also evident from the fact that the UN gave the most fertile land in Palestine to the Jews, as well as 400 of the 1200 Palestinian villages. Now, although the UNSCOP claimed that the two states, Jewish and Arab, would live side by side in peaceful coexistence and observe democratic principles, so that considerations of demographic and economic geographic balance were not necessary, the UNSCOP showed itself to be totally ignorant of the nature of Zionism when it gave away more than half of Palestine to a movement which, as early as in the 1930s, had openly declared its intention to cleanse the land of Arabs.

The worst thing about Resolution 181 was that it contained no mechanism to prevent this ethnic cleansing, which all Zionist leaders of note had promised to carry out.

By voting yes to the UN partition resolution, these member states were complicit in the crime of ethnically cleansing Palestine of non-Jews.

The First Arab and Palestinian Reactions

Immediately after the UN passed Resolution 181, the Arab leaders officially declared that they would send troops to defend Palestine. And yet during this time and until May 1948, Ben-Gurion and his closest associates did not feel the slightest concern that their future state was under threat or that they would not be able to both repel Arab attacks and continue the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. In public speeches, Jewish leaders conjured up horror stories of how Jews in Palestine were threatened by a “second Holocaust”. Privately and among themselves, they never spoke like that. This is evident from the letter Ben-Gurion wrote in February 1948 to Moshe Sharett, who went on to become Israel’s foreign minister.

The first Palestinian reactions to UN Resolution 181 were scattered work stoppages, demonstrations, and riots. These were both short-lived and ineffective.

The Jewish leaders were concerned about the moderate and restrained reaction of the Palestinians. They needed a pretext to launch their ethnic cleansing, which would be in retaliation for alleged Palestinian terror. But this terror did not materialize. All that happened was that Palestinian gangsters of the Abu Qishq gang attacked a Jewish bus from an ambush. But this was ordinary gang crime, which was not politically motivated and lacked general Palestinian support.

As early as December 1947, Jewish leaders abandoned the principle of *tagmul*, retaliation, and started talking about *yotzmah*, initiative. Initiative meant that they took action against the Palestinian civilian population without waiting for a pretext.

Palti Sela was a scout sent by the Jewish military leadership to investigate the military preparations of Palestinian villages. He noted the great difference between the kibbutzes, which the Jews turned into military outposts with armed and ready-to-shoot farmers, and the unarmed Arab villages, where life went on as usual, peacefully and normally. If these people were to be expelled, it could not be in retaliation for demonstrated “aggression”.

What strikes one again and again when one is studying at the reactions of the Palestinians to the enormous atrocities committed against them by the Zionist Jews is the desire of the Palestinians to return to their normal, peaceful life as soon as possible. The Palestinians are normal people. The Zionist Jews rather give the impression of being psychologically abnormal people, always and everywhere seeking trouble and strife, death and destruction.

Ben-Gurion's Advisory Committee

On October 7, 1947, almost two months before the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 181, David Ben-Gurion explained to his closest associates that since the Arabs refused to cooperate with the UN, there were no territorial boundaries for the future Jewish state.

At the same time, in October-November 1947, the Advisory Committee became Ben-Gurion's main decision-making group. This was because it was in this group that the decision would be made to disregard the partition plan and use indiscriminate violence to ensure a Jewish majority and exclusivity in Palestine.

The main culprit was, of course, David Ben-Gurion, the undisputed leader of the Zionist movement at the time and, from May 1948, the leader of Israel. It was at his residence that he gathered the group of his closest aides to discuss the plans for the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians and to translate these plans into concrete decisions and orders for the military commanders of the Haganah, Palmach, and Irgun.

This group of planners and decision-makers was called the Advisory Committee, *haveadah hamyeazet* in Hebrew. This name appears in one of the few surviving documents from the group's meetings. In another such surviving document, the names of all the group's members were listed but then crossed out by official Israeli censorship. However, Ilan Pappé, Professor of History at the University of Exeter, has managed to establish all eleven identities.

Count Folke Bernadotte Wrote "Expulsion", Not "Flight"

On September 16, 1948, the United Nations-appointed mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, submitted a situation report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in which he stated that "the departure of the Palestinian Arabs was the result of panic caused by fighting in their communities, by rumours of real or alleged acts of terrorism or expulsion." The UN report categorically uses the term "displacement", not "flight", and the Israeli intelligence reports reveal that in many cases the fighting was solely intended to trigger a mass displacement and that panic about massacres was deliberately spread to provoke a mass exodus. The evidence, supported by eyewitness testimony, confirms that many villages were bombed and that many civilians were indiscriminately murdered without any connection to military targets. The common denominator was to drive the indigenous Palestinian population into mass exodus.

The fact that Count Folke Bernadotte revealed the truth about the expulsion was undoubtedly one of the reasons why the Jewish terrorist group Lehi, also known as the Stern Gang, murdered him the day after he submitted his report. And which of these cold-blooded killers has the dubious honor of being responsible for the murder of the UN mediator? None other than Jicchak Jaziernicki alias Yitzhak Shamir, who less than forty years later became Prime Minister of Israel.

"The Palestinians Left Voluntarily"

Zionist propaganda often claims that the Palestinians were not expelled but more or less voluntarily left their villages and towns at the behest of Arab leaders to make way for an impending Arab invasion. This is a lie, which has been refuted by several scholars.

Erskine Barton Childers checked the transcripts of all Arab radio broadcasts monitored by

the BBC and the CIA in 1948 and found that “there was not a single order, call or suggestion for evacuation from Palestine emanating from any Arab radio station inside or outside Palestine in 1948” and that, on the contrary, the broadcasts gave firm orders to civilians to stay put. Steven Glazer, in his essay “The Palestinian Exodus in 1948”, also states that it was not the Arab but the Zionist radio stations that encouraged the Palestinians to flee by spreading information about the ongoing and upcoming war, sometimes highly exaggerated and sometimes outright lies.

Walid Khalidi provided even more evidence, including that Arab governments took measures to prevent Palestinians from leaving their country to ensure that they stayed to fight. For example, Lebanon denied residence permits to Palestinian men of military age on 30 April and Syria on 6 May 1948. Several Arab radio stations urged Palestinian residents to stay and discussed plans for an Arab government in the country.

In 1959, Khalidi published data showing that the story that the Arab governments wanted to evacuate the Palestinians was an invention of the Zionist Jew Joseph Schechtman, who in 1949 published two books in which “the evacuation order is first described in detail”.

However, it has become increasingly difficult to claim such lies since historians have published more and more facts about how the ethnic cleansing of Palestine was planned by David Ben-Gurion and his close associates and then carried out by the Jewish military forces. Four successive plans were drawn up: Alef, Bet, Gimel, and Dalet – named after the first four letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The fourth plan, Plan Dalet, was the one finally implemented.

Plan Gimel

In February 1947, the British made the decision to leave Palestine and hand over the Palestine question to the United Nations. Already by the end of 1946, Ben-Gurion had realized that the British were on their way out and began to work with his closest associates on a plan to be implemented against the Palestinians as soon as the British were gone. This plan was called Plan Gimel.

The purpose of Plan Gimel was to discourage the Palestinians from resisting the plans the Jews were making against them.

Specifically, Plan Gimel was about: killing Palestinian political leaders; killing Palestinian agitators and financiers; killing Palestinians who acted against the Jews; killing Palestinian officials in the Mandate system; damaging Palestinian transportation; damaging Palestinian businesses such as water wells, workshops, etc.; attacking Palestinian villages that might provide assistance to Palestinian resistance; attacking Palestinian clubs, cafes and other meeting places.

But after only a few months, a new plan was drawn up, even more extreme, comprehensive and detailed: Plan Dalet. Plan Dalet was nothing less than the systematic and complete expulsion of the Palestinians from their own land.

Plan Dalet

The three previous plans had not been so clear and detailed, and had only vaguely discussed how the Jews would deal with the problem of such a large non-Jewish population on the territory of the planned future Jewish state. Plan Dalet was unequivocal: the Palestinians had to go.

The official name of Plan Dalet or Plan D was the Yehoshua Plan. Yehoshua Globberman (1905–1947) was a Haganah commander in some parts of Palestine. The first draft of this plan from December 1947 contained clear references both to the geographical extent of the desired Jewish state and the fate of the one million Palestinians living in the area:

“These actions can be carried out in the following ways: either by destroying villages (by setting them on fire, blowing them up, and laying mines in their rubble) and especially those

population centres that are difficult to permanently control ... In the event of resistance, the armed forces must be wiped out and the population displaced to outside the borders of the state.”

The orders given to the Haganah’s field units were more specific. According to these orders, the country was divided into zones according to the number of brigades, which was twelve. Each brigade commander was given a list of the villages and neighbourhoods to be occupied, destroyed and whose inhabitants were to be expelled, with exact dates.

When Ben-Gurion’s Advisory Committee issued the order on March 10, 1948, 30 Palestinian villages had already been destroyed. Eventually, 531 villages and eleven cities and towns or parts of towns were destroyed and their non-Jewish inhabitants expelled.

Documents released from the Israeli Defence Force archives in the late 1990s make it clear that Plan Dalet contained unambiguous operational orders for the brigade commanders to carry out, contrary to what Israeli historians, including Benny Morris, have tried to claim.

Shulamit Aloni, an officer in the Haganah at the time, recalled how special political officers would visit the field units and stir up the soldiers by demonizing the Palestinians and invoking the “Holocaust” as justification for the upcoming operation, often the next day.

Another admission came from Yitzhak Pundak (born 1913), who in 1948 was a battalion commander in the Givati Brigade. He stated in 2004 in an interview with the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz*: “There were 200 villages [in the front] and they are now gone. We had to destroy them, otherwise we would have had Arabs here [in southern Palestine] as we now have in the Galilee. We would have had another million Palestinians.”

Summary of the First Phase of Ethnic Cleansing

The Partition Plan resolution was adopted on November 29, 1947, and the very next morning, November 30, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine began with a campaign of terror jointly carried out by the Haganah and the Irgun against the city of Haifa. This was followed in early December by attacks on Palestinian villages and neighbourhoods in Palestinian cities. Although sporadic, these Jewish attacks were damaging enough to displace nearly 75,000 people.

On January 9, the first units of the Pan-Arab Volunteer Army arrived in defence of the Palestinians and fought Jewish forces in small battles over roads to isolated Jewish settlements.

The Arab forces were totally inadequate, poorly trained and armed, so the Jews easily gained the upper hand over them.

