

## 2 Revisiting the Palestinian exodus of 1948

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Over the years, the history of the Arab–Zionist conflict has undergone interpretative innovation. The massive declassification of archival documentation in the West and in Israel made possible the historiographic breakthrough of the late 1980s that is now commonly called the “new historiography.” And it is the further declassificatory initiative in Israel today that compels a fresh look at much of what was published in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I am speaking specifically of the opening of certain private and institutional papers, of the protocols of Israel’s Cabinet meetings between 1948 and 1953, with additional years now in the works, and, most significantly, of the massive declassification of the documentation stored in the Haganah Archive in Tel Aviv and the Israel Defense Forces and Defense Ministry Archive (IDFA) in Givatayim. A certain amount of material is still being held back, but on average more than 95 percent of each file is being made available. The archive’s small staff cannot meet the academic community’s needs and, so far, less than 10 percent of the 140,000 files covering the years 1947–56 have been opened. But as most of the now declassified files relate to the 1948 War and, more specifically, to its operational side, it can be said that a great proportion of the important material on 1948 in the IDFA is now available.

Looking through these new materials, both military and civilian, has compelled a fresh look at the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. When writing *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947–1949* in the mid-1980s, I had no access to the materials in the IDFA or Haganah Archive and precious little to first-hand military materials deposited elsewhere. None the less, the new materials I have seen over the past few years tend to confirm and reinforce the major lines of description and analysis, and the conclusions, in *The Birth* and in a subsequent volume, *1948 and After*, published in 1990.

These main conclusions were that the refugeedom of the 700,000 Palestinians was essentially a product of the war, of the shelling, shooting, and bombing, and of the fears that these generated. But the flight of the Palestinians was also due to their incompetent, self-serving, and venal

leadership, a leadership that failed to prepare properly for war, then plunged headlong into it, and, finally fled at the first whiff of grapeshot, leaving behind leaderless, bewildered, and defeated communities, which then also took flight. Concomitantly, the months of fighting caused the collapse of Palestinian urban society, creating joblessness, increased food prices, and poverty. The gradual exodus, which began with the upper and middle classes, was pushed along by the Haganah, the Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL or simply "Irgun," lit. National Military Organization), the Lohamei Herut Yisrael (LHI or simply "Stern Gang," lit. Freedom Fighters of Israel), and IDF expulsions at specific sites; by orders in certain areas and towns by local Arab officials and Arab troops to groups of Palestinians – such as women and children – or to specific communities to leave their homes and clear the battlefield; and to Israeli atrocities which unnerved and panicked neighboring communities. The Arab states also contributed to the Palestinians' refugeedom by failing at certain crucial junctures to give the Palestinians clear signals about whether or not to leave and, subsequently, by invading Palestine and then rejecting a succession of proposed compromises and by failing to absorb the refugees in their own countries.

Above all, let me reiterate, the refugee problem was caused by attacks by Jewish forces on Arab villages and towns and by the inhabitants' fear of such attacks, compounded by expulsions, atrocities, and rumors of atrocities – and by the crucial Israeli Cabinet decision in June 1948 to bar a refugee return.<sup>1</sup>

The declassification of the new material none the less necessitates a widening and deepening of description and analysis regarding various aspects of the exodus. I have already begun to probe and write anew about certain episodes and processes and will continue to do this – ultimately producing a revised edition of *The Birth* which will be more accurate, comprehensive, and deeper than the original.

For good or ill, the newly opened material generally tends to reinforce the version of events of those who would stress the Yishuv's and Israel's part in the propulsion of the Palestinian Arabs out of the areas that became the State of Israel rather than that of those who would reduce Israeli responsibility for what happened. Let me quickly add, first that this upshot seems to me natural in that it was precisely those materials that cast Israel in a bad light that Israel's official and semi-official archival repositories took care not to reveal. And, second, I suspect that if and when the Arab states open their archives for 1948 to researchers, the material there may serve to "adjust" the balance and increase our awareness of the direct and indirect responsibility of these states for the tragedy that engulfed Palestine and the Palestinians (i.e., Arab responsibility for unleashing the two stages of the 1948 War, irresponsibility with regard to

the emergent refugee problem, orders to specific Arab communities to leave, and so on).

I would like to focus on two subjects to illustrate the importance of the new material: first, transfer thinking among the Zionist leaders in the decade leading up to 1948, and second, the expulsions and atrocities in the central upper Galilee during and immediately after Operation Hiram in October–November 1948. Some of the material relating to the first subject may have been open to researchers in the early and mid-1980s, when *The Birth* was being written, but I was not then aware of its existence.

### **Transfer thinking, 1937–1947**

Among the first criticisms of *The Birth* by Palestinian and pro-Palestinian scholars (such as Nur Masalha and Norman Finkelstein) was that it ignored or underplayed the role of pre-1948 proposals and thinking about transfer among the Zionist leadership in what actually happened in 1948. More recently, Zionist and pro-Zionist critics (such as Shabtai Tevet and Efraim Karsh) have either flatly denied that the Zionist leaders ever seriously entertained the idea of transfer or, at the least, charged that *The Birth* exaggerated the quantity and quality of such transfer thinking and asserted that there was no connection between the occasional whimsical toying with the idea and what transpired in 1948. The controversy here is really about the nature of Zionism and about the degree of Zionist premeditation in what occurred in 1948.

The question goes to the heart of Zionism and to the root of the Zionist–Arab conflict. From the start, the Zionists wished to make the area of Palestine a Jewish state. Unfortunately, the country contained a native Arab population of 500,000 at the start of the Zionist influx around 1882 and of 1.3 million in 1947. How was a round peg to fit into a square hole? How was a Jewish minority – of some 60,000–80,000 in 1914 and 650,000 in 1947 – to gain control of a country populated by an antagonistic Arab majority? Several solutions offered themselves.

The first and most important was through *Aliya* or further Jewish immigration. Gradually the minority would demographically overwhelm the native majority, despite the Arabs' higher birth rates; once the Jews were in a majority, a Jewish state would naturally ensue. Unfortunately, the Ottoman Turks and subsequently, from a certain point on, their British imperial successors, restricted immigration. At the same time, through most of the period, relatively few Diaspora Jews actually wished to immigrate to Palestine. Most, if moving, preferred North America, Western Europe, and the Commonwealth states. A Jewish majority in Palestine would not come to pass through immigration.

A second solution lay the way of South Africa: the establishment of an apartheid state, with a settler minority lording it over a large, exploited native majority. But this was anathema to the majority of Zionists, who arrived from Europe with liberal or social-democratic views and aimed to establish an egalitarian or at least democratic polity. Apartheid was out of the question.

