

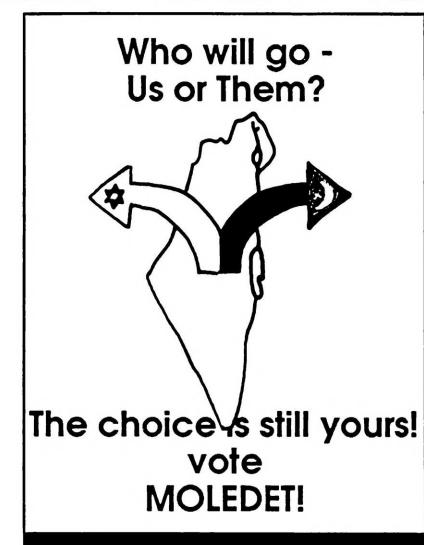
Palestinian refugees, Gaza, early fifties

few and do not represent the mainstream of Israeli society. But according to the Applied Social Research and Communications Institute of the Hebrew University (ASRCI), «Forty-nine percent of Israeli adults believe that the transfer of Arabs from the [occupied] territories would allow the democratic and Jewish nature of Israeli society to be maintained» (*Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 20, 1988). The ASRCI concluded that the subject of transfer «has gained legitimacy, and has become a focus of public discussion» (*Ibid.*).

Zeev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, two of Israel's foremost journalists, reached a similar conclusion in their new book *Intifada*: «The word transfer has been in the air for quite awhile. At first only fanatics like Kahane had indulged in such talk, but in the mid-1980's the notion spread to other respectable circles of Israeli society.» The «respectable circles» Schiff and Ya'ari refer to include: Raphael Eitan, the former Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces and current head of the Tehiya Party; Michael Dekel, who served as Deputy Minister of Defense under Yitzhak Rabin and Rahavam «Ghandi» Zeevi, head of the Moledet Party.

With the anticipated arrival of one million Soviet Jewish immigrants over the next eighteen months, the issue of «transfer» is more pertinent now than ever. It raises the specter of a new war which would be employed as a cover for again expelling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. Former Chief of Army Intelligence Aharon Yariv estimates the number of Palestinians who will be expelled during the next war to be «between 700,000 to 800,000 (quoted by Abdul Jawad Saleh, *Israel's Policy of De-Institutionalization*). Yariv adds that «instruments have been prepared for the contingency» implementation of this mass expulsion plan. In addition, such a war would, as many Israelis believe, or at least hope, put an end to the thirty-three-month old intifada, which has caused the Jewish state much embarrassment and international isolation. The media coverage during the past two and a half years has shown the world what Israel has been doing in the 1967 occupied territories for the past 23 years.

The formation of the new extreme right-wing government in Israel has already set the stage for a third Palestinian «transfer.» The first point of the 23-point plan that the government pre-



Moledet party's election campaign poster, 1988

sented to the Knesset deals with immigration and absorption. The drive to settle the new immigrants in the 1967 occupied territories has already been set in motion by none other than Ariel Sharon, the new minister of housing who has himself taken symbolic residence in these territories.