Even at this time, the Jewish leaders realized that they had sufficient military forces to both defeat the Arab counterattacks and to carry out the planned ethnic cleansing.

Officially, the Jewish leadership changed the mission of its military forces: no longer retaliating for real or imagined Arab terrorist acts, but taking an active offensive of their own: from *tagmul* to *yotzma*.

In mid-February, Jewish troops managed to depopulate five Palestinian villages in a single day.

On March 10, Plan Dalet was adopted. Its first target was the Palestinian cities and towns. All of these had been occupied by the end of April. During this first phase, from November 1947 to mid-May 1948, when the last British left and the State of Israel was declared, a quarter of a million Palestinians were killed or displaced. Numerous massacres of defenceless people took place during this period – the most infamous being the Deir Yassin massacre of April 9, 1948.

On April 30, the Arab League decided to intervene militarily to protect the Palestinians, but not before the British left. On May 15, Arab forces attacked the newly declared Jewish state – but by then it was too late.

King Abdullah Wants His Share, Too

The deal with the Hashemite King of Jordan, Abdullah, proved crucial.

In 1924, the Hashemites had been expelled from their homeland in the Hijaz on the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula. As a reward for their service to the British during World War I, the Hashemites had been promised the kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan, created by the Mandate system. Initially, they were also promised Syria, but this country was taken over by the French, who expelled Abdullah's younger brother, Faisal. The British therefore compensated him instead of Abdullah with Iraq. Big brother Abdullah was unhappy with the poorer Jordan and set his sights on eastern Palestine, now the West Bank. He managed to strike a deal with the Jewish leaders to take over this part of Palestine in return for a promise not to participate in any all-Arab attack on the future Jewish state.

As a result, the Jews were able to take not only the 54 percent of Palestine that the UN Partition Plan gave them, but also 24 of the 44 percent that would go to the Palestinians. The Jews let Jordan take the remaining 20 percent.

This agreement with Jordan disconnected the strongest military force in the Arab world. Without the Jordanian army, the Arab region had no real ability to defend the Palestinians and thwart the Jewish plan to establish a Jewish state in Palestine at the expense of the indigenous population.

Military Resources

In October 1947, Ben-Gurion had written to the head of the Haganah, General Efraim Ben-Artzi, that he wanted an army strong enough both to repel a possible attack by neighbouring Arab states and to occupy as much of Palestine as possible, preferably the whole country.

On the eve of the 1948 war, the Jewish armed forces numbered 50 000 men, 30 000 of whom were in field units and 20 000 in auxiliary troops stationed in the various settlements. By May 1948, air and naval forces had been added, and the field units were equipped with tanks and other armoured vehicles and heavy artillery. The Palestinians, on the other hand, could not muster more than 7000 poorly trained, led and equipped men. By February, some 1000 volunteers from Arab countries had arrived, with another 2000 arriving over the next few months.

In May 1948, the Jewish army received large arms shipments from Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. This had been arranged through the cross-border cooperation of Jewish communists. By the end of the summer, the Jewish army had grown to 80 000 men. The Arab regular army also grew, but never reached more than 50 000 men. In addition, the British, who had been supplying the Arabs with arms, cut off all arms supplies.

On the fringes of the regular Jewish army, the Haganah, two paramilitary groups operated: the Irgun (Etzel) and the Stern Gang (Lehi). The Irgun had emerged from a split in the Haganah in 1931, and the Stern Gang had emerged from the Irgun in 1940. The Haganah, Irgun, and the Stern Gang functioned largely as a single entity during the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. For example, they were jointly responsible for the Deir Yassin massacre of April 9, 1948. It was the Stern Gang that assassinated UN envoy Count Folke Bernadotte on September 17, 1948 in Jerusalem.

Another important force was the Palmach, the special commando unit of the Jews.

In the ethnic cleansing operations, it was the Haganah, Palmach, and Irgun who took the villages, killing and displacing the inhabitants. These units then moved on to new targets, while the captured villages were occupied by the Hish, the field guard. Its units also committed serious abuses against the Palestinian civilian population.

What follows is a more detailed description of how the ethnic cleansing was carried out in its first phase: from the end of November 1947 to the end of March 1948.

November and December 1947

In December 1947, Jewish armed forces of the Haganah carried out the first actions against defenceless Palestinian villages. The pattern was as follows: they entered the village in the middle of the night, stayed for a few hours, shot at anyone moving outside their houses. A number of villagers were killed as a “warning”. The Haganah called this *hasiyur ha-alim*, “violent reconnaissance”.

Two villages were selected first: Deir Ayyub and Bait ‘Affa.

Deir Ayyub was located 15 km southeast of Ramle and had 500 inhabitants. It was attacked on December 21 by 25 Jews. Just before the Jewish attack, the villagers had celebrated the opening of a primary school for 51 pupils, which they had built with their own money and for which they had hired a teacher, whom they also paid with their own money. On February 7, 1948, the village was attacked by the British, who demolished two of the village houses. On March 6, the Jews carried out the major attack with the Givati and Sheva brigades. The entire population of the village was killed or expelled.

Two and a half years later, on November 2, 1950, three Palestinian children – twelve-year-old ‘Ali, his ten-year-old sister Fakhriye and their eight-year-old cousin Khadije – were at the demolished village. Jewish soldiers shot and killed all three of them as they stood in a wadi.

Bait ‘Affa (30 km north of Gaza) had at that time 184 houses and 812 inhabitants. The population was killed or expelled by the Jews on January 10, 1948.

This was followed by attacks on three Palestinian villages in the Upper East Galilee: Khisas, Na‘ima and Jahula.

Khisas was attacked in early December by Jewish forces in the middle of the night. They started blowing up houses at random. 15 people were killed and buried under the rubble of their houses.

On December 17, Ben-Gurion met with his closest associates. They considered the action against Khisas particularly successful and requested more of the same. The representative of the Jewish orthodox sect Agudat Israel who was present said, “We were told that the army had the ability of destroying a whole village and taking out all its inhabitants; indeed, let’s do it!”

The new tactics were also aimed at Palestinian cities. Haifa was chosen as the first target. Already on November 30, 1947, the morning after the UN resolution was passed, the Haganah and Irgun began a joint campaign of terror against the city’s 75 000 non-Jewish residents. Because the city’s Jews had arrived only in recent decades, they had built their houses higher up the mountain. From their heights, they rolled barrels filled with explosives or large steel balls, pouring burning oil and gasoline mixtures down the roads. As panicked Palestinians rushed out of their houses, the Jews fired on them with automatic weapons. In mixed neighbourhoods, the Haganah drove cars to Palestinian garages for repairs. However, the cars were filled with explosives, causing death and destruction. Dani Agmon was the Jew who planned and led these actions, which were carried out by so-called Ha-shahar units of the Haganah (the word *ha-shahar* means “the dawn”).

For his part, the Irgun was in Haifa doing his specialty: throwing bombs into Palestinian crowds, such as a group of workers waiting outside Iraqi Petroleum Company’s oil refinery to start the day’s work.

The next step for the Haganah was to test how the British would react if the Jews attacked a village and killed many of its inhabitants. The village chosen by the Haganah High Command was Balad al-Shaykh, where one of the Palestinians’ most revered folk heroes was buried, Shaykh Izz al-Din al-Qassam, who was killed by the British in 1935. The village was located 10 km east of Haifa.

Haim Avinoam was ordered to surround the village and kill as many men as possible, destroy property but refrain from killing women and children. The attack took place on December 31, 1947 and lasted three hours. The Jews left behind 60 dead Palestinians, not all of whom were men.

That the Jews spared women and children was a rule of leniency of the most ephemeral kind. At their next meeting, Ben-Gurion and his advisory committee decided that it would not apply to future operations. It would be too complicated to distinguish between men, women, and children.

At the same time as the attack on Balad al-Shaykh, a new and even more extreme method was tried in Wadi Rushmiyya, an Arab neighbourhood in Haifa. The Haganah entered, drove the inhabitants out of their houses, and then blew these up. This act can be considered the beginning of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian cities and towns.

The British looked away and pretended not to see these atrocities. Two weeks later, the Palmach attacked the Hawassa neighbourhood in Haifa. It was the poorest part of Haifa, home to 5000 Palestinians. Residents were driven out; homes and schools were blown up.

The British put down the two Palestinian uprisings of 1929 and 1936–1939. However, they could not take similar military action against the Jews in Palestine when they began their ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in 1947 and continued it in 1948. The propaganda of the “Holocaust” was an effective deterrent to the British.

These operations were accompanied by acts of terror carried out by the Irgun and the Stern Gang. The fact that they instilled such fear into the Palestinians was also due to the fact that the British were clearly withdrawing from Palestine and thus also shirking any responsibility for the maintenance of law and order.

In December 1947, Arab irregular forces had attacked Jewish convoys but refrained from attacking settlements. By November, Ben-Gurion’s advisory committee had already decided on its method: to retaliate for each such attack. But the Jewish leaders felt they needed to move to much larger and more offensive actions.

January 1948 – “the Long Seminar”

At the New Year 1947–1948, Ben-Gurion and his advisory committee met for three days at his residence for consultations. Especially invited was Josef Weitz, the head of the Jewish Agency’s settlement department and the person who had led the work of establishing the village files.

For this “long seminar” (the minutes are preserved in the Haganah archives), Weitz had prepared a memorandum, which he addressed to Ben-Gurion personally. In it he set out the ideas he had already formulated in 1940: “Transfer serves not only one purpose – to reduce the Arab population – it serves also another purpose, which is by no means less important: to empty land now occupied by Arabs and free it for Jewish settlements. The only solution is to transfer the Arabs from here to neighbouring countries. Not a single village, not a single tribe must be left behind.”

Weitz was authorized by Ben-Gurion and the Advisory Committee to form his own working group, the Transfer Committee, to submit concrete plans for the impending ethnic cleansing of Palestine the following week.

At the same time, Ben-Gurion had given military commanders the go-ahead to launch whole series of attacks on Arab villages unrelated to any alleged need for retaliation. Ben-Gurion emphasized that it was no longer necessary to distinguish between “innocent” and “guilty” – the time had come to hurt and kill Palestinians intentionally and unintentionally. Many years later, Ezra Danin recalled what Ben-Gurion meant by collateral damage: “Every attack must end in occupation, destruction, and expulsion.”

Yigael Yadin, Acting Chief of Staff of the Haganah (as of May 15 the Israeli army) recommended abandoning the term “retaliation”: “That is not what we are doing. This is an offensive and we need to launch preventive attacks, there is no need for any village to attack us first. We have not properly used our ability to strangle the Palestinian economy.”

