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FOUZI EL-ASMAR

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ISRAELI LAND AND SETTLEMENT POLICIES

TRANSLATED FROM HEBREW BY URI DAVIS  
WITH A FOREWORD BY RABBI ELMER BERGER

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I.

*On Being "Reasonable"*

In his classic book, "On Aggression", Konrad Lorenz makes a distinction between "flight distance" and "critical distance" in trying to explain at which point a man, or a group of men (or animals) will stand and fight against predators. Within the boundaries of the "critical distance", he says, (The danger is too near; so the animal, not daring to turn its back on it, fights with the proverbial courage of desperation". Lorenz borrows the following analogy from another author: "Lion tamers maneuver their great beasts of prey into positions in the arena by playing a dangerous game with the margin between flight distance (an opportunity to run and escape) and critical distance (within which the animal may strike back)."

I was reminded of this passage from the Lorenz book when I read Fouzi el-Asmar's paper and was asked to write this Foreward.

Novitiates in the Palestine problem may not see the relationship. Generally speaking the Palestine problem has attracted fairly widespread attention only since the third Arab/Israel war of June, 1967; and it is only now—in the context of the energy problem—enlisting wider and deeper concern in most parts of the non-Middle Eastern world. Against this background of foreshortened time, not much of the world realizes even now that the aggression of Zionism against the indigenous population of Palestinians goes back more than half a century in time. Without the historic perspective, much of the world is either angered at the desperation of "the Arabs", or bewildered by it. Many who are uninformed cannot—or will not—understand why "the Arabs", in a world totally consumed with trouble, do not wait a little longer for someone, or some power, or some combination of powers to come up with the blue-print of a "reasonable", compromise settlement. To put it another way, not much of the world comprehends why "the Arabs" (more particularly the Palestinians) should be fighting now as if they were in that "critical distance" where desperate measures seem to them to be their only resort; or why "the Arabs" cannot be reasonable and concede a few more miles of territory and some political—and even some human—rights in order to conform to the "new order" of "consultation instead of confrontation" and detente instead of conflict.

One explanation for this general irritation with "the Arabs" is that for the fifty years of Zionist/Palestinian conflict very little has been heard from authentic Palestinian Arabs. The reasons for this information gap are many—and often complex. In all fairness it must be said that, in part, the failure must be assigned to "the Arabs" themselves. Part of a cultural gap dividing the people of the Middle East from the west is the almost total lack of comprehension by "the Arabs" of the techniques, the complexities and the cost of what we westerners rather



cynically call "public relations." But the inadequacy with which the Palestinians have communicated with the west does not alter—and should not be confused with—the basic facts which needed communication.

Now, in the intensification of the conflict—and of interest in it—since 1967, the world is beginning to hear some of the dissident voices from among the diversity of people governed by the Zionist bureaucracy which runs Israel and the occupied territories.

Fouzi-el-Asmar is one of these and—since most of the dissidents who have been heard outside of Israel are Israeli Jews—it should be emphasized that he is an Israeli, Christian, Arab. He is also a poet and a journalist. And, not the least, he is among the growing number of Israeli Jews and Arabs in present day Israel who have felt the "benefits" of occupation which the red-carpet tourists never see. El-Asmar was a political prisoner, incarcerated under the lawless "Emergency Legislation" and its diabolical provisions for "administrative detentions" which permit imprisonment without any semblance of due process. Despite this, Professor Allan Dershowitz of Harvard—a lawyer and a leading Zionist apologist—who visited el-Asmar in prison, admitted Fouzi was a threat to the general serenity of Israeli occupation because he is "a leader of men".

## II.

### *The American "Need to Know"*

Now, as a student in the United States, el-Asmar is free to share his considerable knowledge and personal experience with Americans who, in their own self-interests in the energy matter, if for no other reason, certainly need to know more than they do about the central political problem in an area which contains some 60%-70% of the known oil resources of the world.

El-Asmar's authorship of the pamphlet therefore, is a service to Americans and American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism is honored to publish and distribute it. This action is consistent with our historic purpose of informing the American people of the real substance of the issues in the Zionist vs. Palestinian conflict, too loosely described very often of the Arab/Israeli conflict.

The significance of El-Asmar's pamphlet is two-fold. Using authoritative and often official sources it describes one form of Zionism's historic aggression which dates back to the beginning of the century. This, in itself, will be a surprisingly new time-perspective for many readers. It may help to disabuse many of the illusion that "the Arabs" are merely irascible, irritable, impatient and unreasonable. Their grievances long antedate the so-called "Six Day War" which, in fact, was only one of many battles in a fifty year war which is still not terminated and which will not be terminated until the so-called peace-

makers confront the fundamental aggressions and injustices which spawned it.

Secondly, el-Asmar's pamphlet lifts the veil on a part of the reason why—in the absence of authentic voices from the Palestinians themselves for most of this half century—Zionist aggression continued, largely with the approval, certainly with the acquiescence, of the "great powers". Not alone did Zionism serve certain of their strategic, geo-political interests. It pursued a kind of robber-baron, predatory economic policy in Palestine which it represented to the world, through one of the world's best propaganda machines, as a great benefactor of "civilization" to "backward" people.

## III.

### *"Blooming Deserts?"*

Zionism made "the desert bloom", drained "malarial swamps", developed "modern agriculture", built roads, introduced sanitation and constructed whole cities. "The Arabs" were nothing but "ingrates" for resisting all this progress. Or they "hated Jews". Or, they were just congenitally "backward" or "lazy" or both. What Zionist propaganda neglected to convey to the admiring world was really the key to Arab resistance to all this "civilization". The direct control and "bottom line" benefits of all these blessings—and the degree of improvement which the Zionists brought was itself exaggerated since there was a viable Arab society in Palestine before the Zionist enterprise—were restricted, by Zionist legislation, to Zionism's "Jewish people" constituency, Non-"Jewish people" Palestinians were excluded. Whatever benefits spilled over for them were entirely derivative and by sufferance. A system of social, economic and cultural apartheid was smuggled into the structure of Palestine, shrouded in the garments of "modernizing" an "abandoned" country and an "indolent" population.

One principal Zionist instrumentality for accomplishing this fragmentation of the country was The Jewish National Fund. The Fund was formally established in 1901 at the 5th Congress of the World Zionist Organization. Its purpose was—and is—to purchase and, to some extent develop, land in Palestine. But the land purchased became the inalienable property of "the Jewish people". Individual ownership was precluded by the JNF charter. The arrangement made it possible for Zionism's synthetic nationality entity ("the Jewish people") to buy up land which provided it with a territorial base for Zionism's "national home for the Jewish people".

Since "the Jewish people" nationality entity, according to Zionist claims, included all Jews, everywhere, the anomalies created by this land-policy should be noted. Any Jews, anywhere, by alleged "national right" were considered to have a lien on land in Palestine from which, by Zionist legislation, Palestinians themselves were barred.

#### IV.

##### "For Jews Only!"

Fouzi el-Asmar's paper specifies some of the "hows" with which these land purchases were made. This is not the place to enter the semantical dispute over whether this was a form of "colonialism", although it should be observed that in an era when "land reform" and "land distribution"—rooting the individual to his own land—was regarded as a fundamental step in the direction of liberalizing former, feudalistic societies, Zionism began operating in Palestine on a diametrically opposite course. But giving Zionism the full benefit of the doubts, the land purchase policy *could* have been implemented in a benevolent and liberalizing pattern. It *could* have led, eventually, to a democratic state in Palestine in which, (as they falsely claim it did) Zionism had purchased, in legitimate and honorable ways, its base upon the land.

But there was another, basic restriction written into the leases which the JNF contracted with the Zionist settlers who were chosen for immigration and put upon JNF lands to cultivate them. Article 23 of the standard, JNF lease-form stipulated, *inter alia*:

The lessee undertakes to execute all works connected with the cultivation of the holding *only with Jewish labour*. (Emphasis supplied)

The double form of discrimination—restricting both ownership and employment to Jews—resulted in what, in 1930, the so-called Simpson Report called the "extraterritorialization" of the land. (His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, Cmd. 3686, 1930, pp. 52-56).