A third solution lay the way of partition. By the 1930s many of the Zionist leaders understood that the pace of Jewish immigration was insufficient to lead within the foreseeable future to a Jewish majority – and concluded that, at least temporarily, the Jews would have to forgo sovereignty over the whole land of Israel and make do with only a part of the country. A Jewish majority in the whole of Palestine appeared unattainable. But perhaps the country could be divided in such a way as to create a majority in the part allocated for Jewish sovereignty? The problem with partition, however, was that any way one divided the country – unless one declared the minute area of Tel Aviv and its immediate environs a Jewish state – the state that emerged would necessarily contain an Arab majority or at least a very large Arab minority subversive of and hostile to the Jewish polity to which it had been consigned. Indeed, the Jewish state faced such a problem in the UN Partition Plan of November 1947: it would have had 55 percent Jews and 40–45 percent Arabs. Any way one cut it, partition would be extremely problematic, to say the least. How, for instance, the new state would have dealt with its enormous Arab minority in 1948, had there been no war and no refugee problem, is a good question.

The last and, let me say obvious and most logical, solution to the Zionists' demographic problem lay the way of transfer: you could create a homogeneous Jewish state or at least a state with an overwhelming Jewish majority by moving or transferring all or most of the Arabs out of its prospective territory. And this, in fact, is what happened in 1948.

In *The Birth* I devoted several pages to indicating that transfer was, indeed, something Zionist leaders like David Ben-Gurion had thought about in the decade before the first Arab–Israeli war and I implied that this in some way was preparatory to what actually transpired during the fighting. During the 1990s, I looked afresh at the matter, partly in response to Nur Masalha's book, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*.<sup>2</sup>

My conclusion was and remains that thinking about the transfer of all or part of Palestine's Arabs out of the prospective Jewish state was pervasive among Zionist leadership circles long before 1937, when Lord Peel recommended transfer alongside partition as the only possible solution to the conflict, and continued to exercise the Zionist imagination during the following decade. But how exactly this thinking affected Zionist policy

and actions in the course of the 1948 War remains more complicated than some Arab researchers have suggested.

As Masalha has shown, many if not most of Zionism's mainstream leaders expressed at least passing support for the idea of transfer during the movement's first decades. True, as the subject was sensitive, they did not often or usually state this in public. Such utterances would certainly have annoyed Arabs and Turks, and perhaps others. But traces, and more than traces, of support for transfer are well documented. Herzl never referred to the idea in his main published works, *Der Judenstaat* [The Jews' State] and *Altneuland* [Old-New Land]. But in his diary he jotted down, on 12 June 1895, the following passage:

We must expropriate gently . . . We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our country . . . Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.<sup>3</sup>

Given that the vast majority of Palestine's Arabs at the turn of the century were "poor," Herzl can only have meant some form of massive transfer. But he realized that discretion and circumspection must accompany any such enterprise.

This discretion and circumspection was to characterize Zionist references to the idea of transfer during the following decades. But the July 1937 publication of the Peel Commission report – and its endorsement in principle by the British government – seemed to open the Xoodgates to a more open, if not quite public, discussion of the idea. Peel's recommendation to transfer at least some 225,000 Arabs out of the lowlands of the proposed Jewish state propelled some of the Zionist leaders into transports of enthusiasm. Immediately with its publication, David Ben-Gurion, the Yishuv's leader, jotted down in his diary:

In my comment on the report immediately after the first reading (from 10.7.37) I ignored a central point whose importance outweighs all the other positive [points] and counterbalances all the report's deficiencies and drawbacks, and if it does not remain a dead letter, it could give us something that we never had before, even when we were independent, including during the First Commonwealth and also during the Second Commonwealth: The compulsory transfer of the Arabs from the valleys proposed for the Jewish state.

I ignored this fundamental point out of a prejudice that this [i.e., transfer] is not possible, and that it is not practicable. But the more I look at the commission's conclusions and the more the gigantic importance of this proposal becomes clear – [the more] I reach the conclusion that the first obstacle to implementing this proposal is – our own failure to come to grips with it and our being prisoners to prejudices and intellectual habits that flourished in our midst in other circumstances.

With the evacuation of the Arab community from the valleys we achieve, for the first time in our history, a real Jewish state – an agricultural body of one or more million people, continuous, heavily populated, at one with its land which is completely its own. We achieve the possibility of a giant national settlement, on a large area that is *all in the hands of the state* . . . As with a magic wand, all the difficulties and defects that preoccupied us until now in our settlement enterprise [will vanish] – the question of Hebrew labor, defense, an organized economy, rational and predetermined exploitation of the land and water. We are given an opportunity that we never dreamed of and could not dare dream of in our most daring imaginings. This is more than a state, more than [self-] government, [more than] sovereignty – this is a national consolidation in a homeland free of handcuffs and external restraints creating power and solidity and rootedness that are more important than any mere political control . . . A continuous block of two and a half million dunams . . . the possibility of the new settlement of fifty or one hundred thousand families . . . when we have a Jewish state in the country and [outside] a Jewish people 16 million strong . . . nothing will be beyond the capabilities of this combination of forces, possibilities, needs and realities.

And we must first of all cast off the weakness of thought and will and prejudice – that [says that] this transfer is impracticable.

As before, I am aware of the terrible difficulty posed by a foreign force uprooting some 100,000 [*sic.*] Arabs from the villages they lived in for hundreds of years – will Britain dare carry this out?

Certainly it will not do it – if we do not want it, and if we do not push it to do it with our force and with the force of our faith. Even if a maximum amount of pressure is applied – it is possible she may still be deterred . . . It is certainly possible – and [nothing] greater than this has been done for our cause in our time [than Peel proposing transfer].

And we did not propose this – the Royal Commission . . . did . . . and we must grab hold of this conclusion [i.e., recommendation] as we grabbed hold of the Balfour Declaration, even more than that – as we grabbed hold of Zionism itself we must cleave to this conclusion, with all our strength and will and faith – because of all the Commission’s conclusions, this is the one that alone offers some recompense for the tearing away of other parts of the country [i.e., the commission’s apportioning of most of the Land of Israel for Arab sovereignty], and [the proposal] *also has great political logic from the Arab perspective*, as Transjordan needs settlement and an increase of population and development and money, and the English government – the richest of governments – is required by her Royal Commission to provide the funds needed for this, and in the implementation of this transfer is a great blessing for the Arab state – and for us it is a question of life, existence, protection of culture, [Jewish population] increase, freedom and independence . . . What is inconceivable in normal times is possible in revolutionary times; and if at this time the opportunity is missed and what is possible only in such great hours is not carried out – a whole world is lost . . . Any doubt on our part about the necessity of this transfer, any doubt we cast about the possibility of its implementation, any hesitancy on our part about its justice may lose [us] an historic opportunity that may not recur. The transfer clause in my eyes is more important than all our demands for additional land. This is the largest and most important and most vital additional “area” . . . We must distinguish between the

importance and urgency of our different demands. We must recognize the most important wisdom of any historical work: The wisdom of what comes first and what later.

