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THE HEBREW *RECONQUISTA* OF PALESTINE: FROM THE 1947 UNITED NATIONS PARTITION RESOLUTION TO THE FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS OF 1897

WALID KHALIDI

Challenging the widely accepted premise that the 1948 war was a war of Jewish self-defense, the author demonstrates that the 1947 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) partition resolution was fundamentally a green light for the Yishuv's fully mobilized paramilitary organizations (supported by the resources of the World Zionist Organization) to effect the long-planned establishment of a Jewish state by force of arms. He further argues that as a national movement, Zionism was inherently conquest-oriented from the moment of its birth in Basel in 1897 and that it most closely resembles—in the alchemy of its religious and secular motivation and its insatiable land hunger, irredentism, and indifference to the fate of the “natives”—the Iberian Reconquista of the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

I

THE PREVALENT VIEW IN THE WEST sustained by Israeli and pro-Israeli proponents is that the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) was in an essentially defensive mode during the “civil” and “regular” phases of the 1947–48 war. This view is not shared by some left-of-center Israeli revisionist historians and sociologists, but it remains the foundational premise of official Israeli historiography, including school curricula, and of most non-Israeli Western writers on the 1947–48 war.

This article argues that on the eve of the 1947–48 war, the Yishuv was in a full-blown aggrandizing, militant, and territorially expansionist mode, and that this mode long preceded the November 1947 UNGA partition resolution, which within six months led to the Nakba.

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The 1947–48 war marked only the date of birth of the Nakba; the date of its conception goes back to the first Zionist Congress held in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, to establish the World Zionist Organization (WZO)—the biological parent of the Nakba. The Zionist objective of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine grew exponentially closer to realization after the British conquered Palestine from the Ottomans in 1917.

The post-World War I “settlement” in the Middle East created a veritable geopolitical revolution that was resisted everywhere. But what happened in Palestine had no analogy in the region. It is axiomatic that no radical change in an entrenched, centuries-old status quo can be effected without violence, and the change envisaged for Palestine by the Balfour Declaration was unprecedentedly radical. Article 2 of the League of Nations Mandate over Palestine, entrusted to Britain in 1922, provided for “placing the country under such political, administrative, and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of a Jewish national home.” Britain’s partner in overturning the status quo was not a local community (as in the case of France with the Maronites of Mount Lebanon) but an external actor, the Jewish (Western) diaspora as represented by the WZO. It was because of the introduction of this foreign body riding piggyback on the colonial power, combined with the explicit nature of its intentions, that the colonial enterprise in Palestine was more bitter and intrusive than anywhere else along the Mediterranean Arab littoral, including Mussolini’s Libya and *Algérie Française*, and why it found no partners among the indigenous Palestinian population.

Colonial endeavors are by their very nature nonconsensual, but in the case of Palestine the element of nonconsent was paramount. Theodor Herzl in 1902 had sought (unsuccessfully) a charter for the settlement of Palestine from the Ottoman sultan ‘Abd al-Hamid over the heads of the Palestinians.¹ Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann had negotiated the Jewish national home over the heads of the Palestinians, first with British foreign secretary James Arthur Balfour and later ex post facto with the Hijazi Emir Faisal. The Palestinians had no voice in the formulation of the Mandate. Every Jewish immigrant who entered Palestine between 1917 and 1948, incrementally eroding the country’s majoritarian demography, did so against the wishes of the Palestinians, for the most part with the help of British bayonets. This was acknowledged by the Zionist leaders themselves: Weizmann told U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 that it had been impossible to submit the Zionist project to the Palestinians for their consent, because it would have been refused.² At about the same time, David Ben-Gurion, the paramount leader of the Yishuv, challenged the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, who was then having moral qualms about Zionism, by stating that “not even” Buber had immigrated to Palestine with Palestinian consent.³

The genius of the Zionist narrative is its ability to depict the Palestinians’ resistance to this plan to dispossess them as *Palestinian* aggression, and the Zionist drive to impose this revolutionary status quo on the Palestinians by force of arms as *Jewish* self-defense.