In other words, the process of displacing non-"Jewish people" Palestinians from their land did not originate in the so-called first Arab/Israeli war of 1948-'49. By that time the process was already four decades advanced and it had been challenged by sporadic—and largely ineffectual resistance over the years to the extent the poor and displaced Arabs found it possible to mobilize such resistance.

What the JNF leases—and el-Asmar's paper—show is that Zionist aggression against the indigenous population of Palestine has been going on for a very long time. Military campaigns have been only one form. Economic aggression was more subtle; or, at least, it could be screened from the eyes of the world, assuming much of the world really cared. And the Zionist land-policy was one form of this more subtle aggression.

It is therefore, not surprising that the non-"Jewish people" Palestinians have reached the "critical distance" in which Lorenz says it is instinctual for any animal (including man) to make his stand and fight with desperation. Those who seek peace in the Middle East must be made aware of this history of aggression. Without this knowledge the peace-makers cannot know the issues which must be resolved.

They will therefore, be unable to bring to the problem even that modicum of justice and equity without which peace is as unobtainable today as it has been over these many, long years.

So far there is little evidence the decision-makers possess this awareness. Most "peace" efforts begin with the "realities" of 1967 and entreat the Israelis to be generous and the Arabs to be reasonable in some final disposition of the "spoils" of that war. Practically nothing is said about fundamental changes in the *Zionist* structure, although it is this structure and its exclusivist, discriminatory definitions of nationality which are the seeds from which the jungle of present Middle East hostility has grown. The JNF, for example, is still permitted to operate in the United States as if it were a benevolent aid society. It builds—still for its "Jewish people" only—new settlements, what Mr. Dayan calls "new facts" in the occupied territories. It is often the agency which buys lands from the Israeli government when the government's title to these lands, taken either by war or by continuing discrimination within pre-June 1967 Israel, is very much in doubt. The Jewish National Fund, in other words, is what it has been through history—a tool of Zionist aggression and *fait accompli* diplomacy, still masquerading as a quaint, "peoples" charity and enjoying the immunities, the prestige and tax-exempt privileges of a "charity".

This is the context in which Fouzi el-Asmar's explicit paper needs to be read. But reading it should also be more than an academic or intellectual exercise. To the extent the peace of the world may hinge on a decent and just settlement of the Middle East's central problem, it is important for "the people" to tell the decision-makers and the peace-makers that the Zionist jig is up. No longer should declared proponents of peace subsidize a tool of aggression, either by lending it prestige, or tax advantages or other privileges. It is not the whole of the problem, but it will help if Mr. el-Asmar's disclosures of the true character of this part of the Zionist machine motivated large numbers of fair-minded people to demand an end to our condoning and subsidizing of this land-grab aggression.

It is in this hope that American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism welcomes the opportunity to publish and distribute Mr. el-Asmar's paper.

Elmer Berger  
President

#### I.

##### Land Without People?

The problem of the Arabs in Israel is an integral part of the Palestine problem as a whole. The first Zionist Congress, held in Basel under the leadership of the founder of the Zionist movement,



Theodor Herzl in August 1897, was acutely conscious of the problem of the Palestinians. It is explicated in the 1917 Balfour Declaration. It was a fundamental consideration in context of the 1967 war and it holds a primary role in the present political context of the Middle East. The Zionist movement made no serious attempts to create a basis for common interests with the native people of the country. Rather, it usually solicited the support of outside forces to assist it in its endeavour: the Turkish Sultan, the German Kaiser, the British government, the United States, precisely because the logic of Zionism must involve dispossession, fighting and war. No basis of common interests with the native population was possible on Zionist terms. The organized Zionist movement fought most people who advocated peaceful co-existence and dialogue with the Arab population. Despite the position of the organized Zionist movement, some more forward-looking Zionists, such as Al ad Ha'am, Martin Buber, Judah Magnes, and Chaim Weizman, did advocate at times peaceful co-existence and dialogue with the Arabs. These few progressive Zionists, however, were generally naive in that they usually did not propose realistic and practical tactical ideas and the main body of the Zionist movement, moreover, rejected their ideas. The following excerpt from Aaron Cohen's book, *Israel and the Arab World* (1) is here illustrative:

The 17th Zionist Congress forced Dr. Weizman to resign from the presidency of the Zionist Federation after expressing in his opening speech before the congress readiness 'to welcome agreement between the two racially related peoples on the basis of political equality'.

The Zionist policies concerning the Palestinian-Arab question are, in no sense, whimsical or mere expediencies. They are rooted in Zionism's basic objectives and follow necessarily from its basic logic: the colonization of an already populated country. From its inception the Zionist movement could not avoid aggression against the Arabs.

Early Zionist propaganda deliberately portrayed Palestine as empty of population except for some Bedouin tribes. Zionist propaganda still repeats that the majority of Palestinian Arabs "immigrated" primarily after Jews came and had worked the land, developed its agriculture and built the country (2). The facts in the following pages are mostly taken from Zionist sources, and clearly demonstrate the cynical perversion of truth in these claims.

- (1) *Israel and the Arab World*, Sifriyat, Poalim, Tel-Aviv, 1964, p. 238. Also available in English, Funk and Wagnalls, 1970.  
 (2) Golda Meir, "Israel in Search of Lasting Peace", *Foreign Affairs*, No. 51, No. 3, April 1973, p. 449.  
 "... Between 1922 and 1947 the Arab population of Palestine grew from 670,000 to 1,200,000—a spectacular increase paralleled in no neighboring Arab territory. Thanks to the agricultural and industrial development of the country, Palestine changed from a land of Arab emigration to one of Arab immigration attracted by the higher standards of living and greater opportunities. The supposed Zionist dispossession of Arabs is a myth disproven by every official census.

In this context the famous statement of Ahad Ha'am (3), the renowned Jewish publicist and writer, wrote in 1891, after his visit in Palestine.

We abroad, are used to believing that Eretz-Israel, is now almost totally desolate, a desert that is not sowed, and anyone who wishes to purchase there lands, may come and purchase as much as his heart desires. But in truth this is not the case. Throughout the country it is difficult to find fields that are not sowed; only sand fields and stone mountains that are not fit (to grow anything) but fruit trees, and this, also only after hard labour and great expense of clearing and reclamation—only these are not cultivated.

That view was supported by the British (pro-Zionist) High Commissioner to Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, in 1915: (4)

The number of the Arabs in Palestine at the beginning of this century was 1/2 million to 600,000 persons. And the Jews from 90,000 to 100,000.

The central issue in the Zionist-Arab conflict has consistently been the question of lands. To understand the fundamentals of the issue, it is necessary to examine the historic policies and methods which the Zionists employed, in cooperation with the large Arab *effendis* landlords and the foreign forces dominating the area (the Turks up to WW I, the British up to 1947 and at present the Americans) to gain control over these lands. Such an examination illuminates the context in which the conflict has escalated. The 1967 war was only the most dramatic, recent manifestation. Unless the dynamics of Zionism are restrained or changed, it will not be the last war.

## II.

### *A Historical Descriptive Analysis*

The large Arab landlords controlled about 29.1% of the fertile arable lands of Palestine in 1939. (5) The lands were cultivated by

- (3) Ahad Ha'am, *Complete Works* (Heb) Devir Publishing House, Tel-Aviv and The Hebrew Publishing House, Jerusalem, 8th edition, p. 23).  
 (4) *Viscount Samuel*, by John Bowle. Victor Gollancz, London, 1957, p. 77.  
 (5) The following statistical table was published in *Arabism*, No. 3, 1971, p. 11.

