

# The Events of 1948 and the Palestinian Refugees

## Summary by Ron Stockton

We can learn much about history from first-hand reports. What follows are two types of reports: contemporary documents and the perspectives of those who were present, and the results of recent scholarship. There is an exceptional amount of rhetoric around these events. A polemic is an argument designed to prove that you are right and some rival group is wrong. There is a Jewish-Arab polemic and a Jewish-Jewish polemic [between the Ben-Gurion/Haganah/Labour left and the Begin/Herut/Likud right]. These polemics are only marginally included. Tessler discusses them more fully.

**The New Historians:** When Menachem Begin became Prime Minister in 1977, he was so stung by allegations that he was a terrorist that he began to open the state archives to researchers. More archives were opened under the 50-year rule in 1997 and 1998. These produced a wave of new research based on documents, journals, reports, minutes. Israelis saw themselves as peaceful and accommodating and the Arab side as the problem. Four books shook the way Israelis saw this history. These were Simha Flapan's *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities*; Benny Morris' *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*; Ilan Pappé's *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1951*; Avi Shlaim's *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, The Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine*; and Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis*.

**Background:** Fighting in Palestine went through three distinct stages with different characteristics and different military forces. 1) Jewish-British War, 2) Jewish-Palestinian clashes and 3) the Palestine War of 1948 involving Israel and the Arab League states. Fighting started in 1944 when Zionist forces began attacks on British positions and leaders. In November, 1947, when UN Resolution 181 voted to create a Jewish state, this war became a Jewish-Palestinian War as Palestinian irregulars fought Jewish forces and Jewish leaders tried to push beyond the territory assigned to them by the UN and tried to control the mixed towns and cities of Palestine. In May, 1948 when Jewish leaders proclaimed a Jewish State, Arab armies attacked and it became an Arab-Israeli war.

Benny Morris says the flight of refugees fell into three stages: **Stage I:** November, 1947 to April, 1948. The UN proposed the partition of Palestine & creation of two states, one Jewish, one Palestinian. Fighting broke out within the proposed Jewish sector between Jewish units & ill-organized Palestinian units, usually village militias. Many wealthy Palestinians evacuated their families, especially from port cities and the coastal plain. **Stage II.** April 1948 the massacre of Deir Yassin provoked a rush of refugees who feared widespread massacres. **Stage III.** May, 1948 Israel proclaimed itself a state. Neighboring Arab armies attacked. Israel sets out to conquer "Arab" parts of Palestine; fighting especially hard in Arab populated areas such as Galilee, in central Palestine, and around Jerusalem.

In 1947 there were 1.3m Arabs in Palestine, being 2/3 of the population of the Mandate. The Jews had 1/3 of the population and 6% of the land (20% of the productive land). According to a 1946 Census, just under 50% of the population in that area designated by UN 181 for the Jewish state was Jewish (although by 1948 it was over 55%). In the area designated for the Palestinian state but ultimately captured by Israel and incorporated into its state, the population was 97% Palestinian. By the end of the fighting there were 165,000 Palestinians left within Israel. 119,000 were Muslim, 35,000 Christian, 15,000 Druzes. 32,000 were urban/town dwellers, 120,000 villagers, 18,000 nomads. 30,000 were internal

refugees, 'having fled from one part of the state to the other during the fighting.' By May, 1949 there were nearly 800,000 refugees camped near Israeli's borders (*Israel: A Country Study*, p. 50). Changes in the urban Arab population figures (1947/1949) show the impact on the cities: Jerusalem: 75,000/3,500; Jaffa: 70,000/3,600; Haifa: 71,000/2,900; Lydda-Ramlah: 35,000/2,000; Acre 15,000 /3,500; Tiberias: 5,300/0; Safed: 9,500/0. (Figures from Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State*, 1980).

Menachem Begin was stung by being called a fascist and a terrorist. When he became Prime Minister in 1977, he opened the archives to Israeli researchers, hoping to show that what the Irgun did was not different from what the mainstream Jewish army [Haganah] did. These archives included cabinet minutes, private memoranda from the Jewish Agency and other Zionist organizations, military communications, and Ben-Gurion's extensive diaries. Arabs had always argued that the departure of the Palestinian population (perhaps 90% of those in green line Israel) was not an accident. They had alleged that there was a systematic plan to expel the Palestinians. The Israelis denied the existence of such a plan, and said the Arabs had left voluntarily as part of a military plan to exterminate the Jewish population. Opening the archives produced a new assessment of this period. The research rejected both positions but raised new controversies. One involved a military communiqué (**Plan Dalet** or **Plan D**) issued in March, 1948. The first to publish his research was Benny Morris in 1988. It is hard to overstate how dramatically different this archive-based research is from what went before and how politically controversial these research findings have been. Israeli professor Yaron Ezrachi (*Rubber Bullets*, 1997) says Israel is in the midst of a 'culture war' over Israeli history and the treatment of Palestinians. Israelis always believed in their "purity of arms," that they used force only when necessary, only under limited circumstances, never against unarmed civilians, and only because of an implacable Arab enemy determined to exterminate the Jews. Ezrachi says many Israelis no longer believe this. Sadly, the controversy has spilled over into our own country. When the Smithsonian wanted to sponsor a series of lectures in 1998 to honor the fiftieth anniversary of Israeli independence, the decision to focus on recent research caused such protests from right-wing Jewish groups that a New York Congressman threatened to hold hearings. The announced lecture series was cancelled.

### **Pre-1948 Proposals On the Palestinian Population**

**Peel Commission Report of 1937** proposed partition of Palestine and specified that Arabs would be removed from the Jewish territories. They mentioned 225,000 plus 85,000 in Jerusalem and Haifa. Some who wrote the Peel Commission report had been involved in the bloody Greek-Turkish "population exchanges" after World War I and saw that as a model. In that case, there were two existing states to receive 1,300,000 Greek and 400,000 Turkish refugees. "If Partition is to be effective in promoting a final settlement it must mean more than drawing a frontier and establishing two States. Sooner or later there should be a transfer of land and, as far as possible, an exchange of population...[A]ccording to an approximate estimate, in the area allocated to the Jewish State (excluding the urban districts to be retained for a period under Mandatory Administration) there are now about 225,000 Arabs. In the Area allocated to the Arab State there are only about 1,250 Jews; but there are about 125,000 Jews as against 85,000 Arabs in Jerusalem and Haifa. The existence of these minorities clearly constitutes the most serious hindrance to the smooth and successful operation of Partition. If the settlement is to be clean and final, the question must be boldly faced and firmly dealt with. It calls for the highest statesmanship on the part of all concerned." There must be a "transfer, voluntary or otherwise, of land and population."