His immediate subordinate Yigal Allon was even clearer: “We could easily have taken Jaffa

by now and should have attacked the villages around Tel-Aviv. We must carry out a series of collective punishments, even if there are children living in the houses.”

Even Jews complained about the Haganah’s increased aggressiveness against the Palestinians. On January 25, 1948, Ben-Gurion was courted by a delegation of senior Jewish officials from Tel-Aviv. There was an unwritten agreement between Palestinian Jaffa and Jewish Tel-Aviv for a kind of peaceful coexistence based on the fact that the two cities were separated by a strip of no-man’s land. The Jews of Tel-Aviv now complained that the Haganah had upset this delicate balance, entering no-man’s land and launching random attacks, killing Palestinian civilians, robbing others and destroying wells.

Complaints of such aggression and provocation poured in from other Jewish settlements near Arab villages and towns. These complaining Jews had not yet realized that the Haganah now stood for unprovoked aggression against Palestinians. A month later, these Jewish representatives had learned and no longer complained.

The fate of the Palestinian village of Lifta highlights the Haganah’s new offensive style. The pretext was the claim that a Palestinian gas station owner had urged villagers to attack passing Jewish traffic. Eliyahu Sasson admitted the claim was false, but Haganah troops nevertheless killed the gas station owner, who lived in Lifta. Villagers avenged the murder by attacking a Jewish bus.

The attack on Lifta began on December 28, 1947. Haganah troops peppered a café with automatic-weapons fire, while the Stern Gang stopped a bus and fired into it. Many villagers then fled. On January 11, the Haganah went in for a second time, displacing the remaining population and blowing up all the houses. Today there is nothing left of this village, which had 2500 inhabitants, Muslims and Christians.

Meanwhile, the Irgun was busy torturing captured villagers all over Palestine.

There were 30 Jewish settlements in the part of Palestine designated for the Arab state. The Jews thought the best way to incorporate them into the Jewish state was to build belts of new settlements between them, the same tactic Israel would use after the Oslo Accords and again in the early years of the present century.

In the first week of January 1948, the Irgun carried out more acts of terror than ever before. They detonated a bomb in the Sarraya House in Jaffa, the headquarters of the local branch of the National Committee. The building collapsed and 26 people were killed. On the night of January 6, the Semiramis Hotel in Qatamon, West Jerusalem, was bombed and another 26 people were killed, including the Spanish vice-consul. Sir Alan Cunningham, the last British ruler of the Palestine Mandate, sent a half-hearted complaint to Ben-Gurion, who refused to condemn the terrorist act.

On January 9, 1948, the first significant unit of the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) moved into Palestine, mainly in the areas designated by the UN for the Arab state.

After the long seminar, Jewish military operations began to shift more systematically from retaliation and punishment to ethnic cleansing within the UN-designated borders of the Jewish state. The Hebrew word *tihur*, cleansing, was used in every order sent by Haganah commanders to individual units.

Jewish forces also suffered losses. By the end of January, Palestinians had killed 400 Jews who had established settlements in the middle of Palestinian territories. Ben-Gurion called these 400 “victims of a second Holocaust”. At the same time, the Jews had killed 1500 Palestinians.

The attempt to portray Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular as Nazis was a ploy to keep Jewish soldiers from losing their nerve when ordered to indiscriminately kill Palestinian village civilians.

At this time, when the Jews were apparently facing a second “Holocaust”, they received large shipments of heavy weapons, especially mortars, which they delighted in deploying against densely populated Palestinian neighbourhoods.

It was also at this time that the Jewish chemistry professor Sasha Goldberg invented a new, more efficient flamethrower. There are many testimonies by Palestinians about the horrific effect of this weapon when used not only against property but also against living, defenceless human beings.

At the same time, brothers Efraim and Aharon Katzir were working on a special war gas that would not kill people but would blind them. In February 1948, they conducted 'successful' animal experiments and were already producing 20 kg a day. In June 1948, Efraim Katzir proposed using the gas against human beings.

February 1948 – “Invasions in Depth”

On February 9, Yigael Yadin called for “in-depth invasions” in the Palestinian areas. He specifically mentioned densely populated villages such as Fassuta, Tarbikha and Aylut in northern Galilee. The Advisory Committee first rejected the proposal but then approved it for areas in the Palestinian countryside.

These deep invasions started on 13 February and targeted several areas. In Jaffa, houses were blown up, in which people were still present. The village of Sa’sa’ was attacked, as were three villages in the Qisarya area.

These operations in February differed from those in December in that they were no longer sporadic but were part of a deliberate plan to give the Jews unfettered access to the Palestinian road network while ethnically cleansing the Palestinian villages.

The three villages in Qisarya were selected because they were easy prey. They had no defence. On February 5, the order was issued: expel the villagers and destroy the villages.

The village of Qisarya itself was the first. All villagers were expelled on February 15. The expulsion took only a few hours and was carried out so methodically that the Jewish troops were able to empty and destroy four more villages on the same day, in full view of the British troops stationed at nearby police stations.

The other village was Barrat Qisarya, which had about 1000 inhabitants. The Jews wiped it out so quickly in such a sudden and savage attack that both Jewish and Palestinian historians today describe its disappearance as enigmatic. A few houses were still standing in the 1970s, but when Palestinian research teams went to document them, the Jews immediately demolished them.

Similarly, the third village of Khirbat al-Burj is only vaguely known. The only remaining building is an Ottoman-era inn called Burj, an Arabic word meaning “tower” or “castle”. The building is now used by Jews for exhibitions, fairs, and family celebrations. It is called “a historic castle”, but not a word is officially said about the Palestinian village it once stood in.

Just north of these three villages is the Crusader castle of Atlit. The adjacent village of the same name offered a rare example of Jewish-Palestinian cooperation during the Mandate period. A Palestinian company had invited 500 Jews to live in the village with its 1000 Palestinian inhabitants and to work in salt extraction. But in the 1940s, the Haganah turned the Jewish part of the village into a military camp, from which the Jews threatened and harassed the Palestinians, causing most of them to flee. So much for Jewish-Palestinian coexistence.

The night of February 15 followed the attack on Sa’sa’. Some of the houses remain in today’s Jewish Kibbutz Sasa – even the name has been ethnically cleansed, deprived of its laryngeal pronunciation. The order to attack Sa’sa’ was given by Yigal Allon, commander of the Palmach in the north and a member of Ben-Gurion’s advisory committee, to Moshe Kalman deputy commander of the third battalion, who had committed the atrocities in Khisas. Allon explained that the village had to be attacked because of its location, “We must prove to ourselves that we can take the initiative”, he wrote to Kalman. The order was very clear: “You must blow up twenty houses and kill as many warriors (read: villagers) as possible.” The large Jewish squad encountered no resistance when it entered the village at midnight and began placing charges of

TNT on the houses. The Jews operated systematically along the village street and blew up 35 houses with their inhabitants – men, women and children. At least 60 people were killed, but there may have been as many as 80. The villagers buried their dead in a mass grave – the first time in modern Palestinian history.

Ben-Gurion liked the operation against Sa'sa' for the way it 'made the Arabs flee'. In his diary he wrote shortly after the attack on Sa'sa': "A small reaction [to Arab hostility] does not impress anyone. Destroy a house – that is nothing. Destroy a whole village, and you start to make an impression!"

At the Advisory Committee meeting on February 19, all those present reported that rural Palestinians showed no signs of wanting to fight or attack and were defenceless. Ben-Gurion's recommendation was "to continue terrorizing the countryside by a series of offensives".

By mid-February, only about 3000 ALA troops had entered Palestine. They were poorly trained and equipped.

Israeli historian Benny Morris lists a series of operations, which he claims Josef Weitz led without authorization from what he calls the political leaders. This is impossible. The centralized Haganah command authorized all expulsion actions. Before March 10, it did not always know in advance about individual actions, but it always authorized them afterwards. Nor was Weitz ever blamed for these ethnic cleansings, such as of the villages of Qamun and Qira, 'Arab al-Ghawarina, Qumya, Mansurat al-Khayt, Husayniyya, 'Ulmaniyya, Kirad al-Ghannama, and 'Ubaidiyya, all of which were villages he selected either for the quality of the cultivated soil or because Jewish settlers lived nearby.

March 1948 – Plan Dalet is Officially Adopted

The month of March 1948 began with the final and short-lived Palestinian effort to protect their own people. The Jewish forces were not yet sufficiently well organized to defeat this resistance immediately and everywhere. Yet this resistance was not serious enough to interfere with the Jews' implementation of their plan to ethnically cleanse Palestine. This is evidenced by the fact that when the Consultancy held its first meeting in March, it did not even discuss the Arab Liberation Army counterattack.

It was at the meeting of the Consultancy on March 10 that Ben-Gurion gave orders to update the previous plans for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, the Alef, Bet and Gimel plans. The result was Plan Dalet, which was approved by the Haganah High Command and then forwarded to the commanders of the field units.

The official name of Plan Dalet was the Yehoshua Plan. It was named after Yehoshua Globerman, a Jew born in Belarus in 1905. He commanded Haganah units in various parts of Palestine before he was assassinated by unknown persons in early December 1947. Only a few days later, the Haganah made the first draft of what became the Yehoshua Plan in March 1948.

According to this plan, villages would be completely emptied of their inhabitants either because they were strategically located or because they could offer some kind of resistance. Similar instructions were given for the cities and towns of Palestine.

By March 1948, 30 villages had already been emptied of their inhabitants and subsequently destroyed.

When Plan Dalet was implemented, the Haganah had at its disposal more than fifty thousand soldiers, half of whom had been trained by the British army during the Second World War.

Each brigade commander was given a list with the names of the villages to be occupied, destroyed and whose inhabitants were to be expelled.

In some villages, the inhabitants managed to put up enough resistance to save their village and remain there despite repeated Jewish attacks. But they were very few, exceptions to the rule. The rule was that 531 Palestinian villages and eleven Palestinian cities and towns were destroyed and their inhabitants expelled on the direct orders of the Advisory Committee.

Despite the claims of some Israeli historians to the contrary, the truth is that Plan Dalet consisted not of vague guidelines to brigade commanders but of clear operational orders. This is evident from documents released from the IDF archives in the late 1990s.

However, the orders given to the military commanders did not contain any details on how the destruction of the villages and the displacement of the inhabitants should be carried out. This was left to the military commanders to decide at their own discretion. Nor were there any instructions for them to treat villages and villagers differently, for example in cases where they completely renounced all resistance and surrendered themselves at the mercy of the Jews. Yet their fate was the same.