II

The UNGA partition resolution of 27 November 1947 was the proximate portal of the Nakba. It was Britain, of course, that had dumped the “Palestine problem” on the UN in an attempt to escape the catastrophic consequences of its hubristic Jewish national home policy.⁴ The UN partition resolution got Britain out of its self-inflicted black hole because it ostensibly created two states (a Jewish and an Arab one) to succeed the Mandate in Palestine, thus liquidating Britain’s role there along with its moral responsibility to its policy’s principal victim: the Arab population of the country. When the partition resolution came to the vote, British prime minister Clement Attlee pretended not to endorse it by abstaining, while seeing to it that Britain’s Commonwealth partners voted in its favor.⁵ Meanwhile U.S. president Harry Truman did his part by jamming partition down the windpipes of other UN member states.⁶

The UNGA partition resolution is one of the major foundational myths of Israel on the grounds that it was equitable, practicable, and morally and legally viable and that the Jews had accepted it while the Palestinians and Arabs had rejected it. But the Palestinians and the Arabs had rejected it precisely because it was *not* equitable, practicable, or morally and legally viable. Aggression and offensive action were built into the very concept of the UN partition resolution and integral to the mechanics of its implementation.

Mandatory Palestine was divided into sixteen districts.⁷ Nine of these were “allotted” to the UN Jewish state. Only one of the nine had a Jewish majority, while the Jewish population percentage in the other eight ranged from 47 percent to 1 percent.⁸ In none of the nine districts did the Jews own a majority of the land, with the percentage ownership there ranging from 39 to 1 percent.⁹ The majority of the Jewish community in Palestine was concentrated in three cities: Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem.¹⁰ Outside the urban areas in the UN-proposed Jewish state, the Arab rural population greatly outnumbered the Jewish population.¹¹

Overall, Jewish land ownership in the whole of Mandatory Palestine in 1948 totaled 1.7 million dunams (1 dunam = 1,000 square meters).¹² The area designated for the Jewish state was 15 million dunams.¹³ So what the UN was effectively saying to the Yishuv was: go seize those additional 13.3 million dunams that you *don’t* own from those who *do*—from the largely agricultural people who live in those areas and derive their livelihood from them.

Partitions are devastatingly destructive even (as it were) in “the best of circumstances.” In India in 1947, for example, the predominantly Hindu Congress Party and the Muslim League had agreed to the principle of partition into two states. Demographically, all the areas earmarked for Pakistan in both the western and eastern parts of the country were at least 50 percent Muslim. The British viceroy (Lord Mountbatten) remained in situ throughout, in New Delhi, supervising the entire process. The British commander-in-chief of the India Army presided over the division of the army into two national components.¹⁴

And yet, despite all this, the result was cataclysmic—at least 1 million dead and 14–17 million refugees—“the largest migration in human history.”¹⁵

In Palestine, by contrast, there was no agreement on the principle of partition between Arabs and Jews. There was little correlation between the areas allotted to the Jewish state and the demographic or land ownership situation on the ground. There was no central authority to oversee the process, the British having abandoned ship by 15 May 1948. And, of course, there was no agreed mechanism for implementation. Thus, what the UNGA partition resolution basically did was to give the fully mobilized military forces of the Yishuv—its main army, the Haganah, and the so-called dissident organizations Etzel (Irgun) and Lehi (Stern)—an alibi to establish the new Jewish state by force of arms under the guise of conforming to the international will.

What the UNGA partition resolution basically did was to give the fully mobilized military forces of the Yishuv an alibi to establish the new Jewish state by force of arms under the guise of conforming to the international will.