**Joseph Weitz**, official in charge of Jewish settlement in his diary, 1940: "Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country...We shall not achieve our goal of

being an independent people with the Arabs in this small country. The only solution is a Palestine, at least Western Palestine [west of the Jordan river] without Arabs...And there is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe, should be left...Only after this transfer will the country be able to absorb the millions of our own brethren. There is no other way out."

**British Labour Party platform, 1944:** The platform referred to "the unspeakable atrocities of the cold and calculated German Nazi plan to kill all the Jews in Europe." It called for the removal of Palestinians from Palestine and their replacement with Jews. "Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out as the Jews move in. Let them be compensated handsomely for their land and let their settlement elsewhere be carefully organized and generously financed. The Arabs have many wide territories of their own." Regarding the ethics of the policy, "Palestine surely is a case, on human grounds and to promote a stable settlement, for a transfer of population. Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out, as the Jews move in."

**Former President Hoover (1945)** called for "engineering" the removal of Palestinians to Iraq. American Zionist Emergency Council: "The Zionist movement has never advocated the transfer of Palestine's Arab population...nevertheless when all long-accepted remedies seem to fail it is time to consider new approaches. The Hoover Plan...represents an important new approach in the realization of which Zionists would be happy to co-operate with the great powers and the Arabs."

### **The Traditional Israeli Position on Palestinian Refugees**

**Foreign Office:** "The government of Israeli must disclaim any responsibility for the creation of the this problem. The charge that these Arabs were forcibly driven out by Israeli authorities is wholly false; on the contrary, everything possible was done to prevent the exodus. The question of return cannot be divorced from its military context. As long as the state of war continues, the refugees would be a disruptive element in the maintenance of internal law and order and a formidable fifth column for eternal enemies." (Memo to US, July, 1948 in Pappé, p. 214).

**Ben-Gurion Before The Knesset:** "The Arabs' exit from Palestine...began immediately after the UN resolution, from the areas earmarked for the Jewish state. And we have explicit documents testifying that they left Palestine following instructions by the Arab leaders, with the Mufti at their head, under the assumption that the invasion of the Arab armies at the expiration of the Mandate will destroy the Jewish state and push all the Jews into the sea, dead or alive." (1961, quoted in Pappé, pp 88-89).

**Abba Eban,** Israeli Ambassador speaking to the UN in 1958: "The Arab refugee problem was caused by a war of aggression, launched by the Arab States against Israel in 1947 and 1948...Once you determine the responsibility for that war, you have determined the responsibility for the refugee problem" (p. 151). He follows with a series of assertions to show that the Palestinians and the Arab states are morally responsible, that Israel is innocent of wrongdoing and free of any responsibility. Eban's points: Palestinians Urged to Flee by Arab Leaders; Misery is Result of Unlawful Resort to Force by Arabs; Arab Governments Must Accept Responsibility; Refugee Problem Cannot Be Solved by Repatriation; Arab Leaders Block Solution for Political Reasons; 450,000 Jewish Refugees From Arab Lands Absorbed by Israel; Refugees Closely Akin to Arabs in Host Countries; Arab Governments Prefer Refugee Status Quo; Resettlement Among Host Countries is the Only Solution; Repatriation is a Threat to Israeli

Security; Arab Countries are the true 'Patria' For Arab Refugees" (Laqueur and Rubin, 151-164). Note: Eban subsequently became a strong advocate of a two-state solution.

**Samuel Katz:** The Arabs left "by the initiative of their own leaders" because the Arab states planned to attack Israel. "Their victory was certain, they claimed, but it would be speeded and made easier if the local Arab population got out of the way. The refugees would come back in the wake of the victorious Arab armies and not only recover their own property but also inherit the houses and farms of the vanquished and annihilated Jews." To promote this exodus and to discredit Israel, British and Arab propagandists turned an obscure battle at Deir Yassin into a "massacre." An "utterly fantastic story," this "fraud" has "served enemies of Israel and anti-semites faithfully." In fact, there were no more than 561,000 Arabs in Palestine, of whom 140,000 remained, so refugees could be no more than 420,000. Katz suggests that "a large number of needy Arabs from various Arab countries flocked to the refugee camps, were registered, and thenceforth received their rations" so that an "inflation of numbers" resulted from "the understandable readiness of needy and greedy people to take advantage of free upkeep." Keeping dead and resettled names on the registers created 1.3m refugees by 1966 when the true number was 367,000 (pp., 13-26).

### **Incident at Deir Yassin**

**Background:** A key event before the declaration of a state was the incident at Deir Yassin, a town in what is today western Jerusalem. (Today it is called Kfar Sha'ul and is the site of a mental hospital. Menachem Begin's house was about 100 feet from the road). Although the village had a non-aggression agreement with Jewish forces, there had been fighting in the area around the road leading from the coast to Jerusalem. On April 9, 1948 the forces of Irgun and Stern, 132 strong, attacked the village of 400. The villagers had mostly Ottoman-era muskets used for hunting rabbits or firing during wedding ceremonies. Their resistance was feeble but collapsed entirely when a professional Palmach unit positioned nearby agreed to bring over their heavy gun and use it to level the main building in the village. (The Palmach unit then left). The Irgun/Stern forces went through the village with dynamite and grenades and sten guns. Four Jews and 110 Palestinians died. (Note: a common figure on Palestinian deaths is 254. This number was used by the Red Cross and the BBC and in a *New York Times* story on April 13, 1948 (Dana Adams Schmidt). The Palestinian Research and Documentation Center at Bir Zeit University (1997?) came up with a list of 107 dead and 12 wounded. They say the total dead were not more than 120. Another inaccurate fact says there were Arab soldiers in Deir Yassin. One dead man in the village wore what looked like an Iraqi uniform, but there is no evidence that he was connected to the Iraqi army, nor did any of the villagers have Iraqi-type weapons).