<i>Ownership of Land in Palestine in 1939</i>	Percentage of Land Owned
Large Arab land owners	29.1%
Zionist Foundations	23.0%
Moslem Religious Orders	1.5%
Government	1.5%
Foreigners (Christian Churches and Germans)	0.7%
Arab Falahin, i.e. peasants	44.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

tenants, and serfs. Under the very heavy yoke of economic oppression and exploitation they were forced to sell the land to the large absentee *effendi* landlords and were chained by an elaborate system of exorbitant taxation and mortgages. Profits were funneled into the coffers of the landowners most of whom resided either outside of Palestine or in Palestine's metropolitan cities. They were approached by agents and middlemen of the Zionist movement and offered very large sums of cash for their lands.

They could hardly but welcome the offer. They could not have cared less for the future of their tenants, who had lived on these lands for many generations.

For example: the Jezreel Valley was the first large scale Zionist purchase of lands. It was bought in 1925 from the Sursuk family. It is an area of approximately 400,000 dunam (6) of which 372,000 were fertile and arable. One of the most fertile areas in Palestine, it constituted an important wheat granary of the country. The Sursuk family received 726,000 Palestinian Pounds (approximately 2 million American dollars) for the land. Sursuk himself had bought the land from the Turkish government for 18,000 Palestinian Pounds (something over 50,000 American dollars) and, in fact had paid only 6,000 Palestinian Pounds to the Turkish government; the remaining 12,000 had been paid to the middleman. Sursuk's profits from the deal were, therefore tremendous. 1270 Palestinian-Arab families lived in the Jezreel Valley, divided among 13 villages. They were serfs and tenants. To avoid public scandal over the liquidation of 13 villages, the Zionist movement paid each family 24 Palestinian Pounds (a little over 50 American dollars) by way of "compensation". In many cases, however, it paid nothing and for example, after the purchase of the Hefer Valley, approximately 2000 Arab peasants were dispossessed. The dispossession generated bloody conflicts between the serfs and the tenants and the Jewish settlers. British police intervention followed. This intervention ultimately facilitated dispossession of the Arabs rather than preventing it.

Zionist leadership understood perfectly the importance of the ties between man and land and fully realized that without severing the tie, it would not be possible to establish control over the country.

(6) 4 dunam are equivalent to approximately 1 acre.

In 1930, Dr. A. Rupin (7), the Jewish Agency expert on agriculture and settlement, submitted a secret memorandum to the Jewish Agency, in which he said, *inter alia*:

Land is the most necessary thing for our establishing roots in Palestine. Since there are hardly any more arable unsettled lands in Palestine, we are bound in each case of purchase of land and its settlement to remove the peasants who cultivated the land thus far, both owners of the land and tenants. (*emphasis added*).

The effort to root out the Arabs from the country was camouflaged by self-serving slogans of "Hebrew Labour" and "self-sufficiency". "Hebrew Labour" meant that every Jewish employer was required to employ *only* Jewish labourers, although most Jewish property owners preferred Arab Labour because its wage rates were cheaper while the quality of its work was superior. The requirement for "Jewish labour" was translated to mean not only exclusion of new workers, but the elimination of many Arabs who had cultivated the land, formerly under Arab ownership, for many years, and often for many generations. "Self-sufficiency", was interpreted by the Zionist movement to mean the purchase of Jewish, and only Jewish products, agricultural and others; a total boycott of Arab produce.

The policy of exclusive Jewish employment and purchase was expressed not only in verbal advocacy, but extreme and often violent actions, which intensified and embittered the conflict between Jews and Arabs still more. In what were called "Labour Vigils", Jewish youth were stationed in front of every Jewish business and forcefully removed every non-Jewish worker. Similarly, there was consistent opposition to common Arab/Jewish trade union efforts to obtain improved wages and social benefits. The separate and exclusively Jewish labour trade union organizations was maintained also after the establishment of the State of Israel, and until 1966 the General Israeli Trade Union Organization (Histadrut) was closed to Arab membership. This policy was consistent with the explicit objectives of the *Histadrut* and the purpose of its establishment in 1920. In an interview in the *London Observer*, (January 24, 1971) the present Israeli Premier Golda Meir said:

Then (in 1928) I was put on the *Histadrut* executive committee, at a time when this big labour union was not just a trade union organization; it was a great colonizing agency.

"Self-sufficiency", meant destruction, as well as boycott of Arab produce where, despite obstacles, such produce succeeded in reaching

(7) "The Arab Population in Israel" (Heb.) *Arakhim*, No. 3, 1971, p. 10).



areas of large Jewish population. Arab carts carrying eggs were overturned and kerosine was poured over agricultural produce of Arab peasants who came to sell their produce in Jewish settlements and cities.

The Zionist leader Menahem Ussishkin, in his secret testimony before the Jewish Agency committee on Jewish-Arab relations in March 1940 stated:

I favor 100% Hebrew labor and Hebrew products; I favor this, because I oppose the strengthening of the Arabs; I am against enabling them to establish roots in the country. (8)

### III.

#### Counter-Attack

The Arab peasants, understandably, struck back against their dispossession. They staged a counter attack, with all available means: sabotage, armed attacks on the settlements of the people who dispossessed them as well as on those Arab and Jews who manipulated, speculated and profiteered their Lands. The Arab peasants regarded the totality of Zionist "labour" and "land" policies to be an outright cheat; Musa Goldenberg, member of the *Hasbomer Hatzair* (9) Kibbutz Beit Alpha and a veteran functionary of the Jewish National Fund confirms this in his account of the purchase of the Sahnah lands from one of the Arab effendi landlords: (10)

Most of the Sahnah lands were registered in the name of the Jewish National Fund. Yet, here we have encountered a great many difficulties in getting our lands. All the inhabitants of the village of Sahnah rebelled. They would not deliver one single inch of the land. The JNF bought the lands by mediation of two big Arab speculators, a Jew named Raphael Hakham and the Arab Suleiman Nasif. This Suleiman had here a clerk who dealt with the Sahnah matters by the name of Musa Namla, with whom I had been in touch in all matters of clarification. The negotiations with the inhabitants were peaceful, yet, they were determined that the whole purchase was an act of treachery and they refused to deliver the land.

Most land transactions involved treachery. The peasants were direct witnesses, yet were totally helpless. They had no effective political means to end the treachery, nor did they find popular support for their protest and struggle. Today, 25 years later, the facts clearly vindicate their early resistance. The following story, also told by

- (8) "The Arab Population in Israel" *Arakhim*, No. 3, 1971, p. 12.  
(9) *Hasbomer Hatzair* is the kibbutz federation of the Zionist Socialist United Workers Party—Mapam, now in alignment with the ruling Israeli Labour Party.  
(10) Musa Goldenberg, *And The Fund Is Still Alive* (Heb.) Sifriyat Poalim, Tel-Aviv, 1965, p. 124.)

Musa Goldenberg (11) in the previous reference, concerns an Arab *effendi* who wanted to sell his lands, provided he obtained a good price and on condition that the transaction be carried out in a manner which would not expose him to his own people as a traitor, and would dispose of his tenants without attracting public attention.

In our office in Haifa (writes Goldenberg) the way was found: the estate will declare bankruptcy and will be offered for sale by the court and the court execution office. It will be initially and in fiction be transferred to an Arab, and we shall purchase the land from him in secret. Thus everything will come to pass quietly and peacefully . . .

The Arab who secretly bought the land was, of course, Goldenberg's man. However, this particular transaction did not come to pass: (12)

Investigators showed up at the place and encouraged the people to defy their masters and refuse to get off the place and release the land . . .

Goldenberg's book (*And The Fund Is Still Alive* (ve-hakeren odenah kayemet a pun on Keren Kayemet Le-Yisrael: The Jewish National Fund) is full of similar stories concerning the methods employed to gain control over the lands and to dispossess the Arabs. Another of these stories reads as follows: (13)

In our office in Haifa we worked hard. One of the methods was registration of lands purchased by me in the names of some Arabs who have been hired for this action and have guaranteed in advance by way of complicated legal procedures, that the land will be transferred to us through court execution office or through certain names etc.