There are a number of things that [we] struggle for now [but] which we cannot achieve now. For example the Negev. [On the other hand,] the evacuation [of the Arabs from] the [Jezreel] Valley we shall [i.e., must] achieve now – and, if not, perhaps we will never achieve it. If we do not succeed in removing the Arabs from our midst, when a royal commission proposes this to England, and transferring them to the Arab area – it will not be achievable easily (or perhaps at all) after the [Jewish] state is established, and the rights of the minorities [in it] will [necessarily] be assured, and the whole world that is antagonistic towards us will carefully scrutinize our behavior towards our minorities. This thing must be done now – and the first step – perhaps the *crucial* [step] – *is conditioning ourselves for its implementation.*<sup>4</sup>

These were the words set down by Zionism's leader in his diary. But the following month Ben-Gurion presented the gist of his thinking on the matter in a more public forum, the Twentieth Zionist Congress convened in Zurich specifically to consider the Peel proposals. And there Ben-Gurion once again posited transfer in no uncertain terms: "We do not want to expropriate," he said.

[But] transfer of population has already taken place in the [Jezreel] Valley, in the Sharon [Plain] and in other places. You are aware of the work of the Jewish National Fund in this respect. [The reference is to the sporadic uprooting of Arab tenant-farmer communities from lands purchased by the JNF.] Now a transfer of wholly different dimensions will have to be carried out. In various parts of the country new Jewish settlement will not be possible unless there is a transfer of the Arab fellahin . . . It is important that this plan came from the Commission and not from us . . . The transfer of population is what makes possible a comprehensive settlement program. Fortunately for us, the Arab people have enormous desolate areas. The growing Jewish power in the country will increase our possibilities to carry out a large transfer. You must remember that this method [i.e., possibility] also contains an important humane and Zionist idea. To transfer parts of a people [i.e., the Arabs] to their own country and to settle empty lands [i.e., Transjordan and Iraq] . . .<sup>5</sup>

Despite the fact that the notion of transfer had been proposed by a royal commission and that Ben-Gurion had seen fit to speak of it in the plenum of the Zionist Congress, the subject was still very sensitive. Indeed, a gauge of its continuing sensitivity is to be found in the fact that the Jewish press reports about the Congress' proceedings generally failed to mention that Ben-Gurion, or anyone else, had come out strongly in favor of transfer or indeed had even raised the subject. And when the Zionist Organization published the texts of the addresses the following year, reference to transfer was almost completely excised from every speech. Needless to say, the passage quoted above from Ben-Gurion's speech was completely deleted from this laundered version of the proceedings.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequently, the matter of transfer repeatedly cropped up at the meetings of the Jewish Agency Executive (JAE), the “government” of the Yishuv and the leading body of the Zionist Organization. However, according to the existing protocols, the Executive debated the matter infrequently over the years 1939–47. Usually, the matter was referred to in an isolated sentence or half-sentence, without follow-up. My assumption is that more was said about transfer at these meetings than actually was recorded in the protocol. The issue was highly sensitive – and it was common practice in Zionist bodies to order stenographers to “take a break” and thus to exclude from the record discussion on such matters. But, perhaps, the record does not lie and transfer was simply not discussed often or comprehensively, perhaps because all or most of the JAE members simply felt that there was no need for such debate. At the time, the idea was deemed impractical and, in any case, all or almost all members were in agreement on the matter. The subject was highly sensitive; the less said about it the better as leaks could be highly embarrassing.

None the less, according to Jewish Agency records, in June 1938 transfer was broadly discussed in successive meetings of the JAE. On 7 June, Ben-Gurion proposed that the Zionist movement’s future “lines of action” included discussing with the neighboring Arab states “the matter of voluntarily transferring Arab tenant-farmers, laborers and fellahin from the Jewish state to the neighboring states.”<sup>7</sup> And on 12 June the matter was roundly discussed. Werner David Senator, a Hebrew University executive, said that the Yishuv must aim for “maximal transfer.” Menahem Ussishkin, head of the JNF, said that there was nothing immoral about transferring 60,000 Arab families: “It is the most moral [thing to do].” Berl Katznelson, one of the dominant Mapai Party’s leaders, said: “A large transfer must be agreed.” And Ben-Gurion said: “I support compulsory transfer. I don’t see in it anything immoral.”<sup>8</sup>

The consensus or near-consensus in support of transfer – voluntary if possible, compulsory if necessary – was clear. Nor, as some critics have contended, did interest in and support for transfer end or wane when the British government in effect dropped the idea with the publication, in October 1938, of the Woodhead Commission report. The commission had ostensibly been set up the previous January to look into ways of implementing the Peel partition recommendation; but, in effect, its mandate was to bury the Peel proposals and the idea of partition. On 12 December 1938, months after the British government had retreated from partition and transfer, Ben-Gurion jotted down in his diary: “We shall propose to Iraq 10 million Palestine pounds for the transfer of one hundred thousand Arab families from Palestine to Iraq.”<sup>9</sup>



Nor did the onset of the Second World War do much to dampen Ben-Gurion's enthusiasm for transfer. Rather the opposite. Nazi persecution of the Jews only heightened his appreciation of the urgent need for more empty land in Palestine on which to settle Jewish immigrants. Moreover, the spectacle of Nazi exploitation of German minorities in central and Eastern Europe to subvert opposing regimes acted as a spur to Zionist thinking about how the prospective Jewish state must rid itself, *ab initio*, of its prospective subversive Arab minority; and the war itself provided precedents and models of actual ethnic transfers that served to rationalize the demographic and geopolitical situation in various nation states. As Ben-Gurion saw things, more such transfers were on the cards in the post-war European settlement. The fact that Her Majesty's government in 1938 had shied away from the idea of transfer was no reason to abandon hope.

