

The Concept of «Transfer» in Zionism

by Maher Salameh

Transfer - a euphemism for the expulsion of the indigenous Palestinian Arabs from Palestine, has been an inherent component of Zionist ideology from its inception until today. Since the two primary goals of the Zionist movement have been the ingathering of world Jewry and the creation of an exclusive Jewish state in Palestine, transfer emerged not as a fleeting phenomenon, nor as an aberration in the history of the Zionist movement, but rather as a contrived and calculated scheme. Transfer is the embodiment of the national chauvinism which claims that Jews are a superior race and calls for the establishment of a «pure» Jewish state, necessitating the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs from the country in which they have been living for thousands of years.

The transfer of the Palestinians to other countries has preoccupied the thinking of Zionist leaders since the inception of the Zionist movement, as evidenced in their writings and strategy. Theodore Herzl, the founding father of political Zionism who was influenced by Cecil Rhodes and the ethos of the age of European colonialism throughout the developing world, warned of the danger of colonizing Palestine along with its indigenous inhabitants. His plan was to «spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it employment in our own» (Theodore Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, Vol. 1, p. 88).

Yosef Weitz, director of the Jewish National Fund, the organ of the World Zionist Organization with the task of land acquisition in Palestine, expressed the sentiment of his fellow Zionists very clearly: «Among ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples in this small country...The only solution is the Land of Israel (Greater Israel), or at least the Western Land of Israel (Palestine), without Arabs. There is no room for compromise on this point!...and there is no way besides transferring the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, to transfer them all...And

only with such a transfer will the country be able to absorb millions of our brothers» (Ilan Halevi, *A History of the Jews*, p. 186).

Ironically, the Zionist movement introduced the slogan «Palestine, a country without a people, for a people without a country,» and tried concurrently to expel the Palestinian Arabs from their country. Israel Zangwill, the author of this infamous phrase and one of Herzl's close aids, declared in a speech in New York city in 1904 that the Palestinians must be expelled from Palestine «through the power of the sword» (quoted in *Haaretz*, September 23, 1988).

Zangwill was not alone in promulgating this myth. Chaim Weizmann, who served as the head of the World Zionist Organization and was Israel's first president, also claimed that «there is a country without a people, and on the other hand, there exists the Jewish people who have no country» (Halevi, op. cit., p. 170).

Even after the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their country in the aftermath of the creation of the state of Israel, the American-born Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir still had the chutzpah to perpetuate this myth.

The Zionist logic justifies such concepts in the same manner in which Israel's former Prime Minister Menachem Begin described the massacre of over 250 Palestinians in Deir Yasin in 1948 as justified, and as a victory! Jewish terrorist organizations, whose two most well-known leaders are the present and former prime ministers of the Zionist state, carried out such acts specifically for the purpose of terrorizing the Palestinian Arabs in order to expedite their mass expulsion.

In defending Jewish terrorism, Yitzhak Shamir said, «Neither Jewish ethics nor Jewish tradition can disqualify terrorism...Terrorism is for us a part of the political battle being conducted under the present circumstances and it has a great part to play» (quoted in *Al Hamishmar*, December 24, 1987).

Begin and Shamir's terrorist organizations, the Irgun and LEHI (the Stern Gang), along with other Jewish

terrorist groups were responsible for destroying over 400 Palestinian villages in their drive for an exclusively Jewish state, «as Jewish as England is English» (Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 244). This frenzy, along with countless massacres, culminated in the uprooting and disenfranchisement of half the Palestinian population, in what is referred to by Palestinians as the *nakbeh*, or catastrophe. It was the Palestinian *nakbeh* which facilitated *aliyah*, i.e., Jewish immigration to Palestine and the creation of Israel.

Jewish terrorism and «transfer»

The exodus of half the Palestinian nation in 1948 represents a watershed in Palestinian history and in the history of the Palestinian-Zionist struggle. Israeli apologists have always maintained that the root cause of this exodus was the call by Arab leaders for the Palestinians to leave their country. Although Palestinian historians, including Walid Khalidi, Elias Shoufani and others have dispelled these fabrications as part of a concerted Israeli disinformation campaign, new Israeli primary sources have recently become available which irrevocably dispel the long-standing official Israeli version. Michael Palumbo's *The Palestinian Catastrophe*, Tom Segev's 1949: *The First Israelis*, Simha Flapan's *The Birth of Israel* and Benny Morris' *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947-49* are among the more recent books written by Israelis and Americans who have utilized the archival material recently made available by the Israel State Archives and the Central Zionist Archives.

Despite the shortcomings of these works, the apologetic tone of some of them and the careful selection of the information made available by the Israeli government, they have, nevertheless, shed some light on the crucial period during the years 1947-48 when the Zionist movement was clearing Palestine of as many Palestinians as possible in preparation for the establishment of their *exclusive* state.

Of particular significance is the role the Haganah, which was the mainstream paramilitary Zionist group and the military arm of the Mapai party (which became the Labor party in