Israel derives its legitimacy in Western eyes in part from the Zionist leadership’s “acceptance” of the partition plan. This acceptance is hardly surprising since partition had been the official Zionist solution to the Palestine problem at least since 1937.¹⁶ At the same time, the leadership of the Yishuv never had any intention of sticking to the borders proposed by the 1947 UN partition resolution, as is plainly evident from the operational orders of the Haganah’s Plan Dalet, the master plan for the military conquest of Palestine launched six weeks before the end of the Mandate.¹⁷

Furthermore, while the Zionist leadership under the Mapai (Labor) Party verbally accepted partition, the second and third largest parties in the Yishuv, the Revisionists and Achdut-Poalei Zion, not to mention the Irgun and Stern groups, were all vociferously and adamantly against it, demanding a Jewish state in the whole of Eretz Israel.¹⁸

The passage of the UN partition plan marked the start of what has been called the civil war phase of the first Palestine war, which lasted from December 1947 until the declaration of the Israeli state on 14 May 1948. During that period, the combined operations of the Haganah and the Irgun and Stern paramilitary forces¹⁹ had already destroyed the fabric of Mandatory Palestinian society, triggered the Palestinian exodus, conquered major Arab towns and scores of Arab villages,²⁰ and established Jewish control over the bulk of the territory allocated to the Jewish state and territories well beyond.²¹ The regular war, which began with the entry into the country of units of the regular Arab armies on 15 May 1948, would not have occurred had these events not preceded.

The outcome of the regular war was already sealed in favor of Israel by the time it began. The “existential threat” supposedly posed by the Arab armies to the nascent Jewish state in 1948 occupies pride of place in Israeli and Zionist mythology. But like the ostensible equity and moral viability of the UN partition resolution, this threat is just that—a myth.²²

III

At the 1897 Basel congress that established the WZO, only 4 of the 199 delegates were Palestinian-born.²³ Fifty years later, on 14 May 1948, only 1 of the 37 signatories of Israel's Declaration of Independence in Tel Aviv was Palestinian-born.²⁴ In many ways, this encapsulates the nature of the Zionist movement. It was not a native phenomenon. It was not of Palestinian provenance.

Membership in the WZO never ceased to be overwhelmingly diaspora-based. Of a total membership of 2.16 million at the time of the 1946 World Zionist Conference on the eve of the creation of the Jewish state, only 300,000 members were from Palestine. American membership, at 956,000, was more than three times the contingent from Palestine.²⁵ The greater part of the Yishuv's income was never self-generated. It always came from overseas, largely from the American Jewish community.²⁶

The Mandate was essentially a condominium between the British administration and the WZO. This was explicitly provided for in the Mandate instrument itself.²⁷ Throughout the Mandate, the WZO was headquartered in London.²⁸ Can one imagine Michael Collins, or Nehru, or Kenyatta leading their national movements against Britain from headquarters in London? And yet the Yishuv in Palestine was an emanation and literally the creation of the London-based WZO and its financial institutions overseas.²⁹

Zionism was undoubtedly a nationalist movement. But what kind of nationalist movement? It was not a movement of liberation or self-determination against a foreign imperial or colonial power, like most Afro-Asian movements. It was not a settler rebellion against a metropolitan parent, like the American Revolution. It was not an intifada against a brutal and suffocating military occupation. It was not a secession from a multinational state or empire, like the movements against the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. It was not an assertion of an indigenous communal or minoritarian identity against neighbors, as in the Kurdish or Basque cases. It was not a *Risorgimento* à la Mazzini or Garibaldi aimed at the regional unification of a fragmented nation like Italy.

The movement had rich secular, utopian, and socialist fountainheads. But it also had powerful ethno-national impulses nurtured by centuries of discrimination, persecution, and intimidation, insults and expulsions (mostly in Christian Europe), and an imperative desire to escape from an ubiquitous and humiliating minority status. Simultaneously, the movement was informed by powerful religious, spiritual, even mystical, currents. The result was an admixture of these with other secular and national ingredients that defies easy analysis. The slogan of the religious Zionist Right (the Mizrahi Party) during the Mandate was "Eretz Yisrael for the people of Israel according to the Torah of Israel."³⁰

But messianic subtexts were by no means confined to religious parties. The secular Right under Menachem Begin in 1948 called "for the restoration of the whole Land of Israel to its God-covenanted owners."³¹ The secular biochemist and centrist leader Chaim Weizmann, the president of the WZO, testified before the Palestine Royal (Peel) Commission in 1936 that the Balfour