In October 1941, Ben-Gurion expatiated at length about the need for and practicalities of transfer in a memorandum outlining future Zionist policy. He believed that parts of Palestine's Arab population – “the Druse, several of the Beduin tribes in the Jordan Valley and the South, the Circassians, and perhaps also the Matawalis [Shi'ites of northern Galilee]” would “not mind being transferred, under favourable conditions, to some neighbouring country.” Moreover, “it would . . . be probably not too difficult” to transfer tenant-farmers and landless laborers out of the country. But a complete transfer of the bulk of the Arab population could only be carried out by force, by “ruthless compulsion,” in Ben-Gurion's phrase. However, recent European history, Ben-Gurion pointed out, had demonstrated that a massive, compulsory transfer of populations was possible – and the ongoing world war had made the idea of transfer even more popular as the surest and most practical way to solve the difficult and dangerous problem of national minorities. The post-war settlement in Europe, he envisioned, would include massive population transfers. But the Zionists must take care not to preach openly or advocate compulsory transfer, as this would be impolitic and would antagonize many in the West. At the same time, Ben-Gurion reasoned, the Zionist movement should do nothing to hamper those in the West who were busy advocating transfer as a necessary element in a solution to the Palestine problem.<sup>10</sup>

Ben-Gurion was not the only Zionist leader who kept anxiously, not to say obsessively, mulling over the possibilities of transfer. Chaim Weizmann, president of the Zionist Organization and the movement's liberal elder statesman, repeatedly pressed the idea on various interlocutors. The following is a description – possibly penned by Lewis Namier, one of Weizmann's aides – of Weizmann's talk with Soviet ambassador to London

Ivan Maisky in January 1941. The talk focused on the post-war settlement in Palestine:

Dr. Weizmann said he had had . . . a very interesting talk with M. Maisky . . . Mr. Maisky said there would have to be an exchange of populations. Dr. Weizmann said that if half a million Arabs could be transferred, two million Jews could be put in their place. That, of course, would be a first instalment; what might happen afterwards was a matter for history. Mr. Maisky's comment was that they in Russia had also had to deal with exchanges of population. Dr. Weizmann said that the distance they had to deal with in Palestine would be smaller; they would be transferring the Arabs only into Iraq or Transjordan. Mr. Maisky asked whether some difficulties might not arise in transferring a hill-country population to the plains, and Dr. Weizmann replied that a beginning might be made with the Arabs from the Jordan Valley; but anyhow conditions in Transjordan were not so very different from the Palestine hill-country . . . Dr. Weizmann explained that they were unable to deal with [the Arabs] as, for instance, the Russian authorities would deal with a backward element in their population in the USSR. Nor would they desire to do so.<sup>11</sup>

The possibility of solving the problem of Palestine had in effect been shelved by Britain, the Zionist movement, and the Arabs during the Second World War; the world had more pressing problems. So, for the duration of the global conflict, talk of the practicalities of transfer was pointless. None the less, the matter came up from time to time in internal Zionist deliberations. For example, on 7 May 1944 the JAE discussed the British Labour Party Executive's resolution supporting transfer as part of a solution to the Palestine conundrum. Moshe Shertok (Sharett), the director of the Jewish Agency's political department, soon to be the state of Israel's first foreign minister and second prime minister, began: "The transfer can be the archstone, the final stage in the political development, but on no account the starting point. By doing this [i.e., by talking prematurely about transfer] we are mobilizing enormous forces against the idea and subverting [its implementation] in advance . . ." And he continued: "What will happen once the Jewish state is established – it is very possible that the result will be transfer of Arabs."

Ben-Gurion followed Shertok:

When I heard these things [i.e., about the Labour Party Executive's resolution] . . . I had some difficult thoughts . . . [But] I reached the conclusion that it is best that this remain [i.e., that the resolution remain as part of Labour's official platform] . . . Were we asked what should be our program, I would find it inconceivable to tell them transfer . . . because talk on the subject might cause harm in two ways: (a) It could cause [us] harm in public opinion in the world, because it might give the impression that there is no room [for more Jews] in Palestine without ejecting the Arabs . . . (b) [such declarations in support of transfer] would force the Arabs onto . . . their hind legs [i.e., would shock and stir them up].

None the less, declared Ben-Gurion: “Transfer of Arabs is easier than any other type of transfer. There are Arab states in the area . . . and it is clear that if the Arabs [of Palestine] are sent [to the Arabs countries] this will better their situation and not the contrary . . .”<sup>12</sup> The rest of the JAE members followed suit. Yitzhak Gruenbaum, who would be Israel’s first interior minister in 1948, declared:

To my mind there is an Arab consideration in favour of transfer. That is, in the increase of population of Iraq by [additional] Arabs. It is the function of the Jews occasionally to make the Gentiles [*goyim*] aware of things they did not until then perceive . . . If for example it is possible to create artificially in Iraq conditions that will magnetize the Arabs of Palestine to emigrate to Iraq, I do not see in it any iniquity or crime . . .<sup>13</sup>

Eliahu Dobkin, a Mapai stalwart and director of the Jewish Agency’s immigration department, said: “There will be in the country a large [Arab] minority and it must be ejected. There is no room for our internal inhibitions [in this matter]. . .” Eliezer Kaplan, the number-three man in Mapai who would become Israel’s first finance minister, said: “Regarding the matter of transfer I have only one request: Let us not start arguing among ourselves . . . This will cause us the most damage externally.” Dov Joseph, the Agency’s legal adviser (and soon to be Israel’s justice minister), chimed in: “I agree with Mr. Kaplan.” Werner David Senator said: “I do not regard the question of transfer as a moral or immoral problem . . . It is not a matter I would refuse to consider . . .”<sup>14</sup>

Ben-Gurion returned to the transfer theme the following month, when he proposed bringing 1 million Jewish immigrants to Palestine’s shores “immediately.” The religious Mizrahi Party’s Moshe Hayim Shapira said that the matter would force the Yishuv to consider transferring Arabs. Ben-Gurion replied:

I am opposed that any proposal for transfer should come from our side. I do not reject transfer on moral grounds and I do not reject it on political grounds. If there is a chance for it [I support it]; with regard to the Druse it is possible. It is possible to move all the Druse voluntarily to Jabal Druse [in Syria]. The other [Arabs] – I don’t know. But it must not be a Jewish proposal . . .<sup>15</sup>

What is the importance of these expressions of support for transfer in the decade before 1948? How do they connect to what actually happened during the first Arab–Israeli war? Some researchers – such as Masalha – will have us believe that there was a direct, causal, one-to-one link between the earlier thinking and the subsequent actions. My feeling is that the connection is more subtle and indirect.

The haphazard thinking about transfer before 1937 and the virtual consensus in support of the notion from 1937 on contributed to what

happened in 1948 in the sense that they conditioned the Zionist leadership, and below it, the officials and officers who managed the new state's civilian and military agencies, for the transfer that took place. To one degree or another, these men all arrived at 1948, in no small measure owing to the continuous anti-Zionist Arab violence which played out against the growing persecution of Diaspora Jewry in central and eastern Europe, with a mindset which was open to the idea and implementation of transfer and expulsion. And the transfer that occurred – which encountered almost no serious opposition from any part of the Yishuv – transpired smoothly in large measure because of this pre-conditioning, though also because all or almost all came to understand, after the Arabs of Palestine had initiated the war and after the Arab states invaded Palestine, that transfer was what the Jewish state's survival and future well-being demanded.