**Meir Pa'el**, a young Palmach commando at Deir Yassin wrote a report to the Haganah commander: "It was noon when the battle ended and the shooting stopped. Things had become quiet, but the village had not surrendered. The Etzel [Irgun] and Lehi [Stern] irregulars left the places in which they had been hiding and started carrying out cleaning up operations in the houses. They fired with all the arms they had, and threw explosives into the houses. They also shot everyone they saw in the houses, including women and children--indeed the commanders made no attempt to check the disgraceful acts of slaughter. I myself and a number of inhabitants begged the commanders to give orders to their men to stop shooting, but our efforts were unsuccessful. In the meantime some twenty-five men had been brought out of the houses: they were loaded into the freight truck and led in a 'victory parade,' like a Roman triumph, through to Mhaneh Yahuda and Zakron Yosef quarters [of Jerusalem]. At the end of the parade they were taken to a stone quarry between Giv'at Sha'ul and Deir Yassin and shot in cold blood. The fighters then put the

women and children who were still alive on a truck and took them to the Mandelbaum Gate” [the entry into Jordanian-controlled Jerusalem].

**Mordechai Ra’anan**, Likud commander at Deir Yassin, on how and why he held a press conference and fabricated the figure of 254 dead. “On that day I did not know, could not have known, how many Arabs had been killed. No one counted the bodies. I told the reporters that 254 were killed so that a big figure would be published, so that the Arabs would panic not only in Jerusalem but across the country, and this goal was accomplished. Reporters, journalists, researchers, and historians treat it as if it were an established fact requiring no investigation, and nobody bothered to check what the true figure was.” (Quoted in *ZOA*, 1997).

**Begin:** Begin wrote of how "Arab propaganda" created a "crude atrocity story" of over 240 deaths. Ben-Gurion's followers, "apprehensive of the Irgun's growing strength and popular support" also used this fabricated figure "to denounce and smear the Irgun." But Begin says the results were not what the propagandists wanted: "Arabs throughout the country, induced to believe wild tales of 'Irgun butchery', were seized with limitless panic and started to flee for their lives. This mass flight soon developed into a maddened, uncontrollable stampede. Of the about 800,000 Arabs who lived on the present territory of the State of Israel, only some 165,000 are still there. The political and economic significance of this development can hardly be overestimated." (Begin, *The Revolt*, p. 164).

### Events in Other Areas

**Yigael Allon**, writing on May 10, a month after Deir Yassin and five days before Israel declared independence, when the Haganah anticipated an Arab invasion: "There were before us only five days, before the threatening date, the 15th of May. We saw a need to claim the inner Galilee and to create a Jewish territorial succession in the entire area of the upper Galilee. The long battles had weakened our forces, and before us stood great duties of blocking the routes of the [anticipated] Arab invasion. We therefore looked for means which did not force us into employing force, in order to cause the tens of thousands of sulky Arabs who remained in Galilee to flee, for in case of an Arab invasion these were likely to strike us from the rear. We tried to use a tactic which took advantage of the impression created by the fall of Safed and the [Arab] defeat in the area which was cleaned by Operation Metateh--a tactic which worked miraculously well. I gathered all the Jewish mukhtars [mayors] who have contact with Arabs in different villages, and asked them to whisper in the ears of some Arabs, that a great Jewish reinforcement has arrived in Galilee and that it is going to burn all villages of the Huleh. They should suggest to these Arabs, as their friends, escape while there is time...The flight numbered myriads." (*Book of Palmach*, cited in *Israel: A Country Study*, p. 49).

**Yitahak Rabin on Lydda and Ramleh:** "While the fighting was still in progress, we had to grapple with a troublesome problem, for whose solution we could not draw upon any previous experience: the fate of the civilian population of Lod and Ramle, numbering some 50,000. Not even Ben-Gurion could offer any solution, and during the discussions at operational headquarters, he remained silent, as was his habit in such situations. Clearly, we could not leave Lod's hostile and armed populace in our rear, where it could endanger the supply route to Yiftach (another brigade), which was advancing eastward. We walked outside, Ben-Gurion accompanying us. Allon repeated his question: 'What is to be done with the population?' B.G. waived his hand in a gesture which said, 'Drive them out!' Allon and I held a consultation. I agreed that it was essential to drive the inhabitants out. We took them on foot towards the

Bet Horon Road, assuming that the legion would be obliged to look after them, thereby shouldering logistic difficulties which would burden its fighting capacity, making things easier for us. 'Driving out' is a term with a harsh ring. Psychologically, this was one of the most difficult actions we undertook. The population of Lod did not leave willingly. There was no way of avoiding the use of force and warning shots in order to make the inhabitants march the 10 to 15 miles to the point where they met up with the legion. The inhabitants of Ramle watched and learned the lesson. Their leaders agreed to be evacuated voluntarily, on condition that the evacuation was carried out by vehicles. Buses took them to Latrun, and from there, they were evacuated by the legion. Great suffering was inflicted upon the men taking part in the eviction action. Soldiers of the Yiftach Brigade included youth-movement graduates, who had been inculcated with values such as international brotherhood and humanness. The eviction action went beyond the concepts they were used to. There were some fellows who refused to take part in the expulsion action. Prolonged propaganda activities were required after the action, to remove the bitterness of these youth-movement groups, and explain why we were obliged to undertake such a harsh and cruel action" (NYT, 10-23-79).

**Golda Meir on Haifa:** "Whenever I read or hear about the Arabs whom we allegedly dealt with so brutally, my blood boils. In April, 1948, I myself stood on the beach in Haifa for hours and literally beseeched the Arabs of that city not to leave. Moreover, it was a scene that I am not likely to forget. The Haganah had just taken over Haifa, and the Arabs were starting to run away--because their leadership had so eloquently assured them that this was the wisest course for them to take and the British had so generously put dozens of trucks at their disposal. Nothing that the Haganah said or tried did any good--neither the pleas made via loudspeakers mounted on vans nor the leaflets we rained down on the Arab sections of the town ("Do not fear!" they read in Arabic and Hebrew. "By moving out, you will bring poverty and humiliation upon yourselves. Remain in the city which is both yours and ours")...Ben-Gurion called me in and said, 'I want you to go to Haifa at once and see to it that the Arabs who remain in Haifa are treated properly. I also want you to try to persuade those Arabs on the beach to come back. You must get into their heads that they have nothing to fear.' So I went immediately. I sat there on the beach, and I begged them to return to their homes. But they had only one answer: 'We know that there is nothing to fear, but we have to go. We'll be back.'" I was sure that they went, not because they were frightened of us, but because they were terrified of being considered traitors to the Arab 'cause.'...Of course, there were some Jews in the *yishuv* who said, even in 1948, that the Arab exodus was the best thing that could have happened to Israel, but I know of no serious Israeli who ever felt that way." (pp. 277, 280).