Declaration was the fulfillment of God's "promise to his people," comparable to the Persian Cyrus's sponsorship of the "return" of the Jews to Jerusalem to "rebuild their Temple."³² And speaking before that same royal commission, the ham-eating socialist leader Ben-Gurion affirmed that "the Bible is our Mandate."³³ The "eternal Book of Books" is mentioned in the first paragraph of Israel's Declaration of Independence.³⁴

Ben-Gurion's socialist Labor Mapai Party is traditionally seen as the founder of the state. Less well known is the fact that the ruling Zionist coalition from 1935 to the end of the Mandate and well beyond was what is known in Israel as the "historic coalition," whose principal partners were the Labor Mapai Party and the religious Mizrahi Party.³⁵ Without the Mizrahi party's active participation, it is doubtful that Israel could have been founded. What particularly distinguishes the Zionist movement across this secular-religious spectrum are, first, the nostalgia for a specific country (Palestine) by largely Western Jews in their intercontinental diaspora, and, second, the Zionists' dogged determination "to return" to it and to "retie" an ancient historical umbilical cord. Thus, in the second paragraph of the Israeli Declaration of Independence we read, "After the people were exiled by force from their country they remained faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersal and never ceased praying and hoping to return to it and to renew their *political* liberty within it."³⁶

Even in its pre-Balfour, pre-World War I state of political and military powerlessness, Zionism exhibited a sense of exclusive entitlement and moral superiority that not only reflected current European attitudes to non-European peoples but also seemed rooted in the conviction of a primordial and preemptive birthright purblind to the indigenous Palestinians of the land.³⁷

Analogies to the Zionist venture abound, particularly those of the early English settlers in North America, Australia, and New Zealand. But while the parallels are clear, they seem to pertain more to the mechanics of dispossession and colonization than to the motivational impulses of these settlers, in which the atavistic irredentist Zionist dimension is lacking. The English settlers did see America as the promised land, but they did not believe that they had originated in the prairies.

After decades of reflection on the subject, the closest analogy I can think of, given the lack of congruence with other national movements, is the Iberian *Reconquista* of the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries under Castile and Aragon. Sensing the opportunity as Muslim power after several centuries had begun to wane, they were determined to "take back" what they saw as their ancestral patrimony no matter how long it took. In this sense, the Reconquista was not about armies, or the legitimacy of this or that treaty, or even Muslim divisions or missteps. It was about a people on the move, with its alchemy of religious and national motivation, its profound sense of prior ownership and entitlement, its insatiable land hunger, and its pitiless indifference to the fate of the inhabitants. In this same fundamental way, Zionism was on the offensive—a Reconquista, from the very start. As in the Iberian case, there was never any serious thought about what to do with the "usurpers" or "strangers" on the

land—they were simply obstacles to its forward march. Partnership was never a possibility because what was at issue was an exclusive primordial, unchallengeable, indeed divine right. In this light, questions of who fired the first shot, and who did or did not accept partition, are mere diversions and irrelevancies.

IV

The watershed in the fortunes of the Zionist movement was the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which changed Zionism's prospects overnight from a fantasy to a possibility under the wing of the paramount imperial power of the day. By twinning with Mandatory Britain, Zionism launched its Reconquista against the Palestinians by proxy—with British bayonets.

The hauteur toward the Palestinians at Whitehall is best exemplified by the following words written by Balfour himself in 1919:

Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.³⁸

In the same memorandum, Balfour went on:

Whatever deference should be paid to the views of those who live there [i.e. Palestine], the Powers in their selection of a mandatory do not propose, as I understand the matter, to consult with them.

Somewhat less circumlocutory were the views about the Palestine Arabs held by Winston Churchill as reported by the then colonial secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, in 1938. "He told me we were crazy to help the Arabs because they were a backward people and ate nothing but camel dung."³⁹ So intimate was the relationship between Churchill and Weizmann that at a private dinner organized in London in 1938 to discuss British policy in Palestine, the British arch-imperialist, then in the opposition, told the Zionist leader, "You know you are our master . . . and what you say goes. If you ask us to fight we shall fight like tigers."⁴⁰

Under British protection, the tiny indigenous Yishuv gradually burgeoned into the "Jewish national home" that was the *raison d'être* of the Mandate. It was thus that the Yishuv grew from 56,000 in 1917 to 174,610 by 1931 to 553,600 by 1944.⁴¹ As early as 1920, Ben-Gurion and his Labor colleagues had decided on the need for a secret underground army, the Haganah, on the realistic assumption that to convert a country whose vast majority was Arab into a Jewish national home required direct military force that the British government might not always be willing to provide. The word *Haganah* in Hebrew characteristically means "self-defense."