One last point on this subject. Much more work needs to be done on the Yishuv's attitude to transfer. So far, only the surface of the available documentation has been scratched. The diaries and letters of various Zionist leaders and officials and the files of various Zionist bodies between 1881 and 1937 need to be thoroughly combed. So must the protocols of various political bodies – the Mapai Centre, the political committees of other parties – and the diaries and correspondence of the leaders and officials for the period 1937–47. Of particular interest might be the papers from 1937–47 of the majors and colonels and generals of 1948 who actually carried out the transfer, such as Yigal Allon and Yitzhak Sadeh and Moshe Carmel.

### **Expulsion and atrocity in Operation Hiram, 1948**

Nothing that I have seen in Israeli archives during the past decade indicates the existence before 1948 of a Zionist master plan to expel the Arabs of Palestine. Nor, in looking at the materials from 1948, is there anything to show that such a plan existed and was systematically unleashed and implemented in the course of the war, or that any overall expulsory policy decision was taken by the Yishuv's executive bodies – the Jewish Agency Executive, the Defence Committee, the People's Administration, or the Provisional Government of Israel – in the course of the 1948 War (apart from the June–July 1948 Cabinet decision to bar a refugee return).

None the less, expulsion was in the air in the war of 1948. From April on, Palestinian Arabs were the target of a series of concrete expulsions from individual villages, clusters of villages, and towns. The readiness among the Israeli commanders and officials to expel fluctuated in relation to the local conditions and to the national military situation (certainly

there was greater willingness to expel after the Arab states invaded Palestine on 15 May, putting the Yishuv's very existence temporarily in question), the character and outlook of the Israeli commanders, and the nature of the Arab villagers and townspeople involved (traditional anti-Zionists or "friendly" Arabs, Muslims, Christians, Druse, etc.), topographical conditions, and so on.

Clearly, the readiness to resort to compulsory transfer grew in the Yishuv's bureaucracies and among its military units in the course of the first months of fighting, and as the fighting became more desperate, bloody and widespread, with Ben-Gurion himself setting the tone and indicating direction, usually resorting to a nod and a wink if not actually issuing explicit orders. Given his deep awareness of historical processes and the mechanics and importance of historiography, Ben-Gurion was very careful, in speech and writing, not to leave too clear a spoor in his wake.

Ben-Gurion apart, the documentation that has come to light or been declassified during the past ten years offers a great deal of additional information about the expulsions of 1948. The departure of Arab communities from some sites, departures that were described in *The Birth* as due to fear or IDF military attack or were simply unexplained, now appear to have been tinged if not characterized by Haganah or IDF expulsion orders and actions (for example, Ein Hod near Haifa and Isdud, today's Ashdod, near Ashkelon). This means that the proportion of the 700,000 Arabs who took to the roads as a result of expulsions rather than as a result of straightforward military attack or fear of attack, etc. is greater than indicated in *The Birth*. Similarly, the new documentation has revealed atrocities that I had not been aware of while writing *The Birth* (for example, at al-Husayniyya, north of the Sea of Galilee, in March, and at Burayr, north of Beersheba, in May). These atrocities are important in understanding the precipitation of various phases of the Arab exodus.

Let me add that with respect to both expulsions and atrocities, we can expect additional revelations as the years pass and as more Israeli records become available. As things stand, the IDFA has a standing policy guideline not to open material explicitly describing expulsions and atrocities. Thus, much IDF material on these subjects remains closed. But IDFA officials, like all officials, occasionally overlook a document with an explicit description or, more frequently, relent when it comes to implicit or indirect descriptions. Thus, the archive may declassify a document carrying an order to expel but keep sealed the following document in which the local commander details how he carried out the order. Similarly, the IDFA will generally declassify a document which uses euphemisms such as to "move" (*le'haziz*) or "evacuate" (*le'fanot*) a community while

keeping closed a document employing the more explicit term to “expel” (*le’garesh*).

Occasionally, the new documentation compels a revision of *The Birth* with respect not to a specific site but to a whole campaign and a large area. A case in point is “Operation Hiram” (28–31 October) and its immediate aftermath, when the IDF overran the central upper Galilee held by the Arab Liberation Army and a battalion of regular Syrian Army troops. In *The Birth* I wrote that:

neither before, during nor immediately after Operation . . . Hiram did the Cabinet . . . decide or instruct the IDF to drive out the Arab population from the areas it was about to conquer or had conquered. Nor, as far as the evidence shows, did the heads of the defence establishment issue any general orders to the advancing brigades to expel or otherwise harm the civilian population in their path. Nor, as far as can be ascertained, did any general orders issue from the headquarters of the . . . operation or from the headquarters of the . . . brigades involved to their battalions and companies to this purpose.<sup>16</sup>

In the book I described a chaotic situation in which the IDF units involved were not directed by a central guideline or a consistent policy, and each acted differently – here leaving an Arab community in place, there expelling one, in certain villages committing atrocities, occasionally accompanied by an expulsion, in other places acting benignly. I reached this conclusion on the basis of the demographic situation after Operation Hiram, in which a large number of communities, both Christian and Muslim, remained *in situ*, and on two documents: a letter of 12 November from Ya’akov Shimoni, acting director of the Israel Foreign Ministry’s Middle East Affairs Department, to Eliahu (Elias) Sasson, the departmental director who was then in Paris; and a letter, six days later, from Shimoni to the ministry director general, Walter Eytan.