**Begin on the conquest of Jaffa:** After extensive shelling, "Then a strange phenomenon was revealed before our eyes: the mass flight from Jaffa. Arab civilians and a variety of Arab 'fighters' suddenly began to leave the town in panic. There appear to have been two causes for this epidemic flight. One was the name of their attackers and the repute which propaganda had bestowed on them...The second factor was the weight of our bombardment. I do not know exactly how many shells we sent into Jaffa...The total load was certainly very heavy. We went all out...Confusion and terror, deepened by the noise of the battle raging at no great distance from the central streets, reigned in the town. Thus the morale of the enemy was broken, and the great flight began, by sea and land, on wheels and on foot. It started with thousands, but very quickly tens of thousands were sucked into the panic flood. British sources reported numerous Arab casualties in all parts of the town...The enemy was given no rest and could find no shelter. The British military authorities tried to calm the panic stricken Arabs. Jaffa was in utter confusion. The streets were flooded, the houses gaping and tottering, looting and murder were rife. There was no authority that could now prevent the complete evacuation of the town. The mass flight from Jaffa carried

away not only the civilian population but fighting men as well, not only in Jaffa but in the surrounding neighborhood" (p. 363-364).

**Abu Iyad on fleeing Jaffa:** “ May 13, 1948, is a day that will remain forever engraved in my memory. That day, less than twenty-four hours before the proclamation of the Israeli state, my family fled Jaffa for refuge in Gaza. We had been under siege; the Zionist forces controlled all the roads leading south, and the only escape left open to us was the sea. It was under a hail of shells fired from Jewish artillery set up in neighboring settlements, especially Tel Aviv, that I clambered onto a makeshift boat with my parents, my four brothers and sisters, and other relatives. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians started for exile that day, often under tragic conditions. Not yet fifteen, I was overwhelmed by the sight of this huge mass of men, women, old people and children struggling under the weight of suitcases or bundles, making their way painfully down to the wharfs of Jaffa in a sinister tumult. Cries mingled with moaning and sobs, all punctuated by deafening explosions....At the time I didn't even ask myself why we were so hastily leaving our homes and belongings for the adventure of exile. It wouldn't have occurred to me at my age to question my father's authority, and besides, like everyone else, I was convinced that to stay would have meant sure death. News of the Deir Yassin massacre, which had taken place on April 9, 1948, still rang in our ears. Militants of Menachem Begin's group, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, had stormed the peaceful village west of Jerusalem and wiped out most of its inhabitants: More than 250 defenseless men, women, and children had been shot down, buried alive, or had their throats slashed. Numerous bodies had been mutilated with knives, pregnant women had been disemboweled. We had no reason to doubt the news of this savage killing, confirmed by Jacques de Reynier, the representative of the International Red Cross, who personally conducted the investigation at the scene. Like Deir Yassin, Jaffa was at the mercy of the Zionist forces which completely controlled the hinterland of the city. The Haganah, the 'official' army of the Jewish Agency which closely coordinated its activities with those of the so-called dissident groups like Begin's Irgun, had unleashed a full-scale offensive at the beginning of April aimed at cleaning out the Arab 'pockets' within the territory set aside for the Jewish state. Before each attack, the population was warned that it would suffer the same fate as Deir Yassin's if it didn't evacuate the area. The news of the genocide had spread like wildfire throughout the entire country, helped along by the Zionist mass media which amplified it as part of its campaign to terrorize the Arabs. But there's no denying that the massacre was also used by Palestinian agitators trying to mobilize the population. For example, they stressed that Deir Yassin women had been raped by the Zionist forces and called upon their compatriots to defend their most precious possession, the honor of the wives and daughters. But in most cases the strategy backfired; In a profoundly traditional society such as ours, many men rushed to remove their women from the reach of the Zionist soldiers instead of staying to resist the aggression. I often remember hearing in this connection that 'honor is more important than land.' The decision of most of Jaffa's approximately 100,000 residents to flee the city for temporary refuge seemed all the more logical in that the Jews had an overwhelming military superiority. Better armed and better organized than the Palestinians, there was no question that they had the upper hand. The population began to take fright when Great Britain announced at the end of 1947 that it was relinquishing its mandate over Palestine and withdrawing its troops before May 15, 1948. So we couldn't even count on the protection--such as it was--of the British troops. Fright changed to panic when, after the Deir Yassin massacre, the Zionist forces began to pound the city, especially the port and business district. Everyone thought that the economic suffocation would serve as a prelude to the conquest of the city and doubtless new and atrocious killings” (pp. 3-5).

**Menachem Begin, on the Jewish Claim to Jordan:** "'Eretz Israel,' literally the 'Land of Israel,' has been regarded since Biblical times as the motherland of the Children of Israel. It has always comprised what came subsequently to be called Palestine on both sides of the river Jordan, that is to say not only

Western Palestine, but also the territory formerly occupied by three of the twelve Hebrew tribes, Manasseh, Gad, and Reuben" (p. 3).

**Begin Defines Terrorism:** "Our enemies called us terrorists...And yet, we were not terrorists...The historical and linguistic origins of the political term 'terror' prove that it cannot be applied to a revolutionary war of liberation...A revolution, or a revolutionary war, does not aim at instilling fear. Its objective is to overthrow a regime and to set up a new regime in its place. In a revolutionary war both sides use force...Fighters for freedom must arm; otherwise they would be crushed overnight. Certainly the use of force also wakens fear...But the instilling of fear is not an aim in itself. The sole aim on the one side is the overthrow of armed tyranny; on the other side it is the perpetuation of that tyranny...We were strictly speaking anti-terrorists" (p. 59-60).

**Moshe Dayan. A funeral oration for an Israeli farmer killed near the Egyptian border, 1953:** "Let us not today fling accusations at the murderers. Who are we that we should argue against their hatred? For eight years now they sit in their refugee camps in Gaza, and before their very eyes, we turn into our homestead the land and the villages in which they and their forefathers have lived. We are a generation of settlers, and without the steel helmet and the cannon we cannot plant a tree and build a home. Let us not shrink back when we see the hatred fermenting and filling the lives of hundreds of thousands of Arabs, who sit all around us. Let us not avert our gaze, so that our hand shall not slip. This is the fate of our generation, the choice of our life--to be prepared and armed, strong and tough--or otherwise, the sword will slip from our fist, and our life will be snuffed out" (Uri Avnery, *Israel Without Zionism*, 154).