As a matter of fact, to a large number of the Arab serfs and tenants it was a matter of indifference who owned the land; the main issue for them was whether or not they would be expropriated. But the objective of the Zionist buyers was clear: to uproot the Arab peasants at any price in order to realize the Zionist dream. In the same account of the purchase of the Sahnah lands, Goldenberg quotes the Arab peasants as saying: (14)

Why should you bother *kbawaja Musa*. Let Suleiman Nasif plow the land and give you (the crops).

The request was rejected. The Jewish *Yisbuv* which came to the country and brought with it modern technology, announced solemnly that it intended to develop the "backward" population. In fact it did

(11) (*ibid* p. 159)

(12) (*ibid* p. 159)

(13) (*ibid* p. 162)

(14) (*ibid* p. 124) Suleiman Nasif was the JNF middleman. The peasants were indifferent as to who will formally own the land and take the profits of that ownership. What they resisted to the point of taking arms was their dispossession—F.A.



everything it could to stifle precisely such development. In March 1940, Yitzhak Ben Zvi (15) made the following observation before the same Jewish Agency secret commission on Jewish-Arab relations:

We should not consider the theory concerned with the question of Arab development. I am not interested to develop the Arabs . . .

The reason is not hard to find. As a matter of fact it has been often stated in public, and in the most deliberate and authoritative terms. Dr. Arthur Rupin, the Jewish Agency expert on agriculture and settlement, puts it candidly: (16)

For the time being we are irrigating our plots and leave Arab plots out of consideration. But there are for instance some areas in Beit Shean, where we can establish joint projects. *Do not want to hide from you the danger involved in the matter; so long as the land is not irrigated, we have the possibility of purchasing it. After irrigation is introduced this will be much more difficult.* (emphasis added)

This, of course, puts in clear context the Zionist claim that one of its aims was the developing of the land. It did, indeed, invest major efforts in developing the land—but exclusively for Jews. The serfs and tenants responded in bloody clashes. Musa Goldenberg notes that: (17)

When we went to plough another plot (in Sahnah) there was a great assemblage around the tractor, which was hired from Beit Alpha and there began stoning and chasing with sticks. The tractor driver was seriously injured and his life was in danger.

After this particular incident the British governor came to make peace between the contending parties. He assembled all the inhabitants along with a number of Jewish National Fund people. According to Goldenberg again: (18)

The conversation was carried out politely and peacefully, when suddenly an old, erect, tall man burst into the tent, his beard was white and his eyes sparkling fire. This was the Sheikh Abdallah Shihab al-Darawish—they said; He is over ninety years of age and some said he was already a hundred years old . . . He stood in the center of the tent and addressed the governor directly in a haughty powerful voice: Oh, Your Honoured Governor, our tribe, al-Saqr, has in the past ruled all the lands from Beit Shean to the outskirts of Haifa. There was no power that dared to disobey us and enter the area

(15) Yitzhak Ben Zvi was the second President of the State of Israel.  
(16) (p. 12-13). Musa Goldenberg, *And The Fund Is Still Alive* (Heb.)  
(17) (ibid., p. 124-125)  
(18) (ibid p. 125)

under our rule against our will. Now look and see; slowly, slowly we are being pushed east and have been limited to this small area, the Sahnah, and you come and demand that also this last hold be taken out of our hands. Oh, Your Honoured Governor, it shall not be. With our bodies we shall fight for every inch of the land.

The incident is typical of the resistance of the Arab peasants, to their dispossession, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. During this period the Arabs carried out attacks on Jewish settlements established on the lands from which they were dispossessed. To some degree the Zionists were successful in portraying these attacks as acts of "barbarity", of primitive xenophobic people whose sole objective was robbing and thieving.

Zionist authored children stories relate in length how the Arabs attacked the peaceful Jewish settlements in order to steal and murder. In addition to rationalizing Zionist expropriation these stories condition the Jewish child to consider the Arabs as primitive, dedicated to fighting as an end in itself. The British colonial regime which then ruled Palestine was interested only in continuing and extending its power. It skillfully employed the principle of "divide and rule", not at all unhappy over the expanding conflict between Arabs and Jews. It utilized both the Zionist movement and the feudal Arab landlords to advance its own interests. Above and beyond all other considerations it was eager to present any meaningful, joint efforts or cooperation between Jews and Arabs. Such efforts, the British reasoned, would lead to a struggle for liberation and the termination of its foreign domination under the Mandate.

#### IV.

##### *Enter "The State of Israel!"*

After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Zionist leaders continued their traditional policies of dispossession of Arab peasants. The difference is that now the dispossession is implemented by state authorities for the purpose of "development", "security" and other official pretexes. In 1948, during the war, says Musa Goldenberg, the situation in Nazareth was unbearable: (19)

Thousands of Arabs who fled out of fear of the battles (around) their villages assembled in Nazareth and waited for the storm to pass. Meanwhile their villages have been declared to be deserted and their destruction by bulldozers has begun. There were also villages that were favoured since their inhabitants cooperated with the military authorities, and were therefore not harmed. These were the happiest in the country. Yet, the lot of those of their inhabitants who fled to the city or crossed temporarily to Trans-Jordan with their relatives, or fled to other villages and after some time returned

(19) (ibid p. 208)

to their home village to establish their right of possession over their lands and houses—their lot was no better. Military Government registered all those present on the clerk of the day of census, and those received temporary certificates for Israeli citizenship. The rest who appeared and vehemently claimed that they were absent no longer than a day or two from the village, returned empty handed. So a great camp of Arabs was created, who were registered in the Military Government books as absentees and their property was confiscated. After some time they were indeed registered as Israeli residents, but their property was not returned to them and the strange application of "present absentees" was attached to them. This was also the status of Beit Shean inhabitants who left the city "temporarily" by the demand of the army: this is the situation in some villages and towns, which are now stripped of everything, cannot sell their property and almost perish from hunger.

Such is first hand testimony of a faithful Zionist who specialized in land dealings.

The expulsion from the land of Arab inhabitants did not end with the 1948 war period. It continued well into the 1950's and many of the Arab inhabitants became refugees within the boundaries of the State of Israel. As an editor of *Hadha al-Alam* (\*), I went with a woman friend and another journalist of the paper to visit the refugees of the Arab village of Ayn Hawd (now Ein Hod). We found them living in wooden huts and block houses just a mile away from their village. The village itself, situated on top of a beautiful hill overlooking the Mediterranean, had been turned into an artist village and its lands were being cultivated by a neighboring kibbutz. The Sheikh of the village, an old man, told us with great agitation how the Jewish intelligentsia had turned the village mosque into a night club: "Not only did they expel us from our village, but the Mosque was turned into a night club as well . . ." This was particularly shocking, because the village was now inhabited by people who definitely belonged to the Israeli intelligentsia and some among them were known for the "struggle" against violation of Arab rights. I published the story in an article in *Hadha al-Alam* (20) under the title "Brandy in the Mosque".

There are at least 21 similar cases (*Haaretz*, August 28, 1972), among them, Ikrit, Birim, Ghabasiyya. The lands of these villages were mandated over to Jewish kibbutzim, very often to *Hasbomer Ha-Tzair* (Mapam) kibbutzim. (e.g., Kibbutz Baram, established on the lands of the Arab village of Birim). The case of the village of Ikrit is particularly interesting because its inhabitants were removed by sheer cheating. In 1972 a campaign was initiated in Israel demanding the right of the villagers to return to their homes. The perseverance of these people and their relentless efforts to regain their rights systematically violated and denied for 25 long years are one of the

(20) The Arabic edition of *Ha-Olam Ha-Zeh*.

genuine demonstrations of courage and fortitude in Israel. Zvi Tal (21) published the history of Ikrit and Birim in *Yediot Abaronot*, June 30, 1972 in some detail:

On one of the days of December 1948 a young officer of the Israeli army appeared in the house of the Mukhtar (22) of the Christian village of Ikrit on the Lebanese border. The *mukhtar*, Mabda Daud, rose to receive the officer according to the best Arab tradition. Yet, quite soon it became clear that the young officer did not come in order to drink coffee in his company. In an authoritative voice the officer explained that the inhabitants of the village (700 people) must evacuate the place. The *mukhtar* was dumbfounded, yet the officer calmed down his alarm saying: "Just for two weeks; the area is strewn with mines and real danger is awaiting you".