Shimoni, a former intelligence executive and a man well-versed in Middle Eastern affairs, wrote Sasson:

Too many hands have stirred the [Hiram] broth . . . So it was that the attitude towards the Arab inhabitants of the Galilee and towards the Arab refugees [temporarily] living in the Galilee villages or near them was haphazard and different from place to place according to the initiative of this or that commander or government official. Here people were expelled and there people were left in place, here the surrender of villages was accepted (and with it a sort of commitment to allow the inhabitants to remain and to protect them) and there [officers] refused to accept surrender, here Christians benefited from positive discrimination, and there [the army] dealt with Christians and Muslims the same way and without distinction. So it was, too, that refugees who had fled in the panic-filled first moments of the conquest were allowed to return to their places. Our advice [to the army] and our view [i.e., the view of the Middle East Affairs Department of the Foreign Ministry], which were not acted upon, are certainly clear to you: We

asked that [the army] make an effort during the conquest that no Arab inhabitants remain in the Galilee and certainly that no refugees from other places remain there . . .<sup>17</sup>

To Eytan, Shimoni wrote:

After [i.e., during] two trips around the [newly conquered areas of the] Galilee by Ezra Danin [special adviser on Arab Affairs at the Foreign Ministry], Zvi Meckler (of the Political [i.e., intelligence] Department [of the Ministry]), Shmuel Ya'ari (of the Syrian and Lebanese section in my department) and myself . . . we heard from all the commanders with whom we had contact that during the operations in the Galilee and in Lebanon<sup>18</sup> they had *no clear orders, no clear line* [italics in the original] concerning behavior towards the Arabs in the conquered areas – expulsion of the inhabitants or leaving them in place; harsh or soft behavior; discrimination in favor of Christians or not; special treatment of Maronites; special treatment of Matawalis [i.e., Shi'ites], etc., etc. . . . As for those acts of cruelty perpetrated [by the IDF] – certainly some of them were carried out for reasons not connected to these considerations; but I have no doubt that some of them would not have happened had the conquering army had a clear . . . policy regarding behavior [toward civilian populations].<sup>19</sup>

The demographic situation in the wake of the operation on the face of it reinforced these descriptions. Many villagers, both Christian and Muslim, stayed put and were left in place – and they and their descendants today constitute the core of Israel's current 1.3 million-strong Arab minority.

In an interview I conducted in 1985 with General Moshe Carmel, OC Northern Front (Command) during Hiram, he explained that he had never adopted a policy of expulsion *vis-à-vis* Arab communities he had conquered in the battles of 1948, though he admitted that in a number of localities he had authorized expulsions for military reasons. But Carmel had not told me the truth and Shimoni had been somewhat misinformed – so it emerges from newly released documents in the IDFA. There was a central directive by Northern Front to clear the conquered pocket of its Arab inhabitants, though Carmel had shied clear of using the explicit word “to expel” (*le'garesh*). It is possible that the “advice” proffered by the Foreign Ministry (as mentioned by Shimoni) to the army command influenced the issuance of this directive.

On the morning of 31 October 1948, Carmel radioed all his brigade and district commanders: “Do all in your power to clear quickly and immediately from the areas conquered all hostile elements in accordance with the orders issued. The inhabitants should be assisted to leave the conquered areas.”<sup>20</sup> On 10 November, Carmel added the following, somewhat “softer,” order: “(B) [The troops] should continue to assist the inhabitants wishing to leave the areas conquered by us. This is urgent and must be carried out swiftly. (C) A strip five kilometers deep

behind the border between us and Lebanon must be empty of [Arab] inhabitants.”<sup>21</sup>

There can be no doubt that, in the circumstances, the brigade and district OCs understood Carmel’s first order, of 31 October (and perhaps also his follow-up of 10 November), as a general directive to expel. Clearly this is how Major Yitzhak Moda’i (who in the 1980s rose to national prominence as a Likud politician and served as Israel’s finance minister) understood the order. In his classified, comprehensive analysis of Operation Hiram based mainly on IDF archival material, written for IDF History Branch in the late 1950s, Moda’i devoted a great deal of space to the question of why most of the Arab population in the conquered pocket remained *in situ*, when most of the inhabitants fled or were driven out of areas previously overrun by the IDF. Moda’i wrote:

One could have believed that the Arab population in the Galilee simply wasn’t forced – as were the inhabitants of other parts of the country – to flee for their lives by the intimidator [i.e., Israel]. But from testimony by commanders and men and from official reports . . . it is clear that our forces in the Galilee did not act with restraint and that their treatment of the inhabitants could in no way be construed as a factor [motivating them] to stay in their villages.

Although [Northern] Front’s and the Brigade HQ’s operational orders for Operation Hiram make no mention of the local population [and its prospective treatment],<sup>22</sup> all were aware of General Staff/Operations stand on this score.

Moda’i refers his readers to the order by Yigael Yadin, IDF OC Operations, from 18 August 1948, stating “that we are not interested in Arab inhabitants [in Israel] and their return [to Israeli territory] must be prevented at all costs.” Moda’i then quotes Carmel’s order of 31 October (“the inhabitants should be assisted to leave the areas conquered”), and concludes: “It appears, therefore, that the Arab population in the Galilee by and large stayed put in its villages, despite the fact that our forces tried to throw it out, often using means which were illegal and not gentle.” Moda’i suggests a number of explanations for the fact that the bulk of the population stayed put:

- (A) The [Arab] Liberation Army’s opposition to [civilian] flight on the eve of the operation. [The central-upper Galilee pocket conquered by the IDF in Hiram had been held by the ALA, supported by a regular Syrian Army battalion.]
- (B) The mountainous terrain of the Galilee areas [i.e., certain villages failed to hear about the IDF campaign until after it had been accomplished and the topography made flight, especially with baggage, very difficult] and the nature of the villagers.
- (C) The presence of a friendly population which was promised good treatment by us in advance and which was not subjected to ill-treatment in the course of the operation [i.e., Maronites and Druse].



- (D) The speed with which our forces took over the Galilee's roads.
- (E) A lack of initiative on the part of our forces which enabled a great number of villagers to return to their homes, after they had first evacuated.

Moda'i also speaks explicitly of:

The lack of a clear and predetermined order, instructing [the troops] to get rid of the inhabitants (if that, indeed, was the aim), the Arabs or the Muslims in the Galilee, [and the absence of] a precise definition of the [appropriate] attitude to be employed towards the various religious and ethnic groups, an ignoring, in the planning and the implementation of the operation, of the question [i.e., problem] posed by the [presence of the] Arab inhabitants, and the fact that no forces were prepared in advance to ensure that a "vacuum" would not be created, which would enable the inhabitants to return to their homes – these are the reasons that gave rise to the fact [i.e., continued presence] of the Arab community in the Galilee.<sup>23</sup>

To these explanations one should, in my view, add that by the end of October 1948 the inhabitants of the "pocket" had heard about the trials and tribulations of their fellow countrymen who had gone into exile during the previous months and had become impoverished refugees. They concluded that, on balance, they would probably be better off staying put. Moreover, by Hiram most of the Palestinians probably understood that they and the Arab states had lost the war and that the refugees would not be allowed back to their homes. One must also pay attention to the date of Carmel's order – 31 October. By the morning of that day Operation Hiram had almost been concluded; that is, by the time the battalions and companies had received Carmel's order, they had already overrun most of the pocket's villages and advanced beyond them. To expel the population of a village during or immediately after its conquest was one thing; to go back to a village hours or days after it had been subdued and throw out its inhabitants was something else (though, to be sure, there were expulsions also after the campaign ended). Carmel's order had been issued at 10:00. Presumably additional time would have had to elapse until it reached the battalion and company OCs who would have had to carry it out. Lastly, the order itself was couched in soft terms, seeming to leave the commanders in the field with a measure of discretion. Certainly, no commander was subsequently charged with or tried for not expelling – or, for that matter, for expelling – villagers.