### **What the Professors Found In The Archives The Context for Plan Dalet**

The UN partition plan of 1947 allocated 57% of Palestine to the Jewish state. Ben-Gurion had made it clear that he had no intention to accept those limitations. His plan was to include in the Jewish state the maximum amount of territory possible. He was reluctantly willing to yield the West Bank to Jordan but wanted most of the rest. Before 1947, the Jews had placed settlements outside of their main population areas and Ben-Gurion hoped to include any area where there were Jews living in the Jewish state. Unfortunately, many of those settlements were in areas that had majority Palestinian populations. Within the area designated for the Jewish state, about 45% of the population was Palestinian. In the expanded area almost all the population was Palestinian. There were also certain urban areas that had mixed population, among them Haifa, Jaffa, Tiberias, Safed, and Jerusalem. Israel wanted all of those. After 1948, Israel had 75% of Palestine, and there were perhaps 800,000 Palestinian refugees.

### **What Plan Dalet Said**

**Plan D** was to create "a fixed defensive system to preserve our settlements, vital economic projects, and property, which will enable us to provide government services within the borders of the state (based on defending the regions of the state on the one hand, and on blocking the main access routes from enemy territory to territory of the state, on the other)." Jewish forces were to mount "operations against enemy population centers located inside or near our defensive system in order to prevent them from being used as bases by an active armed force. These operations can be carried out in the following manner: either by

destroying villages (by setting fire to them, by blowing them up, and by planting mines in their debris), and especially of those population centres which are difficult to control continuously; or by mounting combing and control operations according to the following guidelines: encirclement of the village, conducting a search inside it. In case of resistance, the armed force must be wiped out and the population expelled outside the borders of the state.” Note: Enemy bases refers to Arab villages or quarters in three categories: 1. Those in the security zone (surrounding Jewish settlements or strategic routes) 2. Those on the borders of territory designated to become Arab Palestine 3. Those within the Jewish state.

### **The Research of Benny Morris**

**Morris** says there is no evidence of a central plan to expel the Palestinians. He says the Palestinians left in waves, which were quite different from each other. Wave I was from November, 1947 to April, 1948. The UN proposed partition and isolated fighting broke out in the proposed Jewish zone between Jewish units and ill-organized Palestinian units. Wealthy Palestinians often evacuated their families, especially from the port cities and coastal plain. This had the unintended consequence of depriving the Palestinians of many key leaders. Wave II started in April after the massacre at Deir Yassin. This produced mass flight. Wave III occurred after May when the Jews declared Israel a state and the Arab armies attacked. Israel set out to conquer areas designated for the Palestinian state, including Galilee and the Negev. Jewish claims to the contrary, Morris found no evidence that Arab leaders broadcast messages urging Arab civilians to flee. (This confirmed earlier research by Erskine Childers who had read British intelligence records monitoring radio broadcasts. Morris also had access to internal Israeli intelligence records). Morris did find one communication that instructed Jordanian commanders to assist with the evacuation of women and children in combat zones, but this applied only to combat situations and there was no suggestion that the civilians be removed from Palestine. Morris did find several Arab broadcasts urging Palestinians to stay put, often pointing out that their movement was disrupting military operations. Morris found that local Jewish leaders in Haifa and Tiberias tried to persuade fleeing Palestinians that they would be safe if they stayed.

**Morris on Plan Dalet:** It was “not a political blueprint for the expulsion of Palestine’s Arabs; it was governed by military considerations and was geared to achieving military ends. But given the nature of the war and admixture of the two populations, securing the interior of the Jewish state for the impending battle along its borders in practice meant the depopulations and destruction of villages that hosted hostile local militia and irregular forces.” Plan Dalat was “a blueprint for securing the emergent Jewish state and the clusters of Jewish settlements outside the state’s territory against the expected Arab invasion on or after 15 May. The plan was born out of a feeling of losing the diplomatic battle due to the shift in America’s policy and the initial success of the Arab irregulars.”

**Morris:** “However, during April-June relatively few Hagana commanders faced the dilemma of whether or not to carry out the expulsion clauses of Plan D. The Arab townspeople and villagers usually fled from their homes before or during the battle: the Hagana commanders had rarely to decide about, or issue, expulsion orders.”

**Morris:** “Plan D aside, there is no trace of any decision-making by the Yishuv’s or Hagana’s supreme bodies in March or earlier April in favour of a blanket, national policy of driving out the Arabs.”

### **The Research of Tom Segev**

**Segev** focused his research on Ben-Gurion's diaries, minutes of cabinet meeting, and internal communications. Some of his most valuable contributions are quotes from key personalities.

**Ben-Gurion:** On May 29, 1949 BG commented on a "harsh and threatening" letter from President Truman expressing outrage at how Palestinians had been treated. Truman said he had supported Jewish refugees out of compassion and now might support Palestinians for the same reason. **B-G:** "The State of Israel was not established as a consequence of the UN Resolution. Neither America nor any other country saw the Resolution through, nor did they stop the Arab countries (and the British mandatory government) from declaring total war on us in violation of UN Resolutions. America did not raise a finger to save us, and moreover, imposed an arms embargo, and had we been destroyed they would not have resurrected us. Those boundaries determined in the UN Resolution were based on peace accords, the validity of international law, and the Arabs' acceptance of them. But the Arabs rejected it. There are no refugees--there are fighters who sought to destroy us, root and branch. The Arab states came at their request and they still refuse to make peace or to recognize us, and are openly threatening revenge. Shall we bring back the refugees so that they can exterminate us for the second time, or should we ask America to take pity on us and send an army to protect us? America is immense. We are a tiny and helpless nation. We could not withstand American might, but our self-preservation is more important to us than obedience to America. The rebuke and the threatening style [of the letter] are incomprehensible" p. 36-7.

**Ben-Gurion,** mid-1949, on the need to capture Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron: "I presumed that most of the Arabs of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron would flee...and then the entire country, as far as the Jordan north or south of Jericho, as well as all of the western bank of the Dead Sea would be ours." Note: Those towns had 100,000 Arabs (Segev, p 14).

**Ben-Gurion:** "Now history has shown who is really attached to this country, and for whom this country is a luxury which is easily given up. So far, not a single Jewish settlement, however remote, hopeless or isolated, has been abandoned. The Arabs, on the other hand, have abandoned entire cities, like Tiberias and Haifa, with the greatest of ease, after their very first defeat. Despite the fact that they did not have to fear destruction or massacre. Indeed, it has now been made amply clear which people is deeply attached to this country." (Statement April 5, 1948, on the nearly 400,000 refugees at that time, in Segev, p. 25).

**Minutes, Ministerial Committee for Abandoned Property, 7-13-48:** Conquest of Lydda and Ramlah. Member says the "army proposed to capture all the men who are capable of bearing arms (except for those who signed the letter of surrender), take them as far as the Arab border and set them loose...Minister of Defense (BG) says 'young men should be taken captive, the rest of the inhabitants ought to be encouraged to leave, but those who remain, Israel will have to provide for'" (Segev, p. 26-27).