The official Israeli historiography describes April 1948 as a turning point. In this view, an isolated Jewish population in Palestine was threatened with extinction, a second “Holocaust”, but now turned from defence to offensive, having been nearly defeated. Nothing could be further from the truth. The general military, political, and economic balance between Jews and Palestinians was now such that not only were most of the Jews out of danger, but the Jews had, from the end of November 1947 to the end of March 1948, succeeded in completing the first stage of their planned ethnic cleansing of Palestine. If there was any turning point in April 1948, it was that it had turned from sporadic attacks on villages and expulsions of their inhabitants to the systematic, massive ethnic cleansing of Palestine.

PART TWO: FROM APRIL 1948 – PLAN DALET IS BEING IMPLEMENTED

The publishers of Ben-Gurion’s diary were surprised to discover that from April 1 to May 15, 1948, the leader of the Jews in Palestine seemed unconcerned about the threats the Jews faced, the “second Holocaust”, which he liked to refer to with pathos in his speeches, especially on this occasion. To his inner circle he spoke a completely different language, proudly listing the names of all the Palestinian villages his troops had just cleansed of their inhabitants. His only real fear was probably the isolated Jewish settlements in parts of the Galilee and the Negev, as well as some parts of Jerusalem, where a possible Arab army might come to the Palestinians’ defence. But these were – as Ben-Gurion and his cronies realized – only locally limited bare parts. The Jewish forces had the ability to seize many of the areas allocated to the Jewish state by the UN. “Seize” here meant only one thing: to massively displace the Palestinians living in these areas, both in the cities and in the villages.

Operation Nachshon – the First Plan Dalet Operation

The isolated Jewish settlements – which the British eventually approved – proved to be burdensome as tensions between Jews and Palestinians increased. Transportation to these places could not always be guaranteed. The road from the west to the Jewish colony in Jerusalem passed through many Palestinian villages and was particularly difficult to secure for Jewish traffic. Therefore, these Palestinian villages west of Jerusalem became the first target when Plan Dalet was implemented. The operation was called Nachshon and would set the pattern for future attacks on Palestinian villages and neighbourhoods.

Each brigade to be deployed in the operation was ordered to move to *Mazav Dalet*, State Dalet, in order to carry out Plan Dalet: “You are moving to State Dalet to carry out Plan Dalet” – so began each order to the units. Then the order stated: “The villages you will capture, cleanse, or destroy will be decided in consultation with your advisers on Arab affairs and the intelligence officers.” In the official Plan Dalet, the villages were given the alternative option to surrender, but in the operational orders to the field units there was no room for evasion : all the villages were to be cleansed of their inhabitants and then destroyed. The only differences between the operations against these villages were the different times: the Alexandroni Brigade, which was

to cleanse the villages along the Mediterranean coast, received its order at the end of April; the Golani Brigade, which was to clear the eastern Galilee, received its on May 6.

The Palmach units received their order on April 1. It read: “The main objective of the operation is to destroy the Arab villages ... and to evict the villagers so that they become an economic burden to the general Arab forces.”

Operation Nachshon was an innovation in other respects as well. It was the first operation in which all the Jewish military organizations sought to operate as a single army, thus laying the foundation for the future Israeli army.

Jewish soldiers involved in this operation often saw themselves as noble fighters against “Nazis”. The “Nazis” in this case were peaceful and unarmed Palestinian villagers, who only wanted to continue living as they and their ancestors did, and ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni and his para military forces, who came to the defence of these villagers.

The first of the many villages to be emptied and destroyed was Qastal, located on the last western hill before the final ascent to Jerusalem. All that remains of the village today is a plaque commemorating the battles that took place here against an “enemy base” – that is, the village.

On April 9, ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni was killed during the defence of Qastal. His death so demoralized his men that the other villages became easy prey for the Jewish forces. They surrounded, attacked and captured the villages. The villagers were then driven out of their homes and the buildings were destroyed. In some of the villages, the Jews employed massacres of the population. Among the most terrible examples was the village of Deir Yassin, which fell on the same day as Qastal, April 9.

Deir Yassin

The operation against the village of Deir Yassin, just west of Jerusalem, demonstrated the systematic nature of Plan Dalet. This small idyllic village had signed a non-aggression pact with the Haganah in Jerusalem. It was nevertheless doomed to be destroyed, as it was located within the areas that Plan Dalet predetermined to be ethnically cleansed. But since the pact with the village was in force, Haganah leaders decided to send Irgun and Stern Gang troops instead. One wonders whom the Jews deceived most with this treacherous procedure. In any case, the distinction between “friendly” and “hostile” villages was later ignored.

When the Jewish soldiers entered the village, they first peppered the houses with fire from automatic weapons, killing many villagers. Then the Jews gathered the survivors in one place and murdered them in cold blood, many immediately, others only after cruelly torturing them. Many women were raped by the Jews before they murdered them. On a number of pregnant women, the Jews plunged bayonets into the abdomen, killing two lives at once. About fifty children were mutilated by the Jews in front of their parents before they killed them along with their parents. In total, the Jews killed 250 people in Deir Yassin.

Fahim Zaydan, who was 12 years old at the time of the massacre, survived his gunshot wounds. He later testified:

“They took us out one by one, shot an old man, and when one of his daughters screamed, they shot her too. Then they called my brother Muhammad and shot him in front of our eyes, and when my mother screamed and bent over him, carrying my little sister Hudra in her arms – she was still nursing her – they shot her too.”

The Jews had lined up a number of children against a wall and then sprayed them with bullets “for fun” before leaving. It was among these children that Fahim found himself.

The Jewish leaders then proudly announced the high death toll in Deir Yassin as a warning to all Palestinians that a similar fate awaited them if they refused to leave their villages and flee.

Then four nearby villages were destroyed: Qalunya, Saris, Beit Surik and Biddu. The Haganah stayed only an hour in each village, driving out the people, looting the houses and then blowing them up.

The Killing of Palestinian Cities and Towns

The confidence that Jewish leaders showed in early April in their military's ability to not only take over the areas designated by the UN for the Jewish state, but to cleanse them of Palestinians, can be seen in the way they turned their attention immediately after Operation Nachshon to Palestine's main cities and towns. These were systematically attacked during the month of April, while UN agents and British government officials stood by and watched.

The offensive against the cities and towns started with Tiberias. When knowledge of the massacre in Deir Yassin and another massacre three days later in Khirbat Nasr al-Din (3 km southwest of Tiberias) reached the residents of Tiberias, many of them fled. Jewish troops fueled this flight by shelling the town and rolling down barrels of explosives from the hills outside the town.

As so many times before, when it came to the Palestinians, the British showed their worst side. First they prevented the ALA from rescuing the city, so that only 30 volunteers reached it. Then they promised to protect the city from the Jews, which of course they did not do, but instead urged the Palestinians to negotiate with the Jews for a general withdrawal. Tiberias fell on April 8.

But the British behaved even worse in the killing of the cities of Haifa and Jaffa.

The Ethnic Cleansing of Haifa

As mentioned earlier, the systematic Jewish terror against the Palestinians in Haifa began as early as November 30, 1947. This terror continued and worsened in December and January, displacing an estimated 15 000 – 20 000 of the city's Palestinian inhabitants. The city was shelled from the hills further inland.

The Jewish operation against Haifa was named *Misparayim*, a word meaning "scissors" in Hebrew. The intention was to use a pincer operation to isolate the city from its Palestinian hinterland. Haifa had been given to the Jews under the UN partition plan, again demonstrating the unfairness of the UN's approach – giving the only significant port city of the country to this minority hostile to the Palestinian majority. The Jews of course wanted this port city, but without its 75 000 Palestinian inhabitants. The British let them have their way, as we shall soon see.

As a port city, Haifa was also the last stop for the British before their departure. They had initially planned to stay until August but changed their minds in February and left in May. There were therefore plenty of British troops left in Palestine when the Jews started to ethnically cleanse Haifa.

In early April, the Jews intensified their terror against Haifa. On April 18, Major General Hugh Stockwell, Commander of the Northern Sector with a staff in Haifa, informed the Jewish authorities in the city that two days later the British forces would be removed from the places where they were stationed to form a buffer between the city's Jews and Palestinians. This buffer was the only thing that prevented the Jewish forces from directly attacking the Palestinian neighbourhoods, where more than 50 000 people still lived.

The task of attacking was given to the Carmeli Brigade, one of the best units in the Jewish army. Its 2000 well-equipped soldiers faced an ill-equipped force of 500 volunteers, mainly Lebanese.

The British withdrawal meant that Operation Scissors became Operation Cleansing the Leaven (*bi'ur hametz*). The name refers to the Jewish ritual performed just before Passover, when all traces of bread or flour are removed from houses. It is clear that the Palestinians would become the bread and flour. The ethnic cleansing of Haifa was also initiated on April 21, the day before the Jewish Passover.

It can hardly be said that the Jews used such symbolic allusions to make their religion look good to non-Jews.

The order issued by the head of the Carmeli Brigade, Mordechai Maklef, was: "Kill all Arabs you encounter, set fire to all combustible objects, and use explosives to open the doors."

When this order was carried out within the mere one and a half square kilometers in which the defenceless Palestinian inhabitants of Haifa were crowded, they fled in panic towards the port, taking no possessions with them. As soon as they fled, the Jews broke or blew up the abandoned houses and looted them.

Just a few days later, Golda Meir visited ethnically cleansed Haifa. She recounts the horror she felt when she entered abandoned Palestinian homes where cooked food was left on the table, children had left toys and books on the floor, and life seemed to have frozen in an instant. This impression of horror must have been very temporary, however, as she and her associates continued uninterrupted with the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. Golda Meir was one of the 24 Jews who signed Israel's declaration of independence on May 14, 1948. She served as Prime Minister of Israel from 1969 to 1974.

Early at dawn on April 22, the Jews drove the remaining Palestinian urban population down to the port area and crowded it into the old market area, which was a hundred meters from the port. They then shelled the dense crowd from the slopes with 75-mm mortars. The crowd then fled into the port area itself, pushing aside the police chain guarding the gate to it. The people stormed the moored boats, which of course were far too few and small to be used to evacuate such a large number of fleeing people. It is not difficult to imagine the horrific scenes that took place. Here is an eyewitness account:

"Men stepped on their friends and women stepped on their own children. The boats in the port were soon filled with living cargo. The crowding in them was terrible. Many turned about and sank with all their passengers."