This was a month after the liberation of the Galilee; a month after Ikrit raised a white flag without a single shot being fired.

Men, women and children banded their meagre bundles together and the convoy of the displaced people moved towards the village of Rama next to the Acre-Sagad road. A new refugee camp (*maaberah*) came into being in the newly established state of Israel—"The Rama Refugee Camp" (Maabarah Rama) (23)

"Just for two weeks"—and 24 years have passed since. The houses of the village, the mud and stone houses, were razed. Only the church remained, erect, overlooking from the top of the mountain towards the breathtaking view of the Galilee mountains and next to it the silent graveyard. 20,000 dunam of land were transferred over to the Jews to the control of Israel Land Authority and leased to Jewish settlements established in the framework of the plans for the Judaization of the Galilee.

Yet the sons of Ikrit refused to surrender the village, and when the sound of the cannons subsided, they began their struggle for the return of their property. They recruited to their support the whole hierarchy of the Christian church: bishops, arch-bishops, the leaders of the Greek Catholic Church and up to the Pope himself.

- (21) Zvi Tal is a reporter for *Yediot Abaronot*, one of the three largest circulation daily Hebrew newspapers in Israel.
- (22) Mukhtar, the head or official representative of an Arab village.
- (23) *Maabarah* is a term usually reserved for a Jewish new immigrant refugee camp. Its use in this context is ironical. Rama refers to the place of the *Maabarah*.



The Ikrit villagers, seeing no salvation by way of lobbying, decided to attempt to address the Israeli courts for justice. In 1952 they filed a suit at the Israeli Supreme Court of Justice in Jerusalem. "We are not absentees"—they claimed—"We left our village for a limited period of time on order of the Israeli army. Our property is therefore outside the category of absentee property".

*The judges accepted this position and ruled that it is the right of the plaintiffs to return to their lands. Yet, there was a catch in the ruling. The judges added to their ruling the qualification that their return is predicated upon a permit by the military governor. Needless to say that such a permit was not issued.* (emphasis by Zvi Tal)

Years lapsed. The (Jewish) refugee camps in Israel were liquidated one by one. The "Rama r fugee camp" was not liquidated. Its inhabitants, the people of Ikrit, who were formerly independent peasants cultivating their plots have turned into hired labourers in agriculture, building construction and industry. Only a meagre few (approximately 10%) have consented to accept compensation for their lands. These received either cash or land in other locations.

The Israeli government fears that if it allows the displaced persons of Ikrit and Birim, who have been refugees within Israel for the past 25 years, to return to their villages, a precedent will be established.

This is one of many similar stories. Inhabitants were expelled from many villages and the slogan of the military governor was invariably, "security". Although the meaning of this term is never precisely defined by the officials, a journalist, Yeshayahu Ben Porat had the courage to illuminate its meaning in an article in *Yediot Abaronot*, July 14, 1972.

Security, as understood by the Israeli establishment, and the Eretz-Israeli establishment ever since its coming into being, was and has remained to mean not only the positioning of guns and at a certain point in order to defend it, but rather—and during certain periods primarily—the creation of Jewish territorial continuity (emphasis by Y.P.) *par excellence*. In other words, the salvation of the country by way of obtaining land in different ways and Jewish settlement on this land.

## V.

### *Internal "Refugees"*

The Arab lands, whose owners have been expelled or who fled from Palestine out of fear of the war, have been automatically appropriated by the Israeli government. Arabs who remained in the country must present documents to prove their ownership of the property. Many lost these documents during the war, and thus remained propertyless. When a person asked the land registry (*Tabu*) to see the registered list of landowners so as to prove his right of ownership of the property

in question, the answer was usually that the documents were lost in a fire. When an Arab came with his own documentation, his case would be delayed months and even years, "Until we double check with the microfilms in Jerusalem". If and when an Arab finally succeeded in regaining his land (many of those who indeed had the required documentation did not) he was subject to the continual threat and very often the actuality of expropriation. The Israeli government utilized every possible means to dispossess Arabs from their lands. One of the major motivations was the original Zionist design to sever the tie between the Arab and his land, to leave him rootless and to create a situation where he would feel that he has nothing to lose by permanently leaving the country. By the pursuit of these policies it became possible to establish the basic objective of the Zionist movement—as exclusive a Jewish state as possible under the circumstances.

To augment these land and labor policies, the Israeli government made extensive use of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations of 1945. These regulations had been introduced into the country by the British and were later incorporated lock, stock and barrel into the body of Israeli law after independence. These regulations grant the military governor virtually unlimited authority. The overwhelming majority of the Arab population in Israel was under military government up to 1965. For the purpose of expropriating Arab lands the military governor usually resorted to Regulation 125 of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations: (24)

A military Commander may by order declare any area or place to be a closed area for the purpose of these Regulations. Any person who during any period in which any such order is in force in relation to any area or place, enters or leaves that area or place without a permit in writing issued by or on behalf of the Military Commander shall be guilty of an offense against these Regulations.

The military governor, therefore, can prevent any person from leaving his village or town for employment or any other purpose. And it is not surprising that most of the lands of Arab villages, on which the agricultural economy of the village rested, were declared closed areas "for reasons of state security". Any Arab who wanted to reach his lands and cultivate them had to apply for a permit from the military governor—and in most cases the permits were not given.

Coordinate with this is the law which authorizes the Minister of Agriculture "to take possession of uncultivated land to ensure that it is cultivated". Since the Arab did not obtain a permit to enter and cultivate his lands, the Minister of Agriculture expropriated it by the simple fiat of declaring it fallow and he then turned it over for Jewish settlement.

(24) Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, The Institute For Palestine Studies, Beirut, Lebanon, 1966, p. 21-22.



The Arab village of Umm Al-Fahm provides an example. In 1948 it had a population of 7000 and an area of 140,000 dunam. In 1959 its population was 11,000 and the village owned 1500 dunam. The Arab village of Tayyiba, in 1948, had a population of 3500 cultivating 45,000 dunam. In 1959 a population of 7000 was reduced to cultivating only 13,000 dunam. Similarly, the Arab village of Tira, in 1948, had 3100 people owning and cultivating 28,000 dunam; in 1959 its population of 5100 owned only 7,500 dunam. (25)

In the early 1960's the lands of the three villages of Deir al-Asad, Bi'ana and Nahf were expropriated from Arabs for the purpose of building the Jewish city of Karmiel. After the expropriation the Israeli Land Authority advertised plots for sale in Karmiel—but not to Arabs. Recently the name Karmiel made headlines, when one of the Arab capitalists in the area proposed that the City Council invest 2 million Israeli Pounds in the city's industrial park. The motivation for the idea was the generous exemptions made available by the government to investors in development areas. Though the Mayor and some of the City Council members supported the proposal, theirs proved to be a minority position and the proposal was rejected. The explanation was a typical Zionist argument, explicitly articulated by one of the City Council members, and quoted in *Maariv* January 30, 1972:

Of course we object to materializing these plans, since Karmiel has been primarily established for the purpose of Judaizing the Galilee, and not for the purpose of providing a convenient meadow for investments by Arab inhabitants of the neighbouring villages . . . This is a matter of principle and we intend to do everything in order to prevent the establishment of industrial plants and business by Arabs in Karmiel . . ."