**Ben-Gurion:** "The Arab Legion has wired that there are 30,000 refugees moving along the road between Lydda and Ramlah, who are infuriated with the Legion. They're demanding bread. They should be taken across the Jordan river" (July 15, 1948, quoted in Segev, p. 27).

**Aharon Cizling,** Minister of Agriculture, November 17, 1948, at a Cabinet meeting: "I've received a letter on the subject [of Jewish atrocities]. I must say that I have known what things have been like for some time and I have raised the issue several times already here. However after reading this letter I couldn't sleep all night. I felt things that were going on were hurting my soul, the soul of my family and all of us

here. I could not imagine where we came from and to where are we going...I often disagreed when the term Nazi was applied to the British. I wouldn't like to use the term, even though the British committed Nazi crimes. But now Jews too have behaved like Nazis and my entire being has been shaken...Obviously we have to conceal these actions from the public, and I agree that we should not even reveal that we're investigating them. But they must be investigated...." (Segev, p. 26).

**Moshe Sharett (future Prime Minister) to Nahum Goldman**, head of the World Zionist Organization: "the most spectacular event in the contemporary history of Palestine, in a way more spectacular than the creation of the Jewish state, is the wholesale evacuation of its Arab population...The opportunities opened up by the present reality for a lasting and radical solution of the most vexing problem of the Jewish state, are so far-reaching, as to take one's breath away. The reversion to the status quo ante is unthinkable" (June 15, 1948, quoted in Segev, p. 29).

### **The Issue of Absentee Property**

**Segev**, whose research focuses upon the events of 1949, discusses what happened to the property of the refugees. The Custodian of Abandoned Property had control of 45,000 homes and apartments, 7,000 shops and businesses, 500 workshops and industrial plants, 1,000 warehouses, 800,000 acres ready for harvest. The Government confiscated 1.5 billion pounds of Arab deposits in Haifa banks. (At the time, the British pound was worth \$5.60). 140,000-160,000 Jews were settled in abandoned homes, in Jaffa 45,000, in Haifa 40,000, in Acre 5,000. In late 1948 the government passed the controversial Absentees' Property Law. A Present Absentee was any Palestinian who stayed in Israel but was away from their "usual place of residence" on November 29, 1947. They lost their property whatever the reason for their absence. (Fleeing from fighting was a common reason). Over 500,000 acres were taken after 1948. When the Minister of Finance brought the Present Absentee law to the Knesset he warned members not to talk carelessly. "We are a small country but the interest of the world in all that happens and is said here is immense. It's as if the eyes of the world are constantly on us, watching, exploring, analyzing every step, every act, every word." To make the policy look better, the cabinet report pointed out other confiscations in India and Pakistan; Turkish Greeks and Armenians; Bulgarian Greeks; Iraqi Assyrians; Germans in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. In August, 1948 the government introduced a plan to create 32 Galilee settlements on 30,000 acres. 14,500 acres belonged to Arabs, 5,000 to government, 5,000 to other owners (Germans and Waqf), 5,000 to Jews. On the confiscation of some Waqf lands (held in trust for God), a Palestinian poet wrote, "God is an absentee" (Segev, pp. 69-86).

### **The Research of Ilan Pappé**

**Pappé** conducted a thorough study of political, diplomatic, and military factors from 1947-51. He wrote in 1998 and benefited from the research of Morris and Segev. He says a major consideration of the Jewish side was that the US was vacillating on whether to support the creation of a Jewish state. Regarding the distinction between hostile and non-hostile Arab villages, Pappé says this was a loose distinction since more than half of all Arab villages were considered hostile. Neutrality was not enough. Only those villages that surrendered unconditionally and agreed to support Israeli military efforts were considered friendly. Abu Ghosh was one. Nearly all villages and towns near Jerusalem were considered hostile and were destroyed. By August, 1948 286 villages had been destroyed and many others were seriously damaged and later abandoned or leveled. By 1949, 350 were destroyed.

**Pappe on Plan D:** “Jewish forces were instructed to occupy not only the area allocated to the Jews, but also the mixed towns of Palestine and many areas outside the designated Jewish state. The clear purpose was to win firm control over most of western Palestine and by that to precipitate the Arab invasion, thereby putting an end to the fluctuations of the American policy-makers... Its significance lies in the means by which the Jews hoped to solve the predicament of March 1948, as detailed in the plan itself. They include, as Khalidi notes, the uprooting, expulsion and pauperization of the Palestinian community; all signifying an escalation in Jewish actions against the Palestinian community. Until then the efforts were toward establishing a state, building an infrastructure, contemplating a takeover of the mandatory system--but Plan D spoke of the destruction of the other party to the conflict.”

**Pappe:** “The ‘defensive system’ was a euphemism for what was the establishment of a security zone to be controlled entirely by Jewish forces. This zone covered all the regions surrounding Jewish settlements and quarters as well as the areas along important strategic routes. Plan D went on to outline a plan of action. This referred to ‘enemy bases’ and dealt with the need to attack them as a preventive measure. The term ‘enemy bases’ refers to Arab villages or quarters from which hostile actions had been launched against Jewish settlements and convoys. They were not proper military bases yet, they were civil locations accommodating army personnel and ammunition. Hence when Plan D called for their destruction, it was calling for the destruction of certain Arab population centres. The ‘enemy bases’ designated for attack as military objectives fell with three distinct categories: those located in the security zone defined above (i.e., the surroundings of Jewish settlements and all strategic routes); on the borders of the territory designated by the UN to become Arab Palestine; and those within the Jewish state as defined in the UN resolution...In the areas defined by the Jews as theirs only those villages which would surrender unconditionally would stand a chance of not being submitted to the harsh treatment mentioned above....Plan D did not, therefore only provide guidelines for the future, it also reflected an existing notion prevalent among the policy-makers of the Jewish community--the notion that a Jewish success in the struggle over Palestine might involve the destruction of the Palestinian community....We are left with the impression that of all these [other] factors [absence of leadership, traditional social structure, etc] the Jewish policy as exemplified by Plan D is the principal explanation for the departure of most of the Arabs of Palestine.” To be exempted from destruction a village “had to actively assist the Jewish war effort or at least adopt a neutral policy benevolent to the Jewish side.” p. 92.