When news of what had happened in Haifa reached London, Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin raged against Stockwell for his spineless and treacherous behaviour.

Safad

When Haifa fell, only a few Palestinian towns remained free, including Acre, Nazareth and Safad. Safad had almost 12 000 inhabitants, 9500 Palestinians and 2400 Jews. The Battle of Safad began in mid-April and lasted until May 1, when one thousand well-trained and well-equipped Jewish soldiers from the Palmach attacked 400 Arab volunteers, only 200 of whom had weapons. The city's entire Palestinian population was expelled.

Jerusalem

In April 1948, the Jewish attack on the western parts of Jerusalem inhabited by Palestinians began. The attack was preceded by mortar shelling of the residential areas, which had been going on since January 1.

The British, who at that time still had a strong military presence in Palestine, usually did not intervene when Jews engaged in armed aggression against Palestinian civilians. However, when Jews attacked the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Shaykh Jarra, a British commander decided to take action.

The order given to the Jewish forces was clear: "Take the district and destroy all its houses." The attack began on April 24, but the British managed to stop it after the Haganah blew up 20 houses. This example shows how different things could have been if the British had done their duty according to both the Mandate rules and the UN rules.

On the contrary, with regard to the rest of Jerusalem, the British played a terrible and treacherous role. They first disarmed the Palestinian townspeople, promising to protect them from Jewish attacks, but then immediately reneged on their promise.

One of the Palestinian leaders in the city, Dr. Husayn al-Khalidi, telegraphed to al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni in Cairo that the city's hospitals were overflowing with the injured and that they no

longer had cloth to wrap the dead. There was complete anarchy and panic in the city.

It only got worse. In the last days of April, the Jews launched an intense, incessant shelling. The neighbourhood of Qatamon fell; only Shu'fat held out and refused to give up. Izhak Levy, who was the Haganah's head of intelligence in Jerusalem stated: "While the cleansing of Qatamon was going on, the looting and robbing began. Both soldiers and civilians participated. They broke into the houses and took furniture, clothes, electrical equipment, and food."

When the Arab Legion finally intervened in the fighting in mid-May, the cleansing operations were halted. But by then, eight neighbourhoods in West Jerusalem and 39 villages in the Greater Jerusalem area had been cleared, the population displaced to East Jerusalem.

Acre

The coastal town of Acre (13 500 Palestinians, 3900 Jews) at the northern end of Haifa Bay proved difficult to subdue. Despite a siege and daily shelling by Jewish forces with heavy artillery, the town's inhabitants refused to surrender. Acre's weak point, however, proved to be its water source, the Kabri Springs ten kilometers north of the city, from which water was drawn by an aqueduct. On May 6, the local Red Cross envoy reported to its headquarters that typhoid bacteria appeared to have been added to the water. The report was carefully worded but still left little room for doubt about the perpetrators – Haganah. The Haganah blamed the typhoid epidemic in the city on overcrowding and poor hygiene. This excuse was rejected by British military commanders, military doctors, and Red Cross officials at an emergency meeting convened on May 6 at Acre's Lebanese Hospital, after the typhoid had already claimed 70 lives. Instead, they concluded that the disease was undoubtedly waterborne and had entered the city from outside through the Kabri aqueduct. What defeated the Haganah's "explanation" was the fact that the infection had affected 55 British soldiers. "Nothing like this has ever happened in Palestine," the British commander, Brigadier Beveridge, told Monsieur de Meuron, the Red Cross delegate in Palestine.

The typhoid epidemic and intense shelling eventually broke the morale of the Acre residents. "Surrender or commit suicide. We will annihilate you to the last man," the Haganah's loudspeakers shouted at the residents of the town. Most of them eventually obeyed the order. French UN observer Lieutenant Petite then reported that after the town surrendered to the Jewish forces on May 17, they engaged in widespread and systematic looting of the property of the displaced Palestinians. The looting included furniture, clothing, and anything else that the new Jewish invaders could use and the removal of which might discourage the displaced from returning.

A few months after the capture of Acre, Lieutenant Petite visited the town to investigate allegations that the Palestinians who remained under Jewish rule were being mistreated. Lieutenant Petite reported that the Jews had murdered at least 100 Arab civilians in Acre. In particular, they had murdered many residents of the new suburb of the town who refused to move to that part of the old town which the Jews had not destroyed and which they had now turned into an Arab ghetto. The new suburb was now forbidden ground for the Arabs.

What happened to Mohammed Fayez Soufi and four of his friends is telling. They had lived in the new suburb but were then forced into the Arab ghetto. When they tried to go to their old homes for food, they were arrested by Israeli soldiers who forced them to drink cyanide at gunpoint. Mohammed survived by pretending to swallow the poison. The others died within half an hour, and their bodies were thrown into the sea by the Israelis. Several days later, their bodies were washed up on the beach.

Forcing members of a disagreeable ethnic and religious group to move into ghettos and then killing them with cyanide – have we not been told time and again that this was a uniquely German and particularly evil activity, which thankfully ended in 1945?

In their war against the Palestinians, the Jews, in the case of Acre, apparently used both

biological and chemical weapons.

Later in May 1948, they made another attempt at biological warfare, this time in Gaza, which fortunately failed, thanks to the intervention of the Egyptian military. Four Jews, including David Horin and David Mizrachi, disguised as Arabs, had tried to add typhoid and dysentery bacteria to Gaza's wells. The Egyptians caught them in the act on May 23 and brought them to Egypt, where they were put on trial. The four well-poisoners were sentenced to death and executed by hanging three months later. No official Israeli protests were heard; Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion noted the incident in his diary without comment.

Many years later, Israeli scholars have clarified further facts about the Acre well-poisoning and the failed attempt in Gaza. According to war historian Uri Milstein, the typhoid epidemic in Acre was not the result of wartime chaos but a deliberate poisoning by the Haganah/IDF. Milstein even gave the name of the company commander directly involved in the operation.

Baysan

Around the time of the occupation of Acre, the Golani Brigade took the town of Baysan in Operation Gideon. Having successfully conquered the cities of Haifa, Tiberias and Safad, they were now very effective in their mass expulsions. They gave the population of the town an ultimatum to leave their homes in ten hours. The people refused and sought to organize a defence and endure a siege. The Jews shelled the town with artillery and also bombed it from the air. The city then gave up its resistance, and on May 11 the Jews took it over.

Jaffa

Jaffa was the last Palestinian city to be taken under British rule. Like many Palestinian cities and towns, Jaffa was an ancient city, in this case dating back to the Bronze Age. The area of Greater Jaffa also included 24 villages. The city had 17 mosques. Today only one remains, but all the villages have been wiped out. In late April, five thousand Jews began to attack the city, which was defended by 1500 volunteers. After three weeks of siege and fighting, the city fell on May 13. The city's 50 000 inhabitants were immediately expelled, with British so-called aid and mediation, although this did not mean that civilians were not indiscriminately killed. As in Haifa, the Jews literally drove people into the sea, as crowds tried to board small fishing boats, while the Jews shot at them.

The Cleansing Continues

On April 7, Ben-Gurion's advisory committee had decided at its meeting to destroy all the villages along the Tel Aviv-Haifa road, the Jenin-Haifa road and the Jerusalem-Haifa road and to drive out their inhabitants. Very few of these villages survived. All this happened before a single regular soldier from any neighbouring Arab country had set foot in Palestine. From March 30 to May 15, 1948, the Jews took 200 villages, destroyed them and expelled the inhabitants. This is a fact that must be repeated again and again, because it refutes the Jewish lie that the "Arabs" fled only after the "Arab invasion" began and to make way for it. Almost half of the Palestinian villages destroyed by the Jews had already been attacked by the time the Arab governments reluctantly sent in their troops on May 15. From May 15 to June 11, when the first ceasefire came into effect, the Jews destroyed another 90 villages.

"Our army marches forward and conquers the Arab villages, and their inhabitants flee like mice", wrote Josef Weitz with pride.

On April 14, Ben-Gurion wrote to Moshe Sharett: "From day to day we are expanding our occupation. We are taking new villages and we have only begun."

In some villages that were close to towns, the Jewish forces massacred many civilians to instill fear in the urban population and drive them away. They did so in the villages of Nasr al-Din near the city of Tiberias, 'Ain al-Zaitun near Safad and Tirat Haifa near Haifa. In all three

of these villages, the Jews murdered groups of men to trigger a mass exodus from the nearby cities. For the Jews, the word “men” had a broad definition down through the ages. Boys younger than ten years old managed to survive reasonably well. Boys older than ten were murdered with the adult men.

'Ain al-Zaitun

The 'Ain al-Zaitun massacre is the most notorious of the three. It has also been the subject of fiction: Elias Khoury's novel *The Sun Gate* and Netiva Ben-Yehuda's short novel *Between the Knots*.

Early on May 2, the village was attacked by the Jewish commando unit Palmach under the command of Moshe Kalman. His troops met very little resistance. The Jews shelled the village with mortars and then systematically showered it with hand grenades. At noon, Kalman's troops entered the village. The villagers poured out of their houses and gathered in a crowd, waving a white flag. The Jews immediately drove them into the village square. One of the villagers, Yusuf Ahmad Hajjar, told the Jews that he had surrendered like the others and therefore expected to be treated humanely. Moshe Kalman then punched him in his face and ordered him to randomly select 37 youths and children as punishment. The other villagers were crowded out of sight, and the 37 youths were tied up and shot.

A Jewish soldier, Hans Lebrecht, wrote a book in which he recounted his impressions of the massacre: “At the end of May 1948, I was ordered by the military unit I served in to build a temporary pumping station and divert the water from the source of the ‘abandoned’ village, 'Ain Zaitun, to supply the battalion with water. The village had been completely destroyed, and amidst the rubble were many corpses strewn about. In particular, we found many bodies of women, children and babies near the village mosque. I persuaded the army to have the bodies burned.”

Netiva ben-Yehuda was a member of the Palmach and took part in the attack on the village and the massacre of its inhabitants. In her book she puts the number of villagers killed at several hundred.

The Palmach later captured the nearby village of Biriyya and, as in 'Ain al-Zaitun, burned all the houses to scare away the non-Jewish inhabitants of Safad.

Obedience to the Superior Power

One of the more important signs that it was the Jewish forces that had the upper hand in 1948, and that the Jewish community in Palestine was by no means threatened with extinction, as Jewish storytellers would have us believe, was that several of the country's non-Jewish ethnic minorities decided to leave the Palestinian camp and join the Jewish one.