Even those who supported the proposal were not motivated by any desire to encourage cooperation. Rather Zionist interests recommended using the Arab investment to expand the Jewish settlement. The Mayor of the city made this clear in an interview in *Maariv* (ibid January 30, 1972).

If plans will not be established in the city what shall we be able to offer to the new immigrants and veterans we are inviting to settle in Karmiel?

The obvious concern of the "city fathers" was not the employment of Arab labourers but with inducements for Jewish—and only Jewish—labour. When the lands of the villages were expropriated in early 1960, a protest erupted in the center of which was a radical,

(25) Aaron Cohen, *Israel and The Arab World*, (Heb.) p. 529.

leftist Israeli Jew, Uri Davis. Numerous articles appeared in the press, and the arguments put forward by the supporters of the expropriation provide interesting reading. *Maariv* of December 29, 1961 published an article by Samuel Segev, then *Maariv* correspondent for Arab affairs, where he said:

The abolition of Regulation 125 (on which authority most Arab lands were expropriated—F.A.) concerning closed areas, and which is the most important regulation in what pertains to the military government, would mean in effect the denial of the legal right to close off areas—closing off areas according to this regulation means . . . preparing the area for Jewish settlement, which is now rendered more urgent with the rise of the tide of waves of immigration . . .

Mr. Shimon Peres, (now Minister of Communication and Transport) wrote in *Davar* (26).

The use of Regulation 125, on which the military government is based to a great extent, is a direct continuation of the struggle for Jewish settlement and Jewish immigration.

Ten years later this position was articulated far more emphatically and explicitly in response to the uproar generated by the demand of the displaced persons of the villages of Ikrit and Birim to return to their villages. Yeshayahu Ben Porat addressed the issue in a feature article in *Yediot Abaronot* (27) July 14, 1972, where he said, *inter alia*:

It is a single truth that there is no Zionism, no settlement and no Jewish state without evacuation of Arabs and the expropriation and the fencing of lands.

The decision by the Israeli government not to allow the previous inhabitants of Birim and Ikrit to return to their villages fits into a larger context than simply that of two villages. As Zvi Tal noted in an article in *Yediot Abaronot* on June 20, 1972:

"If we open one outlet, we shall have to open all the outlets".

This is, of course, one of the basic premises of the Zionist government. According to an article in *Haaretz* by Nathan Fabian on July 28, 1972, there are within Israel displaced persons from 21 villages (probably many more—F.A.)

(26) *Davar* is the daily Hebrew-language newspaper of the Histadrut, Israeli Labor Union. The date is January 26, 1972.

(27) *Yediot Abaronot* and *Haaretz*, here mentioned, are two of the three largest circulation Hebrew language newspapers in Israel.

## VI.

## Part of the Record — In Specifics

On July 28, 1972, *Haaretz* enumerated the 21 villages:

"The village of Birwa, at the foot of the Western Galilee mountains which was conquered in the "Dekel" operation (28) which had been staged to attack and beat the Qawuqi (29) forces at their bases. About 1000 displaced persons have survived, and they live at present in the villages of Judayda, Deir al-Asal, Kabul, Kufr, Yasif, Majdal Kurum and Shara'amr. On the lands of this village the *moshav* (30) of Ahihud has been established and plots of land were given to the *moshav* as well as to the kibbutzim of Ein Peretz, Yas'ur and Farod (approximately 1000 dunam). This village was never considered close to the border and was never defined as a "security area". In the western Galilee the village of Betzet is another example. *Moshav* Betzet has been established on its lands. 2500 dunam were given to the people of the *moshav* for cultivation. The 100 displaced persons of the village are now living in the villages of Abu Sinan, Kufr Yasif and Masra'a. (Note that under this item two villages are mentioned; this confirms my judgment that probably more than just 21 villages are involved—F.A.)

# The village of Safuriya, in the Nazareth area, also conquered in the "Dekel" operation has been replaced by *moshav* Tzipori. Part of the 700 people of the village have moved to Nazareth where they established for themselves a special quarter, called the Tzipori quarter, and part moved to the villages of Shafa-amr, Turan, Kufr Rina and Araba. 5000 dunams were divided between the people of the *moshav* and the neighbouring kibbutz Sollelim, which specializes in growing flowers for export.

# In the place of the village of Inan, the kibbutz of Farod was established on the Acre Safad road in the upper Galilee. The 180 displaced persons live today in the villages of Rama and Majd al-Kurum. The lands, approximately 5000 dunam, were given to Kibbutz Farod and are cultivated mainly in fruit groves.

- (28) The "Dekel" was a military operation in 1948.
- (29) Fouzi al-Qawuqi was appointed commander of the Liberation Army, formed by the Arab League out of volunteers from the surrounding Arab countries to come to the aid of the Palestine Arabs.
- (30) A *moshav* is a small holder's cooperative settlement in Israel.

# On the ruins of the village Qumaym the kibbutz of Ein Harod-Ihud was established in the 1950s, after the split in Ein Harod. The approximately 4000 dunam of village lands were given to the kibbutzim of Ein Harod and Tel Yoseph. Most of the 130 displaced persons live today in the eastern quarter of Nazareth and in Kufr Kana.

# On the lands of the village of Tira, near Ein Dor in the lower Galilee, Ha-Shomer Ha-Tzair kibbutz of Gazit, mainly populated by immigrants of Latin American origin has been established. 10,000 dunam were given to the kibbutz and the 100 displaced persons remaining from Tira moved to live in the village of Masr in the Jezreel valley.

# Beit Ha-Emek kibbutz, belong to Kibbutz in the western Galilee live today in Kufr Yasif, Masra'a, Abu Sinan and Majdal Kurum. 4000 dunam were given to Beit Ha-Emek and Caaton. The inhabitants of this village turned recently to the Prime Minister and requested her to allow their return to their own lands and homes.

# A number of villages have been incorporated into the borders of townships and new housing has been built upon them. On the land of the village Umm al-Faraj housing developments of the city of Nahariya have been built and next to them the Malben hospital of this northern resort city. A part of the agricultural area has been given for cultivation to the inhabitants of Nahariya. The displaced persons of Umm al-Faraj, approximately 100 people, moved to the village of Mazra'a. (Note that under this item "a number of villages" are mentioned, that is, more than just Umm al-Faraj—F.A.)

# On the lands of the village of Manshiyya, east of Avre, development housing has been built. The lands of Manshiyya 11,000 dunam were given for cultivation to the people of *moshav* Bustan Ha-Gallil and the kibbutz of Ein Ha-Mifratz. The 200 displaced persons moved to Tarshiha, Mazra'a and Deir al-Asad in the neighboring area.

# Next to the village of Suhmat in the western Galilee the *moshav* of Hosen was established. The 150 displaced persons moved to live in the villages of Hurfaysh, Fassuta and Tarshiha. The lands of the deserted village, approximately 16,000 dunam were given for cultivation to the people of *moshav* Pekin'in.

# The *moshav* of Amka took not only the lands of the Arab village but also its name. Amka was one of the larger villages in the area in 1948. The 4000 displaced persons moved to Tarshiha, Yirka and Mazra'a. The lands, approximately, 6000 dunam, were transferred to the *moshav*.



# In the neighbourhood of the village of Miare in the west-ern Galilee the *moshav* of Segev was established. The displaced people of the village, approximately 600, live today in Araba, Sakhnin and Tamra. The cultivatable areas, approximately 10,000 dunam, were given to existing Jewish settlements in the neighbourhood. Recently the inhabitants of Miare petitioned the Prime Minister for permission to return to their village and resettle.

# Woods that are used by the Jewish National Fund for various purposes, as well as by Youth Movements for summer camps, were planted on the lands of the deserted village of Ma'allul (opposite Mishmar Ha-Emek). All that remains of the village is one single house and the trough used for watering the Bedouin herds in the area. The displaced persons of Ma'allul, approximately 800, live in a special section of Nazareth called the quarter of Ma'allul. Some families moved to the village of Rina next to Nazareth. The 4500 dunam of the village lands suitable for cultivation were divided among the kibbutzim of Kefar Ha-Horesh and Ramat Chen.