**Pappe:** “If the upper classes left voluntarily, it does seem that the lower strata of the Palestinian society were driven out through the implementation of Plan D and because of the developing civil war which reached a climax in April, 1948 with the Jewish takeover of the mixed towns of Haifa, Jaffa and Tiberias. The massacre of Deir Yassin played an important role in driving these groups out of Palestine in April and May 1948; it is the contention of many historians that the Deir Yassin massacre had a psychological effect on the Arab community and acted as a catalyst to the exodus.”

**Pappe:** “The Jewish policy as exemplified by Plan D is the principal explanation for the departure of most of the Arabs of Palestine.” He says there were local efforts in Haifa and Tiberias to persuade local Arabs to stay, but overall Plan D was “a master plan for the expulsion of as many Palestinians as possible.”

**Pappe** found internal communications regarding the removal of the Palestinians. **Yosef Weitz**, head of the Jewish Agency’s Land Department, tried to evict as many Arabs as possible regardless of their friendliness or hostility. Weitz sought out fertile land and encouraged local military commanders to evacuate Arabs. He was close to Ben-Gurion and was appointed head of the “transfer committees”

which wrote a memorandum on “Retrospective Transfer, A Scheme for the Solution of the Arab Question in the State of Israel.”

**Pappe** found evidence of mass killings to induce fear. Ben-Gurion was told by his adviser on Arab affairs (Ezra Danin) in January, 1948 that “our friends among the Arabs inform us that a severe blow, with a high rate of casualties to the Arabs would increase Arab fear and would render external Arab intervention ineffective.” Another advisor (Gad Machnes) said “we need a cruel and brutal retaliating policy, we have to be accurate in time, place and number of dead. If we know that a family is guilty, we should be merciless, and kill the women and the children as well, otherwise the reaction is useless. While the forces are in action, there is no room for checking who is guilty and who is not” (pp. 82-83). Near Haifa and Hebron there were systemic massacres of whole villages. The northern commander Moshe Carmel interpreted “destroy” to mean “kill off the local population” (p. 94). Two villages (Balad al-Sheikh and Hawassa) in Galilee were targeted. “Carmel suggested and the General Command approved the massacre that took place in the two villages. The order was to kill as many men as possible but ‘to avoid the killing of women and children as far as possible.’ All the men of the two villages were dead by the end of the operation as were a number of children and women. On the ruins of these villages the Jewish neighbourhoods of Ben-Dor and Tel-Hanan were later erected” (p. 81). Pappé cites the villages of Ilabun, Sa’as’a, Dawaymiya, Safsaf in the Galilee and Hebron areas as other targets. He sees Deir Yassin in this context.

**Pappe** described “The War of the Crops” waged from March, 1948 on. Plan D ordered the Supreme Military Command to use military tactics *and* the “application of economic pressure on the enemy.” This meant cutting water and food supplies in the cities, or preventing farmers from cultivating their crops. The “harvest war” was initiated from above and was a “national” policy. Depriving populations of food was the equivalent of forcing flight.

**The Conclusions of Walid Khalidi:** Khalidi is a Professor of History at Harvard. He is a native of Jerusalem, a refugee from 1948. Khalidi concluded that the code words and euphemisms of Plan D were clear: destroy the ability of the Palestinian population to survive within its land so that it would be forced to flee. He says the very idea of a Jewish state was inconsistent with the continued presence of the Palestinian population: “Plan Dalet, or ‘Plan D,’ was the name given by the Zionist High Command to the general plan for military operations within the framework of which the Zionists launched successive offensives in April and early May 1948 in various parts of Palestine. These offensives, which entailed the destruction of the bulk of the Palestine Arabs, were calculated to achieve the military *fait accompli* upon which the state of Israel was to be based.”

**Ben-Gurion on a Different Topic:** “The Moslem rule in Lebanon is artificial and easily undermined. A Christian state ought to be set up whose southern border would be the Litani River. Then we’ll form an alliance with it.” Sharett described Ben-Gurion’s position: “all we need to do is to find a Christian Lebanese officer, perhaps no higher than a captain, and win him over or buy him with money, so that he would declare himself the savior of the Maronite [Catholic] population. Then the Israeli army would enter Lebanon, occupy the territory in question and establish a Christian government which would form an alliance with Israel.” (1948, quoted in Segev, p. 10).

## BENNY MORRIS, 2004

In 2004 Morris updated his book based upon newly released archival materials. Strengthening his early research, Morris found that “the transfer idea was in the air” and that Ben Gurion was “projecting a message of transfer.” What stunned Israeli intellectuals was that Morris, a one-time leftist, anti-war activist who had been imprisoned for refusal to serve in the military, concluded that Ben Gurion had gone soft and had been reluctant to do what he should have done—complete the expulsions. Morris says that expulsion may be the only solution and may be in the future. Interview of January, 2004, Ha’aretz. There is another interview in The Atlantic, May 2004.

**Regarding rape, murder and expulsions in 1948:** “[W]hat the new material shows is that there were far more Israeli acts of massacre than I had previously thought. To my surprise, there were also many cases of rape. In the months of April-May 1948, units of the Haganah were given operational orders that stated explicitly that they were to uproot the villagers, expel them and destroy the villages themselves.” Morris found evidence of a dozen cases of rape. “In a large proportion of the cases the event ended with murder. Because neither the victims nor the rapists liked to report these events, we have to assume that the dozen cases of rape that were reported, which I found, are not the whole story. They are just the tip of the iceberg.” He also found evidence of 24 massacres and “a great deal of arbitrary killing...Apparently, various officers who took part in the operation understood that the expulsion order they received permitted them to do these deeds in order to encourage the population to take to the roads. The fact is that no one was punished for these acts of murder. Ben-Gurion silenced the matter. He covered up for the officers who did the massacres.”

