



Palestinian refugee camp, Jordan, in the fifties

1968). The Haganah, which in 1948 transformed and became the backbone of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), was recently implicated by its former chief intelligence officer, Yitzhak Levi, who revealed the Haganah's full backing of Irgun's massacre in Deir Yasin, as well as providing them with rifles and ammunition (Nur El Deen Masalha, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, no. 69). Benny Morris also implicates the Haganah in the destruction of Palestinian villages and attacks against their residents (*The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947-1949*, pp. 53-54). The difference, it seems, between the mainstream (Labor) Zionists and the so-called extremists is, in Israel Shahak's words, the better knowledge on the part of the mainstream, or the pragmatists, of how politics operate.

The significance of the Haganah's involvement in terrorism underscores

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the perjury of the apologists who have all along vindicated the Haganah from such acts, which were carried out by the «extremists,» like Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir.

### The planning stage

The Zionist dream of building a «Jewish state» in Palestine remained on the drawing board for decades due to the lack of the most important ingredient - Jewish immigrants. The Zionist movement, despite all its efforts and the financial backing of Jewish capitalists and the imperialist countries, could only persuade a very small number of Jews to go to the «promised land.» It wasn't until the 1930s, after Hitler's rise to power, that Jews began to flock in large numbers to Palestine. During half a century of Zionist efforts to bring Jews to Palestine (1882-1932), only about 150,000 were brought, in comparison with

164,000 in the four years following the Nazi ascent to power.

It was on this background of the sudden and unexpected large increase of Jewish immigrants to Palestine, that the Mapai party, which was then the largest and most influential party, convened its congress in 1937. Having a new-found feeling of confidence and source of power, «it was then that 'transfer' became a policy, planned and supported by most of the highest-ranking leaders and opposed on moral grounds by none» (Israel Shahak, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, no. 71). The few ambivalent voices expressed reservation on practical grounds only. Golda Meir, for example, said: «I would agree that if the Arabs leave the country, my conscience would be absolutely clear. But is there such a possibility?» (ibid.)

The ensuing years after Mapai's congress witnessed a flurry of activity in an attempt to implement transfer. A transfer committee was formed which included Yosef Weitz, Karl Katznelson and Moshe Sharett, who eventually became Israel's prime minister. Yosef Weitz was delegated the responsibility of searching for an appropriate place to where the Palestinians would be transferred. Although the prevailing sentiment among most Zionists at the time was to expel the Palestinians to Iraq, Weitz, nevertheless, travelled to Syria, Lebanon and Argentina in search of such a place.

The Zionist movement was able to utilize its influence in Europe and the United States in order to gain support for the transfer plan. The British Labor Party declared its support for this plan at its 1944 convention. Then US President Herbert Hoover went further by suggesting the establishment of an international fund to finance the expulsion of Palestinians to Iraq (A. Mohareb, *The Relations Between Militant Zionist Organizations, 1937-1948*, Arabic). Hoover tried to appropriate \$50 million of the money allocated for the Marshall Plan but failed (ibid.).

### Transfer after the establishment of Israel

The policy continued after the establishment of the state of Israel and the expulsion of 80 percent of the population of the territories occupied in 1948. In the period between 1949-53, 23 Palestinian villages were destroyed in the Galilee and Triangle regions of northern Palestine.

Dr. Abraham Sharon warned about the danger of «peaceful coexis- ▶