# In the same neighbourhood stood the village of Ruways, and next to it the town of Migday Ha-Emek was established. A forest was planted on village lands. The inhabitants of the village had approximately 1100 dunam. Of these lands some were given to kibbutz Ramat Yohanan and some as compensation to Arab inhabitants who were not declared "absentees" in the context of the legislation which legitimized appropriation of land under the pretext of land consolidation. The 420 displaced persons of the village of Ruways live today mainly in Tamra and Shafa-amr. They have recently submitted a request to the Prime Minister to return to their village.

# The 100 persons remaining from the village of Sajara, next to Golani intersection, moved to Nazareth, Kufr Kana and Daburiyya. The 15,000 dunam of arable lands available to the village were given to *moshav* Ilaniya. The rest is covered by forests.

# On the lands of Ghabasiyya, near Nahariyya no settlement was established and no forest planted. The 150 displaced persons are now inhabitants of Acre and Kufr Yasif. 10,000 dunam of the village lands were divided between the settlements of Netiv Ha-Shayarah, Ga'aton and Regba. Recently the inhabitants of the village turned to the authorities and requested permission to renovate the mosque and the cemetery. The Custodian rejected their request and argued that to the extent it is necessary to renovate these sites, they will be financed by the Custodian and carried out by his workers.

The inhabitants of Jabasiyya wanted the request to express their longing to return to the village.

# The village of Damun in the area of Ramat Yohanan reflects a similar situation. 1200 dunam of its lands were given to the kibbutzim of Ramat Yohanan, Kefar Ha-Maccabee and Kefar Massarik. From this village 800 persons have remained, living today in Tamra. These displaced persons have recently petitioned the authorities to return to Danum.

# 200 of the inhabitants of the village of Qaditha near Miron are now living in Aqraba in the upper Galilee. No settlement was established on its lands but a part of its lands, approximately 2200 dunam, was given to *moshav* Miron. For years the inhabitants of Qaditha have requested, in informal meetings, to return and inhabit their original village.

# Abasiyya, near Dafna in the upper Galilee, was a village inhabited by swamp dwelling Bedouins who practiced agriculture and raised cattle. These Bedouins were transferred at the end of the 1948 war to wadi Haman in the river of Arbel. Recently the government announced that in place of the tents in which they resided over the years, buildings will be erected and their location in wadi Haman will be declared a permanent settlement. 150 people were displaced from Abasiyya. Today, they serve in the Israeli army. 15,000 dunam of this village were given to kibbutz Shamir (Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi (31) and to kibbutz Sedei Nehemiya.

# Another abandoned Bedouin village is Arab Sabit. Most of its inhabitants fled to Syria and some of them serve in the terrorist organizations. The 75 persons remaining from this village live today in Tamra and Kufr Kana. 7000 dunam were given to the agricultural school Kadduri for cultivation.

# The village of Shaab in the western Galilee was partially deserted. 800 of its inhabitants remained within the Green Line (32). About half live today in the area of the village. Part of the others moved to Acre and Majdal Kurum. The lands of the absentees were given to the settlements of Yodfat and Segev, and a part of the land was given to the displaced persons themselves as compensation.

## VII.

### 1967 Occupation

In my opinion this list is incomplete. I have already mentioned the village of Ayn Haud (Ein Hod). Its inhabitants are living in its environs but its lands are cultivated by a neighbouring Jewish religious kibbutz. There is also Majdal in the South. Most of its inhabitants

(31) Kibbutz Ha-Artzi is the collective term for all Mapam Kibbutzim in Israel.

(32) Border of Israel before June, 1967 war.



moved to the city of Lydda. The inhabitants of the village of Zarnuba experienced a similar fate. It can therefore be assumed that a number of places were not inventoried by the *Haaretz* article. But what has been mentioned sufficiently demonstrates the colonialist character of the Zionist development. All of these people have lived in the State of Israel for the past 25 years as refugees. The *Haaretz* account does not include the lands expropriated from Arab villages whose inhabitants remained in their villages during the 1948 war. Given a birthrate of 4.5% in the Arab community in Israel, the numbers of displaced persons in the State of Israel must have doubled in this quarter of a century.

The Zionist policy of deliberate land dispossession and displacement of people has determined the situation in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Three villages in the vicinity of Latrun—Beit Nuba, Amwas and Yaul—were razed to the ground shortly after the termination of the actual fighting in this front in June 1967. Their inhabitants were expelled and even the stones were removed from the area. Amos Kenan, Israeli journalist, who participated in the conquering of these villages wrote the following report:

The unit commander told us that it had been decided to blow up three villages in our sector; they were Beit-Nuba, Amwas, and Yalu. This was explained by strategic, tactical and security considerations. First—to straighten the border at Latrun. (33) Second—to punish the bases of murders. Third—to prevent the setting up of bases for future infiltration.

One can argue about this idiotic concept of collective punishment, which believes that if an infiltrator loses one house he will not find another. One can argue about the expediency of increasing the number of future enemies. But what is the use of arguing?

We are told to search the houses of the village to take as prisoners any armed men. Unarmed people were to be allowed to pack up their belongings and to be told to go to the nearby village of Beit-Sura. We were ordered to block the entrances of the village and prevent inhabitants returning to the village from their hideouts, after they had heard Israeli broadcasts urging them to go back to their homes. The order was to shoot over their heads and tell them not to enter the village.

Beit Nuba is built of fine quarry stones. Some of the houses are magnificent. Every house is surrounded by an orchard, olive trees, apricots, vines and presses. They are well kept. Among the trees there are carefully tended vegetable beds.

In the houses we found one wounded Egyptian commando officer, and some very old people. At noon the first bulldozer arrived and pulled down the first house at the edge of the village. Within 10 minutes the house was turned into rubble, including its entire contents; the

- (33) Under the 1948 Armistice Agreement Latrun was an enclave of Jordanian territory jutting off the main Jerusalem highway into Israeli territory. Israel took it in the June, 1967 war.

olive trees, cypresses were all uprooted . . . After the destruction of three houses the first refugee column arrived from the direction of Ramallah.

We did not fire into the air but took cover, some Arabic speaking soldiers went over to notify them of the warning. They were old people could hardly walk, murmuring old women, mothers carrying babies, children. The children wept and asked for water. They all carried white flags.

We told them to go to Beit-Sura. They told us that they were driven out of everywhere, forbidden to enter any village, that they were wandering like this for four days, without food, without water, some dying on the road. They asked to return to the village, and said we had better kill them.

Some had a goat, a lamb, a donkey or camel. A father ground wheat by hand to feed his four children. On the horizon we could see the next group arriving. A man carrying 100 lbs. of flour in a sack—he had walked like that, mile after mile. More old people, more women, more babies. They dropped down exhausted where we told them to sit. Some had a cow or two, a calf; all their property on earth. We did not allow them to enter the village and take anything.

The children cried. Some of our soldiers started crying too. We went to fetch the Arabs some water. We stopped a car with a major, two captains and a woman. We took a jerrican of water and distributed it to the refugees. We also handed out cigarettes and candy. More soldiers burst into tears. We asked the officers why these refugees were sent from one place to another and driven out of everywhere. They told us that this was good for them, they should go. "Moreover," said the officers, "why do we care about the Arabs anyway?" We were glad to hear that half an hour later these officers were all detained by the military police because their car was full of booty.

More and more columns of refugees arrived, until there was hundreds of them. They failed to understand why they have been asked to return yet not permitted to enter. We could not stand their pleading. One asked us why we destroyed their houses instead of taking them over ourselves.

The platoon commander decided to go to headquarters and find out if there were any orders about what to do with them, where to send them, and whether it was possible to arrange transport for the women and food for the children. He returned saying that there were no orders in writing, simply that they were to be driven out.