At the same time, with the Jewish population still very thin on the ground in rural areas, the Zionists established early on a brilliant method of controlling

the land in any future showdown with the Palestinian peasantry. This was the kibbutz system, based in its strategic purposes on Prussian models designed for the control of the Polish peasantry in East Prussia.⁴² The kibbutz network—centrally directed and financed—occupied strong points in selected sites across the Palestinian countryside.⁴³ Kibbutzes proliferated, fed by a steady influx of pioneers (*balutzim*) specially trained in Europe before emigrating to Palestine,⁴⁴ as well as via an organized linkage with the Yishuv's own high school graduates and highly motivated youth movements⁴⁵—themselves modeled on German youth movements.⁴⁶

The kibbutz network was buttressed by two other powerful affiliations. First, with the all-embracing multifunctional cooperative services (marketing, banking, transport, construction, education, and health) of the Yishuv's unique General Federation of Jewish Labor, the Histadrut.⁴⁷ Second, with the striking force of the Haganah, the Palmach, whose commanders and rank and file were predominantly kibbutzniks.⁴⁸ The contrast could not be more antithetical between the typical individual preindustrial subsistence-level Palestinian village and the collective kibbutz next door at the nexus of such a highly integrated system of support and organization.

As of 1917, there was a trilateral relationship of power in Palestine among the British occupier, the Palestinians, and the Yishuv supported by the WZO and the (Western) Jewish diaspora. The fundamental story of the Palestine Mandate in the years up to 1948 is the relentless growth of the Yishuv (i.e., the Jewish national home) under British aegis through massive, mostly Eastern and later Central, European immigration. The result was the cumulative shift in the balance of power between the indigenous Palestinians and the Yishuv in favor of the latter.

Shabtai Teveth, the preeminent authority on Ben-Gurion, believes that thanks to this British-protected Jewish mass immigration, Ben-Gurion by 1936 felt the Yishuv was so strong that he could discontinue all political dialogue with the Palestinians.⁴⁹ Uri Ben Eliezer, the brilliant Israeli sociologist, has described in perceptive detail the growth of militarism and a conquest-oriented ethos at the Yishuv grass-roots level from the mid-1930s onward.⁵⁰

Arab anxiety about the growing Jewish national home, attested to by successive British royal commissions of inquiry dispatched from London to look into the causes of the disturbances that had periodically broken out since the imposition of the Mandate, finally erupted in the great Palestine Rebellion of 1936–39, the largest and most sustained armed defiance of British imperial authority in the first half of the twentieth century.⁵¹ The brutal crushing of the rebellion by the British army, the killing and hanging and collective punishment, the dismantling of Palestinian political organizations, the arrest and exile of Palestinian leaders, and the systematic disarmament of the Palestinian population massively and irreversibly shifted the balance of power in favor of the Yishuv.⁵²

In 1937, a royal commission headed by Lord Peel recommended for the first time the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, the latter to be

annexed by Transjordan under the British Hashemite puppet Emir Abdallah. Like the true mother of the child facing Solomon, the Palestinians were outraged at the proposed vivisection. Even more repellent was the commission's recommendation of the compulsory "transfer" of the Palestinians from the proposed Jewish state to make room for Jewish immigrants. In revulsion at these recommendations, the Palestinian rebellion against Britain reached its zenith in 1938–39. By contrast, Peel's compulsory "transfer" proposal was music to the ears of the Zionist leadership, whetting its appetite and fueling its coercive disposition.⁵³