In early April 1948, 500 Druze soldiers deserted the ALA and joined the Jewish forces. However, they wanted the Jews to first stage a mock battle, during which they would surrender and only then declare their loyalty to Zionism. Such a mock battle was also fought near the town of Shafa al-'Amru (20 km northeast of Haifa).

The Circassians also decided to join the Jews, and 350 of them joined the Jewish forces, also in April 1948.

Druze and Circassians formed the core of what became the Israeli Border Police. It was a Druze captain who murdered the Palestinian schoolgirl Iman al-Hams (born 1991) in cold blood on October 5, 2004. After this heroic act, he was promoted to major.

Arab Reactions

When the Jews began capturing and destroying Palestinian villages in November 1947, the Galilee seemed to be the only area where Syrian military officer Fawzi al-Qawkji could have stopped these attacks. He commanded a force of two thousand men and carried out a series of

attacks on isolated Jewish settlements. But these were largely unsuccessful attempts, which could never reverse the balance of power. Al-Qawkji was also limited by the tactics he used: splitting his forces in an effort to defend as many Palestinian towns and villages as possible. Thus, he could never achieve local superiority.

Recognizing his military inferiority, al-Qawkji tried to negotiate a cease-fire with the Jews as early as January 1948 and continued to do so in February and March. At the end of March, he proposed a non-aggression pact and mutual adherence to the UN partition plan. The Jews, of course, rejected this. Al-Qawkji never conducted a major offensive until Jewish forces entered areas designated by the UN for the Arab state.

At the same time, small groups of Muslim Brotherhood volunteers arrived in Palestine from the south from Egypt. They were enthusiastic and self-sacrificing, but useless as soldiers and therefore unable to do anything to stop the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by the Jews.

The leaders of the Arab countries were full of empty talk about saving Palestine but did nothing. They had enough eyes and ears in the towns and villages of Palestine not to be ignorant of the disaster facing the Palestinian people. But they delayed as long as possible the inevitable military intervention. They knew full well not only that the fate of the Palestinians was sealed but also that their own armies stood no chance against the superior Jewish forces.

The Arab leaders left the decision to the Arab League, which also procrastinated. Only at the end of April 1948 did the Arab League decide to recommend a general Arab intervention. By then, 250 000 Palestinians had already been expelled from their homes and 200 villages destroyed, with dozens of towns emptied by the Jews.

It was al-Qawkji's defeat at Marj Ibn 'Amir (or Jizreel Valley) that convinced Arab leaders that they needed to send in regular forces. Al-Qawkji had failed to take the kibbutz of Mishmar ha-Emeq in early April after ten days of fighting. This was the only Arab offensive before May 1948.

The reaction of the Arab states was weak except for Syria. Syria also managed to persuade Iraq to train volunteers for action in Palestine. There was no shortage of volunteers, young men who for were angry at their governments' inaction.

The joker in the deck was King Abdullah of Transjordan. His army, the Arab Legion, was the best Arab army, and there were units of it dispersed inside Palestine. These soldiers were certainly willing to fight to protect the villagers, their homes and lands, but they were largely held back by their officers. Throughout the Jewish operations in 1948 until mid-May, when 250 000 Palestinians were expelled, the Legion stood idly by. It was in January that King Abdullah had reached his agreement with the Jewish leaders. In February, Jordan had quietly received the British government's blessing to annex the parts of the Palestinian state intended for the Arabs that the Jews did not seize. In return, the Jordanians promised not to operate outside these borders, i.e. East Jerusalem and what is now the West Bank.

On May 2, the final meeting took place between representatives of the Jews and Jordan that determined the limited role of the Arab Legion. Jewish representative Shlomo Shamir said that for the Zionists, the Arab Palestinian state designated by the UN had now shrunk to include only the West Bank, which the Jews were willing to cede to the Jordanians. The Jordanian representatives proposed at the meeting that Jerusalem be divided as well as the rest of Palestine. Shamir rejected the proposal, knowing that Ben-Gurion was convinced that his army was strong enough to take all of Jerusalem.

King Abdullah did everything he could to appear to participate seriously in the joint Arab effort for Palestine against the Jews. But in practice, his main objective was to secure Jewish approval for the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank.

For his part, Ben-Gurion never took for granted that the Jordanians would stick to the limited role he had assigned to them, but would try to do more. This reinforces the impression that he was confident of having sufficient military strength to fight the Arab Legion, if necessary, while

continuing his ethnic cleansing of Palestine unabated.

As it turned out, the Legion struggled to carry out the annexation, despite the agreement with Israel. Only a few weeks after the end of the Mandate, the Israeli army tried to seize parts of the West Bank. However, the Legion managed to defend them until the war was over. Thus, the Jordanian and also Iraqi forces saved 250 000 Palestinians from being murdered and expelled by the Jews. However, it would last only 19 years.

The Palestinian leadership was almost completely destroyed. Only a few leaders remained to fight against the Jewish takeover of their country: Emil Ghori, Ahmad Hilmi, Rafiq Tamimi, Mu'in al-Madi and Husayn al-Khalili, and above all 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, who tried to organize a resistance army and fought bravely until he was killed on 9 April. Similar attempts were made by Hasan Salameh and Nimr Hawari.

The Palestinian resistance was thus hopelessly inferior and futile. On the other hand, the Jewish myth-makers succeeded in spreading the story that the Jewish state almost miraculously escaped a "second Holocaust" at its very birth. By exploiting this fat lie, Israel then managed to secure massive support from Jewish communities around the world.

Diplomatic Efforts to Save Palestine

By March 1948, the United States government, through its representatives on the ground, had become fully aware of the widespread ethnic cleansing taking place in Palestine. On March 12, 1948, the U.S. State Department submitted a proposal to the United Nations to replace the Partition Plan with a five-year international trusteeship of Palestine, during which time both sides would negotiate a solution. As the US Ambassador to the UN put it: "The American position is that the partition of Palestine is no longer a viable option." UN member states liked this idea. But it was undone by the powerful Jewish lobby in the United States, which exerted a strong influence on President Truman.

British Responsibility

Whether the British knew about Plan Dalet or not, as soon as it was adopted by the Jews, they made it clear that they were no longer responsible for law and order in the areas where they still had troops stationed, and limited their activities to protecting those troops. This meant that the entire Palestinian people were now at the mercy of Jewish arbitrariness and indiscriminate violence.

Palestinians often say that the main responsibility for the disaster that befell them falls on the British. In fact, the British refrained from any serious intervention against the Jews as early as October 1947. In December 1947, they still had 75 000 men in Palestine.

The British actually participated in various ways in the ethnic cleansing of the Jews. For example, they provided the Jews with Palestinian title deeds and other important documents, which they photocopied before destroying them, as was the norm in the decolonization or rather re-colonization process, since the Palestinians would now have other colonial masters and far worse ones. Military supremacy is the first prerequisite for expulsion and occupation, but bureaucracy is no less important for the efficient implementation of ethnic cleansing, which involves not only depriving the people of their property but also distributing it as booty to the new masters. The destruction of title deeds and other evidence of the Palestinians' ownership of their land was an important bureaucratic element of ethnic cleansing .

The Betrayal by the United Nations

According to the UN partition resolution, UN representatives should be present on the ground to monitor that the partition took place as agreed. The resolution contained very clear requirements, including that the UN promised to prevent any attempt by either party to confiscate land belonging to the citizens of the other party.

However, UN representatives had only limited access to Palestine. The British allowed the ethnic cleansing to take place and, for the duration of the Mandate, blocked UN efforts to intervene. After May 15, 1948, however, there was no excuse for the UN's betrayal of the Palestinians, whose fate they had left in the hands of a group that, since the late 19th century, had clearly stated its intention to expel them from their own land.

The Phony War

Egypt sent only ten thousand men, almost half of whom were Muslim Brotherhood volunteers. They had been imprisoned but were released to take part in the war. They lacked any military training and were no match for the Jews.

The Syrians were better educated and their politicians more committed, but the small number sent to Palestine performed so poorly that by the end of May Ben-Gurion and his advisory committee had begun to consider extending the Jewish state into Syrian territory and annexing the Golan Heights.

The Iraqi troops numbered a few thousand and had been ordered by their government to follow Jordanian directives, that is, not to attack the Jewish state but only to defend the part allocated to King Abdullah, namely the West Bank.

For three weeks these Arab units managed to hold the areas allocated by the UN to the Arab Palestinian state. But they soon found that they had stretched their supply lines too far and ran out of both ammunition and fuel. They were also short of arms, as their main arms suppliers, Britain and France, had embargoed Palestine. The Jewish state, on the other hand, had willing arms suppliers in the Soviet Union and its communist satellite countries in Eastern Europe.

Finally, the Arab forces were poorly coordinated, which was due to the fact that the Arab League had appointed double-dealing King Abdullah to lead the joint effort.

The presence of Arab troops was never sufficient to stop the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by the Jews. The cleansing operations undertaken in the latter half of May were no different from those of the previous half of the month and those of April. Israel had sufficient military strength both to confront the Arabs and to continue the expulsion of the Palestinians.

It has been claimed that the Syrian army posed a real threat to Israel at this time, operating from May 15 into December. But it was only on the three days between May 15 and 18 that Syrian artillery, armour, infantry and aircraft posed any threat to the Jewish forces. A few days later, operations had become more sporadic and less efficient. After the first ceasefire, the Syrians had already begun their retreat.

It is also an outright lie, still told in Israeli textbooks, that the Jews tried to persuade the Palestinians to stay in their villages. On the contrary, it is clear from the orders given to the Jewish field units by their high command that they should cleanse the Palestinian villages of their inhabitants.

The Order Was: Tihur

The word most often used in these orders was *tihur*, which precisely means cleansing. From now on, in mid-May, Ben-Gurion and his closest men did not have to think about the formulation of Plan Dalet. It was executed as intended, and the brigade commanders needed no further direction from above. Instead, their thoughts turned to whether they had enough troops to fight a two-front war: against the Arabs and the one million Palestinians who had now become Israeli citizens under international law on May 15. Two weeks later, they no longer had such concerns.

One of the Jewish brigades, the Alexandroni, was tasked with cleansing the villages to the east and north of Tel Aviv and Jaffa, then moving north and, together with other units, starting to depopulate the Palestinian coast up to Haifa.