None the less, a question arises about events in some of the Galilee pocket villages during the operation and in the following days and weeks. When Shimoni referred to the IDF's "acts of cruelty" and Moda'i to the troops' "lack of restraint" – were they referring to the series of massacres carried out by Carmel's troops in Majd al-Kurum, al-Bi'na, Dayr al-Assad, Nahf, Safsaf, Jish, Sasa, Saliha, Ilabun, and Hula, mostly after the end of the fighting? Perhaps they also refer to the post-Hiram expulsions in the border zone.

The question arises to what degree were these acts the fruit of local initiatives – by platoon, company, and battalion OCs – and to what extent were they a response to directives from on high.

As regards the expulsions from the strip of territory along the Lebanese border in the week after Operation Hiram – including those from Iqrit and Bir'im – there is no doubt that they stemmed from one central, expulsive directive, and Carmel's second cable of 10 November (above) indicates as much.

But what of the massacres? Our knowledge of the details of these massacres is limited, relying mainly on Arab oral and written testimony and some United Nations and Israeli civilian documentation (see Appendix, p. 57).<sup>24</sup> The IDF documents relating to them – reports from the officers in the field and the testimony given to various inquiry commissions which probed the massacres and their final reports (there were at least two, one by IDF Northern Command itself and the other by Israel's attorney general, Ya'akov Shimshon Shapira) – are still classified and unavailable to researchers. But the general lines of what happened are clear.

I am not arguing here that Carmel gave a general order to carry out massacres and that, as a result, a series of massacres were committed. But two things indicate that at least some officers in the field understood Carmel's orders as an authorization to carry out murderous acts that would intimidate the population into flight: the pattern in the actions and their relative profusion; and the absence of any punishment of the perpetrators. The massacres were carried out by battalions of the three main units that participated in Hiram, namely, the (1st) Golani, the 7th, and the (2nd) Carmeli brigades, as well as by second-line garrison battalions who replaced the assaulting brigades in the conquered villages. To the best of my knowledge, none of the soldiers or officers who carried out these war crimes was ever punished.

It is quite possible that the perpetrators looked to Carmel's order of 31 October as inspiration for their actions. The fact that no one was subsequently punished leaves the impression that their interpretation of that order (or accompanying oral instructions or exegesis by officers lower down the chain of command, such as brigade commanders) was sufficiently widespread and well founded so as to deter anyone from bringing them to book. Put simply, Carmel or officers and civilian leaders above him may have been deterred by the possibility or threat that those charged would point an accusatory finger upwards, up the chain of command, to explain the source of their actions.

In any event, the uniform or at least similar nature of the massacres points to a belief, among the perpetrators, of central direction and authorization (and perhaps even to the existence of some form of central guide-

line). Almost all the massacres followed a similar course: a unit entered a village, rounded up the menfolk in the village square, selected four or ten or fifty of the army-age males (in some places according to prepared lists of persons suspected of helping Qawuqji's or Grand Mufti Hajj Amin al Husayni's forces), lined them up against a wall, and shot them. Some of the massacres were carried out immediately after the conquest of the village by the assaulting troops, though most occurred in the following days. In some cases (as in Majd al Kurum on 5 or 6 November) the massacre occurred ostensibly as part of the unit's efforts to force the villagers to hand over hidden weapons, though more often it seems to have been connected to a process of intimidation geared to provoking the villagers into flight (as in Ilabun, Jish, etc.).

In *The Birth* I assumed that there had been no central order from "on high" to commit the atrocities.<sup>25</sup> The documentation recently declassified in the IDFA seems to corroborate this. Three and a half weeks after Operation Hiram, Carmel issued an "order of the day" to all the units under his command, stating:

Our brilliant victory . . . in the Galilee was marred as some soldiers allowed themselves a shameful outburst by looting and condemnable crimes against the Arab population after its surrender . . . Ill-treatment of the inhabitants, murder and robbery are not a military activity or acts of courage. They are a disgrace to our army . . . The perpetrators of these crimes during the operation and in its wake are standing trial and will be punished . . . [but] it has come to my attention that even now such displays of unrestrained behavior have not completely ceased. These acts must cease immediately, and with all severity [*sic*]. Anyone caught committing another crime will be tried immediately and will be most severely punished. I ask the commanders and troops in Northern Front to help stamp out this corruption. Whoever covers for the criminal is an accomplice in the crime and he too will not be cleared of responsibility . . . Honor to the the loyal and liberating Hebrew fighter, respect for the pure, protective and crushing Hebrew arms!<sup>26</sup>

As stated, this statement appears to point to Carmel's displeasure over these actions, and he even asserts – to the best of my knowledge, without foundation – that soldiers were being put on trial for these crimes. But the profusion of cases (altogether about a dozen massacres occurred), the lack of punishment, the pattern of the events, and the delay in the issuing of this "order of the day," taken together, perhaps point to a more ambiguous conclusion.

I have brought these examples of Zionist thinking about transfer in the decade before 1948 and of Operation Hiram, to demonstrate the importance of the documentation currently being declassified, especially in the IDFA, for a fuller understanding of what transpired in 1948. The newly available documentation, which I will deal with and deploy more fully in

the planned revised version of *The Birth*, sheds important, fresh light on different segments and aspects of the first Arab–Israeli war. Without doubt, the crystallization of the consensus in support of transfer among the Zionist leaders helped pave the way for the precipitation of the Palestinian exodus of 1948. Similarly, far more of that exodus was triggered by explicit acts and orders of expulsion by Jewish/Israeli troops than is indicated in *The Birth*. These are certainly two of the major, if still tentative, conclusions that emerge from the newly released documentation. But more years will have to pass before the declassification process is completed. Even then, black, incomprehensible holes will no doubt remain, areas where knowledge and understanding will remain incomplete. But these areas of darkness will be smaller than those that exist today.