We drove them out. They go on wandering in the south like lost cattle. The weak die. In the evening we found out we had been taken in, for in Beit-Sura too bulldozers had begun to destroy the place and they were not allowed to enter. We found out that not only in our sector was the border straightened out for security reasons but in all the other sectors too. The promise in the radio was not kept; the declared policy was never carried out.

Our unit was outraged. The refugees gnashed their teeth when they saw the bulldozers pull down the trees. At night we were ordered to guard the bulldozers, but the unit was so outraged that no soldier

was willing to carry on such duties. In the morning we were moved from the area. None of us understood how Jews could behave like this. Even those who justified the action said that at least it should have been possible to keep the Arabs in some camp until a final decision concerning their fate was taken, and they could be transported, with their belongings, somewhere else. No one understood why shouldn't these felahens be allowed to take their stove, blankets and some food.

The chickens and doves were buried in the rubble. The fields were turned into waste land in front of our eyes. The children who went crying on the road will be fedayeen in 19 years, in the next round.

Thus we have lost the victory."

## VIII.

### *Jerusalem and Gaza*

Considerable acreage has been expropriated in occupied East Jerusalem for building development-housing for Jewish settlement. The army forced Arab inhabitants residing in the Jewish quarter of occupied Jerusalem to evacuate the quarter "in order to bring back its former residents . . ." Most inhabitants of the Jewish quarter were Palestinian refugees of the 1948 war. Many of them have houses and property within the State of Israel. But even those who have houses in West Jerusalem were forbidden to return to their homes. Immediately after the 1967 war the Mughrabi quarter in Jerusalem was totally destroyed to make place for a plaza at the wailing wall. The inhabitants were not allowed to remove their belongings. I personally witnessed the destroyed houses and personal effects when visiting Jerusalem about ten days after the war.

The official argument offered for justifying the evacuation of the Arab inhabitants of the Jewish quarter of East Jerusalem boomeranged. The majority of the quarter's former inhabitants are members of the orthodox Jewish Neturei Karta community, which is a zealous opponent of Zionism. They claim the evacuation was initiated by Sarati to confuse the Jewish people. They not only refuse to return to their former residence, now under Zionist occupation, but will not set foot there even for visits. They will not even go to the Wailing Wall, the West Wall of the ancient Temple and a sacrament in traditional Judaism. Neturei Karta's leader, Rabbi Amram Blau, is the only Jewish Rabbi who condemned the confiscation of Arab lands and houses as robbery. His daughter, twenty years ago, accepted a flat in Jerusalem in a house that was formerly owned by an Arab. She has not seen her father step across her threshold. Rabbi Blau publicly announced that he will not visit her and has lived with this self-imposed ban to this very day. Neturei Karta's anti-Zionism is not limited to these specifics. The following quote from *Maariv* (April 21, 1972) suggests their broader perspective:

Jerusalem in its entirety was decorated with flags in honour of Independence Day. Flags were raised over public buildings as well as many private residences. Also in the quarter of Meah Shearim (34) flags were raised for the occasion of Independence Day. Yet the flags on a number of houses in this Orthodox quarter were . . . black flags . . . to express their "mourning" of the extreme Orthodox over the fact that the "Zionist State" is celebrating its 25th anniversary

The situation in the Gaza Strip is catastrophic. Its inhabitants are being forcefully displaced from their houses, their lands are fenced and hundreds of families and a number of Bedouin tribes have been forced to move to other places. *Haaretz*, March 10, 1972 reports:

The Authorities Have Received A Complaint As If In The Evacuation Of Bedouins From The Rafiah Area Israeli Army Soldiers Caused Heavy Damages To Their Property And Treated The Evacuees Harshly.

Complaints by the settlements of *Ha-Shomer Ha-Tzair* in the South "against dispossession of Arabs in the Gaza Strip" (this sentence is placed by the paper in quotes . . . F.A.) refer among other to the contention that the Israeli army evacuated forcefully the Bedouins from the Rafiah area.

The Israeli army spokesman announced later that large scale fencing activities have been carried out in the area of Rafiah (40,000 dunam) in order to prepare the area for Jewish settlement and prevent terrorist activity . . . Eye witnesses have reported that prior to the evacuation the water wells of the Bedouins in the area were filled and that during the act of evacuation property was destroyed and a number of Bedouins beaten by Israeli army soldiers.

The eye-witness reports came from reserve soldiers who were revolted at what they were ordered to do. *Haaretz* (ibid) continues: Kibbutz members who served as reserve soldiers in the Gaza Strip reported that they were employed in fencing areas in the Strip and by orders to displace Bedouins and other inhabitants in the Strip from their lands and permanent residence. A member of kibbutz Gevulot, Moshe Epstein, reported that he has seen a bulldozer destroying orchards, irrigated fields and buildings for the purpose of fencing areas in the Strip.

Many lands in the occupied territories are now transformed into many of new Jewish settlements. Lands are fenced against Arabs to establish Jewish plants. Some of these are already in operation and represent investments of millions of Israeli pounds.

## IX.

### *By Their Deeds*

Summing up, I would state that the objective of the Zionist movement has always been to dispossess the Arab peasants and serfs from their lands. For that purpose it found two partners; First, the Arab *effendi* feudalists who sold the Zionists part of the lands, in total disregard of the people who lived on, cultivated and dedicated their lives to the land. As a rule these *effendi* were absentee feudal landlords. They were primarily interested in making money and the profits of good business. The second Zionist ally through this whole period of land and labour exclusion were the imperial powers which dominated the area: Turkey, Britain and currently the United States.

(34) Meah Shearim is an ultra-Orthodox Jewish section of Jerusalem.



The Zionist leaders fully appreciated the significance of the tie between man and land. They realized that to displace people from their country, it was necessary to sever these ties with the land. If necessary, they were to be displaced by force. The claim that the Zionist settlers in Palestine helped the Arab peasant is not supported by the facts. As a working policy, Zionism refused to participate with the Arabs in joint labour unions. Zionist policy seriously obstructed Arab products intended for sale in the Jewish community and effectively prevented the employment of Arab workers by Jewish employers.

Zionist propaganda throughout the world has portrayed the Arabs as engaging in murder, theft and terrorism as ends in themselves. In Israeli Hebrew children stories, Arabs are characterized as dirty, murderous, despicable and treacherous. These images are projected to conceal the fact that the Arabs fought the new settlers because Zionism threatened to steal their bread and dispossess them of their land. As Goldenberg notes, (*op. cit.*, p. 124) the Arab peasant was indifferent to who formally owned the land and ripped off the profits as long as the Arab peasant was not barred from the land. But expulsion from the land was precisely the Zionist objective. The Zionist movement was—and is—predicated upon colonization. No form of co-existence with that movement is possible. As an Arab living in Israel for the past 25 years I submit the reality of my country puts the lie to Zionist claims of genuine concern for that justice which is indispensable to any enduring peace. He was right who said: "Show me your deeds and I shall tell you who you are".

The Zionist movement has successfully brain-washed public opinion—particularly in the United States—to believe that Palestine, save, perhaps, a number of nomad Bedouin tribes, was empty of people when the Zionist first settlers came. This is totally untrue, a conscious deliberate historical distortion. I was born in the country, raised there, saw it built and sustained by Arabs. I saw the throbbing cities of Lydda, Ramallah, Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Tiberias, Nazareth, Majdal, Safad and others. In this context I have mentioned Ahad Ha'am and his article, "Truth From Eretz-Israel" (1891).

In his lecture at the Israel Technological Institute in Haifa, in 1968, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan said:

We came to this country, which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish state here. In considerable areas of the country we bought the land from the Arabs. Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don't blame you, since these geography books no longer exist. Not only don't the books exist—the Arab villages are not there either. Nahallal (*Haaretz*, April 4, 1969)



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