The order was issued on May 12. It read in part: "You will, between May 14 and 15, capture

and destroy Tira, Qalansuwa and Qaqun, Irata, Danba, Iqtaba and Shuweika, capture but not destroy Qalqilya ...” Within two days, the next order came to the brigade headquarters: “You will attack and cleanse Tirat Haifa, ‘Ain Ghazal, Ijzim, Kfar Lam, Jaba, ‘Ain Hawd and Mazâr.”

In all, there were 64 villages in the area between Tel-Aviv and Haifa, a rectangle of 100 km by 15–20 km. A small number of villages bravely resisted and were not cleansed until July. In the second half of May, the most important trophy was the village of Tantura

The Massacre in Tantura

Tantura was one of the largest coastal villages and had around 1500 inhabitants, who lived from agriculture, fishing, and work in nearby Haifa. Its day of destiny was marked on May 22, 1948, when the Alexandroni Brigade captured it.

The Jews attacked the village in the middle of the night from four directions, from the seaside in boats. The villagers were herded together and driven at gunpoint to the shore. There the Jews separated the men from the women and children. The latter were driven to nearby Furaydis, where the surviving men were able to join them a year and a half later. The several hundred men were ordered to sit on the beach and wait. Again, it is emphasized that 'men' also meant boys from the age of ten.

The person they were waiting for was intelligence officer Shimshon Mashvitz, who lived nearby.

When he arrived, he immediately set about selecting those to be murdered. He based his selection on the village files mentioned previously. A local informer (wearing a hood with eye holes) helped with the identifications.

It was not only these men and boys on the beach that the Jews murdered. Before that, they had been shooting wildly around the village and inside the houses.

This is how a Jewish officer described the killing in Tantura:

“The prisoners were led in groups 200 meters away and shot there. Soldiers would go to the chief and say, ‘my cousin was killed in the war’. The chief ordered the troops to take a group of five to seven men aside and kill them. Then a soldier came and said that his brother had been killed in one of the battles. For a brother, the retribution was greater. The chief then ordered a larger group to be shot, and so it went on.”

When the bloodshed in the village was over, two Palestinians were ordered to help Mordechai Sokoler, a Jew who owned the tractor used to bury the bodies. In 1999, this Sokoler stated that he remembered the exact number of bodies he buried: 230. “I put them one by one in the grave.”

The Blood Trail of the Brigades

The Alexandroni Brigade was followed by the Golani Brigade, which was tasked with attacking villages that the other brigades had somehow missed or not yet taken.

The orders the brigades later received were more explicit. They distinguished between *le-taher*, to cleanse, and *le-hashmid*, to destroy. In the former case, the population was displaced but the houses were left standing. In the latter case, the houses were blown up or burned and then mines were laid in the ruins to prevent the population from returning.

The Israeli military archives contain a request from the commander of the Qiryati Brigade. It is dated May 22, 1948, and in it he asks if he can use excavators to destroy the villages instead of explosives, as Plan Dalet orders. This request shows what a phoney war it was against the Arab states. A week into this war, a brigade commander has enough time to use a slower method to destroy the dozens of villages on his list.

Acts of Revenge

However, this did not always go well for the Jews. One mistake they made was to send columns of troops through a densely populated Palestinian area that had not yet been conquered.

More than 200 Jewish soldiers died as a result.

In May, Operation Ben Ami was launched in direct revenge for this loss. The villages of Sumiriyya, Zib, Bassa, Kabri, Umm al-Faraj and Nahr were targeted for a crueller version of the Jewish units' usual "destroy and expel" program: "kill the men, destroy and burn Kabri, Umm al-Faraj and Nahr."

This followed one of the fastest cleansing operations in one of the most densely populated parts of Palestine. Within 29 hours, almost every Palestinian village in the north-western Galilee, all located within the proposed Arab state, was destroyed. In other words, it took Jewish troops little more than 24 hours to turn an area that was 96 percent Palestinian and only 4 percent Jewish into an almost exclusively Jewish area. These were also large villages: Kabri had 1500 inhabitants, Zib 2000 and Bassa 3000.

Nizar al-Hanna recounts what his grandmother witnessed at the massacre in Bassa (19 km north of Acre):

"My maternal grandmother was a teenage girl when the Israeli troops entered Bassa and ordered all the young men to line up, after which they were murdered in front of one of the churches. My grandmother watched as two of her brothers, one 21 and the other 22 and recently married, were murdered by the Haganah."

By the end of May it was clear that no external power could stop the Jewish ethnic cleansing of Palestine, that the only thing the invading Arab forces could do was to attack isolated Jewish settlements, but that beyond that they were as weak and inefficient as the first irregular and paramilitary Arab forces.

This realization put the Jews in an agitated state of mind, which was clearly reflected in the orders given to the twelve Israeli brigades to start considering occupying the West Bank, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

On May 24, 1948, Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary:

"We will establish a Christian state in Lebanon, whose southern border will be the Litani River. We will break Transjordan, bomb Amman and destroy its army, and then Syria will fall, and if Egypt still continues to fight, we will bomb Port Said, Alexandria and Cairo. This will be the revenge for what they – the Egyptians, Arameans and Assyrians – did to our ancestors in biblical times."

On the same day, the Israeli army received a large delivery of modern artillery from the communist Eastern Bloc. Israel now had more powerful artillery than the Arab armies combined.

The Cleansing was Intensified in June

In June, UN-appointed mediator Count Folke Bernadotte made efforts to bring about a ceasefire. Meanwhile, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine continued unabated. On June 5, Ben-Gurion noted in his diary: "Today we occupied Yibneh – there was no serious resistance – and Qaqun. Here the cleansing operation (*tihur*) continues, have not heard about the other fronts."

At the end of May, Ben-Gurion showed in his diary a renewed interest in the ethnic cleansing. He made lists of the names of the conquered villages, the number of people displaced from them, the areas of land.

On June 7, he called a meeting in his own house to investigate how much money had been looted from "Arab" banks, how many orchards and other assets had been seized. His Minister of Finance, Eliezer Kaplan, persuaded him to authorize the seizure of all Palestinian property so far taken, in order to prevent the quarrels over the spoils which were already threatening to break out between the rapacious Jews.

The First Ceasefire

UN-appointed mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, managed to negotiate a first truce. It

entered into force on June 8 (in practice June 11) and was to last four weeks. During the truce, the Israeli army engaged in massive destruction of already empty Palestinian villages.

In June, the Israeli armed forces received a rather large delivery of new airplanes. From July onwards, the Jews used aircraft ruthlessly in their ethnic cleansing operations. By shooting and bombing civilian villagers from the air, they drove them into mass exodus.

In early June, Ben-Gurion was content to focus on the Upper Galilee up to the border with Lebanon. The area was defended by the ALA, two thousand strong, but inefficient due to the lack of weapons and ammunition. The Galilee was thus wide open to a Jewish attack. But starting in June and increasingly in the following months, the villagers themselves offered resistance to the Jews. This is why today there are still Palestinian villages in the Galilee, unlike Marj Ibn 'Âmer, the coastal area, the inner plains and the northern Naqab (Negev).

The desperate courage of the Palestinian villagers, meanwhile, made the Jews even more brutal, more determined than ever to indulge in indiscriminate mass killing. One of the first villages to suffer this treatment was Mi'âr.

Taha Muhammad 'Alî was seventeen years old on June 20, 1948, when Jewish soldiers entered the village of Mi'âr. He later became a famous poet, whose poems were translated into Hebrew, English and French. He witnessed how, at sunset, the Jewish soldiers began to shoot indiscriminately at the Palestinian farmers who were still working in their fields in the evening. Tired of this bloody fun, the Jews began to destroy the village houses. Forty people were killed on this occasion.

Safuriyya was one of the first villages the Jews air-bombed. In July 1948 many more villages would be terrorized in this way, but in June it was still unusual. The aerial bombings were followed by ground attacks, not only on the village but also on the caves where the women and children of the village had taken refuge. One survivor, Abu Salim, says: "*The women and children were soon hit by the Jews, and my mother was killed by the troops. She was trying to get to the Church of the Annunciation. The Jews dropped a bomb and she was hit in the stomach.*" Many of the villagers, including Abu Salim's father and wife, fled to the nearby village of Reina, where a Christian family took care of them, feeding and clothing them. After a few months, several villagers sought to return to their village under the cover of night to collect clothes left behind. Jewish soldiers over raided them and shot them on the spot.

Between the Ceasefires

On July 8, the first ceasefire had expired. It took UN mediator Count Folke Bernadotte ten days to negotiate a new truce, which came into force on July 18. One might think that the ceasefire was important for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by the Jews, that when their military forces were not needed to fight the Arabs they could devote themselves more efficiently to emptying the Palestinian towns and villages of their inhabitants. In fact, it was rather the opposite: it proved easier for the Jews to fight the Arabs and carry out large-scale ethnic cleansing operations at the same time.

The clearest example of this is the expulsion of the population of the two Palestinian towns of Ludd and Ramle, a total of 70 000 people. These expulsions were carried out by the Jews between the two ceasefires.

The two ceasefires therefore provided some protection for the Palestinians, albeit insufficient. These ceasefires were effected thanks to Count Folke Bernadotte. Appointed by the UN as a mediator, he arrived in Palestine on May 20. He remained there until September 17, when he was assassinated by Jewish terrorists of Lehi, or the Stern Gang, led by Jicchak Jaziernicki, better known as Yitzhak Shamir. In the years 1983–1984 and 1986–1992 he was Prime Minister of Israel.

Count Bernadotte was murdered because he dared to put forward a proposal to re-divide Palestine and to demand the unconditional right of return of the displaced persons. He had

already demanded the repatriation of the displaced during the first truce, and when he repeated this demand in the report he submitted to the UN on September 16, the Jews murdered him the following day.

However, on November 4, the UN adopted Count Bernadotte's demand for the displaced persons' right of return in its Resolution 194.

In the coastal area south of Haifa, three Palestinian villages remained after ten days of fighting between the two ceasefires. Ben-Gurion ordered the attacks to continue even after the ceasefire came into effect. The Jews lied that the operation against the three villages was just a normal police operation and therefore called the operation *Shoter*, policeman, in Hebrew.

Operation *Polisman* began on July 25, exactly one week into the second ceasefire. The largest of the three villages, Ijzim, with three thousand inhabitants, also held out the longest. A small number of armed villagers held out against hundreds of Jewish soldiers. The Jews then launched air strikes against the village. After the village fell on July 28, Jewish intelligence officers stated: "our forces collected 200 bodies, many of them civilians killed by our aerial bombing."