## Appendix: The Massacre of 14 Beduin Tribesmen in Eastern Galilee, 2 November 1948

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*Most IDFA documentation regarding the massacres remains classified. But the classifiers have not been consistently efficient. For example, one report now open to researchers (in IDFA 1096\1949\65), written on 2 November 1948, apparently by the sergeant-major of "C" Company (the signature is indecipherable), 103rd Battalion, explains and (succinctly) describes the massacre of 14 beduin tribesmen in eastern Galilee on 2 November 1948.*

*This massacre is not to be confused with the one that occurred in nearby Eilabun three days before, in which 12 villagers were slaughtered by Golani Brigade troops (see *The Birth*, p. 229). But that massacre too, appears to have been triggered by the death of the two missing IDF soldiers. The Golani troops appear to have found their severed heads in one of the village houses.*

*Subject: Report on A Search Operation in the Area of 'Arab al Ma'wasi Near Position 213.*

*Transmitted by Platoon OC Haim Hayun.*

On 2.11.48 at 09:00 hours a force comprising two squads accompanied by the battalion armored squad, commanded by Lt. Z. Kleinman and Haim Hayun, set out from the base at Maghar. When they arrived at the site [of 'Arab al-Mawasi, apparently Khirbet al-Wa'ra al-Sauda, 8 km east of Eilabun], they assembled the adult males and demanded their arms. Seven rifles were collected. The force [then] divided in two; one part, commanded by Kleinman, stayed to keep guard over the adult males; the second part, commanded by Hayun, went up to Position 213 [apparently a hilltop some 2 km west of Khirbet Wa'ra], where the bones were found of two [IDF] soldiers lost in a previous action at this position. Their identities were determined by articles of clothing that were found nearby. [The bodies were] found headless.

The men set fire to the Arabs' houses and returned to base [i.e., Maghar] with 19 Arab adult males. At the base the men [i.e., captives] were sorted out and those who took part in hostile actions against our army were identified, and they were sent under command of Haim [Hayun] to a place that had been determined and there 14 of the adult

males were liquidated [*ve'sham huslu*]. The rest are being transferred to a prisoner-of-war camp.

### Notes

- 1 An early version of Part I of this essay appeared in Hebrew in Yehiam Weitz, ed., *Bein Hazon LeRiviziya* [Between Vision and Revision] (Jerusalem, 1997). An early version of Part 2 appeared in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28 (Winter 1999). See Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949* (Cambridge, 1988), and Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford, 1990).
- 2 Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of “Transfer” in Zionist Political Thought, 1882–1948* (Washington DC, 1992). Masalha argued that the Zionist leaders, between the turn of the century and the start of the war of 1948, had consistently and systematically espoused a transfer solution to “the Arab problem” – that is, the problem posed by the existence of an Arab majority in a country, Palestine, that they wished to turn into a “Jewish” state. He further argued that the “de-Arabizing” of the country in the course of 1948 – the Palestinian exodus – was the natural culmination and outcome of this transfer thinking and of specific transfer schemes mooted by the Zionist leaders during the previous decades.
- 3 Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, Raphael Patai, ed. (New York, 1960), vol. I, p. 88, (12 June 1895).
- 4 David Ben-Gurion Diary, 12 July 1937, the Ben-Gurion Archive, Sede Boker, Israel. Emphasis in the original. See also Ben-Gurion diary entry for 20 July 1937.
- 5 CZA, S5–1543, text of Ben-Gurion’s speech, 7 August 1937. It is worth noting that Ben-Gurion here broached the idea that the Yishuv, rather than the British, would carry out the transfer.
- 6 See the *Twentieth Zionist Congress and the Fifth Session of the Jewish Agency Council, Zurich, 3–21 August 1937, A Stenographic Report, The Executive of the Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency* (Jerusalem, 1938); and Morris, “A New Look at Central Zionist Documents” (Heb.) *Alpayim* 12 (1996) 73–103.
- 7 CZA 28, protocol of meeting of the JAE, 7 June 1938.
- 8 CZA 28, protocol of the joint meeting of the JAE and the Zionist Actions Committee, 12 June 1938.
- 9 Ben-Gurion Diary, entry for 12 December 1938, BG Archive.
- 10 Ben-Gurion, “Outlines of Zionist Policy,” 15 October 1941, CZA Z4–14632. I am grateful to Professor Yoav Gelber, of Haifa University, for steering me toward this important document.
- 11 Weizmann Papers, 2271, “Short Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday, January 30th, 1941, at 77 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1,” (“Present: Dr. Weizmann, Mrs. Dugdale, Professor Namier, Mr. Locker, Mr. Linton”).
- 12 CZA S100/42b, protocol of JAE meeting, 7 May 1944.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 *Ibid.*

- 15 CZA S100/43b, protocol of JAE meeting, 20 June 1944.
- 16 Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 218–19.
- 17 ISA, Foreign Ministry Papers (FM), 2570/11, Shimoni to Sasson, 12 November 1948.
- 18 In Operation Hiram, the IDF also conquered a string of villages on the Lebanese side of the international frontier. (The villages were evacuated by the IDF during the following months, the last of them returning to Lebanese sovereignty after the signing of the Israel–Lebanon General Armistice Agreement in March 1949.)
- 19 ISA, FM 186/17, Shimoni to Eytan, 18 November 1948.
- 20 IDFA 715/49//3, Carmel to brigades, districts, 31 October 1948, 10.00 hours.
- 21 IDFA 4858/49//495, Front “A” (North) to 2nd and 9th brigades, 10 November 1948, 09.00 hours.
- 22 See IDFA 854/52//321, “Operational Order Operation Hiram,” Front “A” to brigades, districts, etc., 26 October 1948. There is no reference in the order to the requisite behavior toward Arab civilian communities in the areas about to be overrun.
- 23 IDFA 922/75//189, “Operation Hiram,” a report by Major Yitzhak Moda’i, undated but from the late 1950s.
- 24 See Morris, *The Birth*, ch. 7, and Morris, “New look at Central Zionist Documents,” pp. 96–97, 101–03. In *The Birth* I wrongly attributed a report delivered by Moshe Erem at the meeting of the Mapam Political Committee on 11 November 1948 about these atrocities to Yisrael Galili. This was corrected in the article in *Alpayim*.
- 25 Morris, *The Birth*, p. 230.
- 26 IDFA 437/49//84, Carmel, “Order of the Day,” 25 November 1948. It is worth stressing that Carmel certainly knew of the atrocities on the days they occurred or at most a few days after. Why did he wait two to three weeks to issue this “Order of the Day” condemning them? Perhaps, as he says, it was connected to fresh acts of a similar nature; perhaps he had waited for the various inquiries into the events (by Attorney General Ya’akov Shimshon Shapira, or by Northern Front itself) to be completed. Perhaps his order was issued as a way of persuading officers and men to give evidence to these commissions of inquiry. Or perhaps he had simply tried to refrain from issuing any statement in the matter but in the end was compelled, belatedly, to do so by events, his party (Mapam) or something else. There is no way of knowing with the present evidence available.