**Expulsions in 1948:** “From April 1948, Ben-Gurion is projecting a message of transfer. There is no explicit order of his in writing, there is no orderly comprehensive policy, but there is an atmosphere of transfer. The transfer idea is in the air. The entire leadership understands that this is the idea. The officer corps understands what is required of them. Under Ben-Gurion, a consensus of transfer is created...Ben-Gurion was a transferist. He understood that there could be no Jewish state with a large and hostile Arab minority in its midst. There would be no such state. It would not be able to exist. Ben-Gurion was right. If he had not done what he did, a state would not have come into being. That has to be clear. It is impossible to evade it. Without the uprooting of the Palestinians, a Jewish state would not have arisen here.” Regarding the expulsion of 50,000 people from Lod [Lydda and Ramle] in Operation Dani: “I definitely understand them. I understand their motives. I don’t think they felt any pangs of conscience and in their place I wouldn’t have felt pangs of conscience. Without that act, they would not have won the war and the state would not have come into being...There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleaning. I know that this term is completely negative in the discourse of the 21st century, but when the choice is between ethnic cleansing and genocide—the annihilation of your people—I prefer ethnic cleansing...Even the great American democracy could not have been created without the annihilation of the Indians. There are cases in which the overall, final good justifies harsh and cruel acts that are committed in the course of history.” Morris explains his own perspective on what happened: Ben-Gurion “made a serious historical mistake in 1948. Even though he understood the demographic issue and the need to establish a Jewish state without a large Arab minority, he got cold feet during the war. In the end he faltered...If he was already engaged in expulsion, maybe he should have done a complete job. I know that this stuns the Arabs and the liberals and the politically correct types. But my feeling is that this place would be quieter and know less suffering if the matter had been resolved once and for all. If Ben-Gurion had carried out a large expulsion and cleansed the whole country—the whole Land of Israel—as far as

the Jordan River. It may yet turn out that this was his fatal mistake. If he had carried out a full expulsion—rather than a partial one—he would have stabilized the State of Israel for generations.”

**Why Morris Supports Transfer.** “If you are asking me whether I support the transfer and expulsion of the Arabs from the West Bank, Gaza and perhaps even from Galilee and the Triangle, I say not at this moment. I am not willing to be a partner to that act. In the present circumstances it is neither moral nor realistic. The world would not allow it, the Arab world would not allow it, it would destroy the Jewish society from within. But I am ready to tell you that in other circumstances, apocalyptic ones, which are liable to be realized in five or ten years, I can see expulsions. If we find ourselves with atomic weapons around us, or if there is a general Arab attack on us and a situation of warfare on the front with Arabs in the rear shooting at convoys on their way to the front, acts of expulsion will be entirely reasonable. They may even be essential...The Israelis Arabs are a time bomb. Their slide into complete Palestinization has made them an emissary of the enemy that is among us. They are a potential fifth column. In both demographic and security terms they are liable to undermine the state. So that if Israel again finds itself in a situation of existential threat, as in 1948, it may be forced to act as it did then...“When one has to deal with a serial killer, it’s not so important to discover why he became a serial killer. What’s important is to imprison the murderer or to execute him.” [Question: Who is the serial killer?]. “The barbarians who want to take our lives. The people the Palestinian society sends to carry out the terrorist attacks, and in some way the Palestinian society itself as well. At the moment, that society is in the state of being a serial killer. It is a very sick society. It should be treated the way we treat individuals who are serial killers...Something like a cage has to be built for them. I know that sounds terrible. It is really cruel. But there is no choice. There is a wild animal there that has to be locked up in one way or another...‘I’m trying to be realistic. I know it doesn’t always sound politically correct, but I think that political correctness poisons history in any case. It impedes our ability to see the truth. And I also identify with Albert Camus. He was considered a left-winger and a person of high morals, but when he referred to the Algerian problem he placed his mother ahead of morality. Preserving my people is more important than universal moral concepts...I think there is a clash between civilizations here [citing Samuel Huntington]. I think the West today resembles the Roman Empire of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries: The barbarians are attacking it and they may also destroy it...I think the values I mentioned earlier are values of barbarians—the attitude toward democracy, freedom, openness; the attitude toward human life. In that sense they are barbarians. The Arab world as it is today is barbarian...The phenomenon of the mass Muslim penetration into the West and their settlement there is creating a dangerous internal threat. A similar process took place in Rome. They let the barbarians in and they toppled the empire from within...I think that the war between the civilizations is the main characteristic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I think President Bush is wrong when he denies the very existence of that war. It’s not only a matter of bin Laden. This is a struggle against a whole world that espouses different values. And we are on the front line. Exactly like the Crusaders, we are the vulnerable branch of Europe in this place.”

## USEFUL RESOURCES

Abu Iyad, *My Home, My Land*, 1978. PLO leader.

Menachem Begin, *The Revolt*, 1949. Future Prime Minister

Deir Yassin, internet web site.

John Glubb, *Memoirs by the British commander of the Arab Legion, the Jordanian army.*

David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, 1977. Noted British journalist.

*Israel: A Country Study.*

Samuel Katz, *Background: Fact and Fantasy in Palestine*, 1973. Irgun leader; ally of Begin.

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Zionist Organization of America, *The History of a Lie: Deir Yassin*, 1997. Internet.

## WHO'S WHO

**Abu Iyad** (Salah Khalaf) was number two in the PLO until assassinated in 1990 by Saddam Hussein for renouncing the invasion of Kuwait.

**Yigael Allon** was the leader of the Palmach elite military unit and was a key commander in 1948. He was considered the next Prime Minister until his early death in 1981. He wrote *The Book of Palmach*.

**Menachem Begin** was head of the Irgun, a Jewish militant force, later changed into a party called Herut, the core of the Likud party. He was renounced as a "terrorist" by other Jews and accused of responsibility for the massacre at Deir Yassin. His book, *The Revolt*, written in 1949 when Begin was still in opposition, is a fascinating work.

**David Ben-Gurion** was leader of Palestinian Jews, first Prime Minister, & Founding Father of Israel.

**Samuel Katz** was an Irgun leader who became advisor to Prime Minister Begin on "Overseas Information" in 1977. His views represent those of the Revisionist right. He joined the Land of Israeli Movement to settle the West Bank.

**Walid Khalidi** is a professor at Oxford University. He is a Palestinian refugee from Jerusalem. He edited an excellent collection of documents and accounts called *From Haven to Conquest*.

**Golda Meir**: In 1948, Political Officer (Foreign Minister) of Palestinian Jews, later Prime Minister.

**Benny Morris** is an Israel professor who published the first book on the Palestinian refugee situation based on research in the newly opened Israeli archives.

**Ilan Pappé** is an Israeli professor whose research was based on the 1948 archives.

**Yitzhak Rabin** was a key military commander in 1948, closely allied to Ben-Gurion. In 1979 he wrote his memoirs. A censored section on expulsion was published in the *New York Times*.

**Mordechai Ra-anan**: Likud commander at Deir Yassin.

**Tom Segev** is an Israeli professor whose research was based on the 1948 archives.

**Moshe Sharett** was Foreign Minister and later Prime Minister after Ben-Gurion.

**Joseph Weitz**, Zionist settlement officer in the 1940s.

**Chaim Weizman** was head of the World Zionist Organization and first President of Israel.

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