Operation Dani

Operation Dani was the attack on and cleansing of the two Palestinian towns of Ludd and Ramle, located on the road between Jaffa and Jerusalem. Ludd had about 50 000 inhabitants, Ramle 20 000.

Ludd was known as the town of mosques. Several of these mosques were famous throughout the Muslim world. For example, the Great Mosque of al-'Umari, which was built during the reign of Sultan Rukn al-Din Baybars, who reclaimed the city from the Crusaders. Another well-known mosque was the town's main mosque, the Dahmash, which accommodated 800 worshippers.

On July 10, Ben-Gurion appointed Yigal Allon to lead the attack and Yitzhak Rabin as his deputy. Allon first ordered the aerial bombing of the town, the first Palestinian town to be so targeted. This was followed by a ground attack directly on the town centre. The few defenders of the town took shelter in the Dahmash Mosque. After a few hours of fighting, they surrendered to be murdered inside the mosque, 176 men. In the streets closest to the mosque, townspeople then counted 250 dead men, women and children. This was on July 13. The next day, Jewish soldiers went from house to house, forced the residents out and drove them out of the city towards the West Bank. They were not allowed to take any belongings with them. There were nearly 50 000 people, half of whom were already displaced from nearby villages.

In 1998, Spiro Munayar told sociologist Salim Tamari about what he witnessed in Ludd on that terrible day in July 1948. Munayar was a young doctor at the time, working in the town's hospital with Dr. George Habash, who would go on to found the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He saw the capture of the town by the Jewish troops, the massacre at the mosque, how the Jewish troops entered the houses and pulled out the families, without sparing a single one. He saw how the Jews then looted the houses and robbed the people of their possessions, before ordering them to march to the West Bank, on one of the hottest days of the year in one of the hottest places in Palestine.

From his hospital workplace, he recalled the endless line of dead bodies and still-living severely wounded brought in from the slaughter scenes. He recounted how the soldiers set up roadblocks on all the roads leading east, stopping the refugees and searching them, especially the women, for jewelry and other valuables, necklaces, bracelets, rings and anything that might be hidden in their clothes.

A few Western journalists were allowed to attend the ethnic cleansing of Ludd. Keith Wheeler of the *Chicago Sun Times* was one of them. He wrote about the progress of the Jewish troops: "Practically everything in their way died. Riddled corpses lay by the roadside." Another, Kenneth Bilby, of the *New York Herald Tribune*, made no effort to hide his enthusiasm: "the

corpses of Arab men, women and even children strewn about in the wake of the ruthlessly brilliant charge.”

As Jonas De Geer once pointed out in Swedish journal *Salt*, the only two politically correct attitudes to the Jews are pity or admiration. It was admiration that Mr. Bilby expressed. Even in their ruthlessness towards women and children, the Jews are – simply brilliant.

The British *Economist* journalist noted: “The Arab refugees were systematically stripped of all their belongings before they were sent on their trek to the frontier. Household belongings, stores, clothing, all had to be left behind.”

The Jews had attacked the nearby town of Ramle two days earlier, on July 12, but only took it after Ludd. Terrified by what had happened in Ludd, the rulers of the town sought an agreement with the Jews to allow the population to stay in their town. The Jews seemed to agree. The Jewish troops entered the city on July 14 and immediately began searching for and arresting individuals. Three thousand of them were then taken out of the city to a nearby prison camp. On the same day they began to loot the city. The commander of this operation was Yitzhak Rabin, who later became Prime Minister of Israel. He recalled that Ben-Gurion summoned him to his office to discuss the fate of both Ludd and Ramle: “Yigal Allon asked, what should we do with the population? Ben-Gurion waved his hand in a gesture that said: ‘Drive them out!’”

The people of both cities were forced to march without food and water as far as the West Bank, with many dying of hunger and thirst on the way. Of course, the youngest children, the elderly, the sick and pregnant women, many of whom went into labor, often prematurely, suffered particularly badly. None of the children born during the march survived. They could not even be buried; their tiny bodies were left by the side of the road, only partially covered by turf.

The Arab Legion, having had to abandon the twin towns of Ludd and Ramle, defended the Latrun area in return, and so tenaciously that the battle for it was engraved in the collective memory of the Jews as their greatest defeat of the war. The bitter memory of this failure surfaced in 1967, when Israel occupied the area. In revenge for the 1948 defeat, the Jews expelled the inhabitants of three of the villages in the Latour Valley: Beit Nuba, Yalu and Imwas.

The second truce was violated as soon as it came into force. During its first ten days, Jewish forces took particularly important villages north of Haifa. Damun, Imwas, Tamra, Qabul and Mi’âr were thus taken. This completed the capture of Western Galilee.

The Dawayima Massacre

The Dawayima massacre was probably the worst of the entire ethnic cleansing of Palestine. This village was located 18 km northwest of al-Khalil (Hebron).

A United Nations report of June 14, 1949, explains why this massacre went unnoticed, even though it was worse than the one at Deir Yassin: “The Arab Legion (the army controlling the area) feared that if news of this were to spread, it would have the same effect on the morale of the peasant population as Deir Yassin did, namely to create a new wave of Arab refugees.”

It was probably the Jordanians who feared being accused of not intervening. The UN report was mainly based on the testimony of the mukhtar (village elder). His name was Hassan Mahmoud Ihdeib and he said the following:

Half an hour after midday prayers on Friday, October 28, 1948, he heard gunfire from the western part of the village. When he went to investigate, he saw about twenty armoured vehicles approaching on the road from Qubeiba, a second squad approaching on the road from Beit Jibrin, and still other armoured vehicles on the road from Mafkhar. When the armoured vehicles came within 500 meters of the village, the troops opened fire with automatic weapons and mortars and attacked the village in a semi-circular motion, surrounding the village from the

west, north, and south. A section of the armoured vehicles rolled into the village, while the troops fired automatic weapons. Jewish soldiers then jumped out of the vehicles and spread out in the streets of the village, shooting indiscriminately at everyone they saw. The villagers began to flee the village, with the elderly seeking shelter in the mosque and others in a nearby cave called Iraq al Zagh. The shooting lasted about an hour. The following day, the village elder gathered those who had fled and agreed to return to the village to find out what had happened to those who had stayed behind. He said that in the mosque there were about sixty dead, mostly old men, including his own father. He also saw a large number of bodies in the streets, men, women and children. He then went to the cave of Iraq al Zagh. There he found the bodies of 85 people, again men, women and children. The mukhtar then conducted a census of the inhabitants of the village. It turned out that 455 people were missing, 280 men and 175 women and children. This was only the loss of the village's original inhabitants, but the village had received about four thousand refugees, and the loss of human life among them was impossible to determine. The mukhtar emphasized that the village had not been ordered to surrender and that the Jewish troops had met no resistance.

Even the Jewish soldiers who took part in the massacre recounted horrific scenes: babies with their skulls smashed, women raped and burned in their houses, men stabbed to death. One woman, carrying a newborn baby, was ordered by the Jews to look after them at their meals. They forced her to serve them in this way one day, after which they shot both her and the child.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

After the decision on ethnic cleansing was made, it took only six months to implement it. By the time it was completed, more than half of Palestine's original population, nearly 800 000 people, had been uprooted, killed, or driven from their homes. 531 villages had been wiped out and eleven cities and towns had been emptied of their inhabitants. Both the plan and its systematic implementation are a clear case of ethnic cleansing, now defined under international law as a crime against humanity.

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 states without the slightest ambiguity that "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive."

Nor can the Zionist Jews get away with excuses such as "that was so long ago". There is no statute of limitations for crimes against humanity. Furthermore, it is no less serious a crime to actively prevent displaced persons and their children from returning home, if they so wish.

Moreover, it must be pointed out that the phrase, "that was so long ago", is not exactly what you hear from the Zionists when they are talking about the "Holocaust".

During the expulsion of the Palestinians, the Zionist Jews committed many other crimes. The displaced were not allowed to take any of their possessions with them. The Jews wanted to steal these possessions. Just one example: after the expulsion of the 50 000 inhabitants of the Palestinian town of Ludd in July 1948, the Israeli army sent 1700 truckloads of stolen Palestinian belongings out of the empty town.

In most cases, the Jews carried out these mass expulsions in conjunction with the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians. Palestinians who defied the ban on taking their belongings during the expulsion were also killed.

Rapes of Palestinian women and girls were also common. Ben-Gurion recorded many such cases in his diary. One of the most gruesome involved a twelve-year-old girl, who was captured on August 12, 1949 near Beit Hanun in northern Gaza and then held as a sex slave by a platoon of Israeli soldiers. They cut off her hair and then took turns raping her for several days before murdering her.

The Zionist Jews were determined to establish a state exclusively for Jews at the expense of

the original inhabitants, the Arab Palestinians. David Ben-Gurion himself said, “What Zionist propaganda could not accomplish in years, disaster had accomplished overnight.”

This deed, which is the human act that has most profoundly transformed modern Palestine, has been systematically denied ever since it was committed, and is not even today officially recognized as a historical fact, much less as a crime that must be prosecuted and, as far as possible, redressed.

It was not as Zionist propaganda claimed then, and continues to claim now, that the Jews’ quest to establish their state “tragically but inevitably” led to the expulsion of “parts” of the indigenous population. On the contrary, it was the intention from the outset to expel the Palestinians from their own land in order to establish in the void left by them as far as possible an ethnically pure Jewish state.

There is also reason to criticize certain Palestinian perceptions of the Jewish ethnic cleansing of Palestine, in particular the term *nakba* and its concept of “accident” or “catastrophe”. It was not an impersonal “catastrophe” that befell the Palestinians, not a natural phenomenon unaffected and uncontrollable by human decisions and actions, which therefore has no responsible perpetrators. It was not like a volcanic eruption, which certainly forces people out of their homes, destroys their property and even those who cannot reach safety. But we cannot put a volcano on trial, we cannot punish lava flows and demand compensation. This was no such disaster. It was a crime deliberately perpetrated by known people in positions of responsibility. It was man-made injustice that can still be redressed in essential respects, namely by forcing the Zionist Jews to give the Palestinians their land back in its entirety.

All such ideas, representations, decisions, and actions concerning Palestine and the Palestinians that ignore the fact that an entire nation has been deprived of its land must be misguided. This includes, of course, the so-called peace process. There can be no lasting peace without justice, especially justice that can still be achieved. The Jews must be made to realize that they must seek their so-called national home elsewhere, where they do not trample on any other people – or preferably abandon that idea altogether.

Main sources used: Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2007); Issa Nakhleh, *Encyclopedia of the Palestine Problem*, vol I (1991).