In fact, the concept of transfer (a euphemism for expulsion) of the Palestinians had been buzzing in the bonnets of every leading Zionist figure from the earliest days of the movement, as has been documented by Nur Masalha and Rabbi Chaim Simons.⁵⁴ More to the point, as early as January 1937, some six months before Peel's report was published on 7 July 1937, partition and its concomitant concept of transfer were being discussed in camera by the royal commission and Chaim Weizmann.⁵⁵ The concept of transfer continued to occupy a prominent niche in the strategic thinking of the Yishuv's military and political elite—as it does to this day in some Israeli circles.⁵⁶ In the 1947–48 fighting, the idea of transfer—as shown conclusively in the work of Ilan Pappé—informed the implementation of Plan Dalet once the UNGA partition resolution of November 1947 provided the tendentious alibi of self-defense.⁵⁷

By 1939, Britain had created a Jewish auxiliary colonial army twenty thousand strong, which it armed, trained, and officered. This force was given the innocuous name of the Jewish Settlement Police (JSP), but in fact it was a territorial army modeled on the Territorial Army of Britain, a countrywide structure based on regionally recruited units that were trained and deployed in specific interconnected and centrally directed geographic areas.⁵⁸ This new official Jewish army, when added to the underground "unofficial" Haganah army of thirty thousand men, made the Yishuv, with its population of less than a half million, one of the most militarized communities in the world.⁵⁹

A corollary of British policy in Palestine had been the suspension of democracy and representative government. This was not merely the usual feature of colonial policies everywhere but was absolutely integral to the very formation and growth of the Jewish national home in Palestine. This is because to dismiss the "desires and prejudices of the Arabs," in the words of Lord Balfour,⁶⁰ was to dismiss the "desires and prejudices" of the vast majority of the population. Thus, the country that is tirelessly hailed in Western capitals today as the "sole democracy in the Middle East" came into existence in Palestine only through the burial of democracy pending the building up of an artificial imported majority through mass Jewish immigration from overseas forcibly imposed by the colonial power. In 1935, the mother of all parliaments in London overwhelmingly voted against a legislative assembly in Palestine, which would have provided for the merest semblance of representative government, out of concern that it might prejudice the growth of the Jewish national home.⁶¹

V

Having brutally crushed the resurgent Palestinian rebellion against partition and compulsory transfer, Britain began a reassessment of its entire Palestine policy. With the storm clouds of World War II gathering, the adverse effects of its pro-Zionism on its relations with the Arab and Muslim worlds—the British Empire then contained the largest “native” Muslim population of any European colonial power—were increasingly felt. Accordingly, in 1939, Britain called for a conference in London to be attended by representatives of the Arab countries as well as by Palestinian and Zionist leaders.

A policy paper issued after the conference (the White Paper of 1939) put a temporary cap on Jewish mass immigration and on Zionist acquisition of Palestinian land in certain parts of the country. It also left the door open to a unitary (i.e., nonpartitioned) Palestine, contingent upon Arab-Jewish agreement—an impossible condition to fulfill. This was Britain’s belated attempt at evenhandedness. But evenhandedness, then as now, is not Zionism’s favorite brand of tea. The White Paper was the beginning of the parting of ways between London and the Yishuv.

A distinctive feature of Zionism as a national movement is its dependence on imperial sponsors and the facility with which it could shed one sponsor for another. Soon after the White Paper was issued, Ben-Gurion met its principal author, the British colonial secretary Malcolm MacDonald. In the heated exchanges that ensued, MacDonald asked Ben-Gurion how long he thought Britain could afford to protect the Yishuv with British bayonets. Ben-Gurion answered that the Yishuv no longer needed Britain’s bayonets. When MacDonald remarked that a regular Iraqi army could invade the Yishuv from the East, Ben-Gurion replied: “The sea is easier to cross than the desert.”⁶² What Ben-Gurion had in mind, of course, was the Jewish communities overseas, particularly in the United States. And sure enough, the Yishuv’s shift to the United States as patron was presently formalized in the 1942 “Biltmore Program.”

A distinctive feature of Zionism as a national movement is its dependence on imperial sponsors and the facility with which it could shed one sponsor for another.

The Biltmore Program is so called because it was declared at the Biltmore Hotel in New York, at a general meeting of major American Jewish leaders organized at Ben-Gurion’s behest. The program demanded unrestricted postwar Jewish mass immigration into Palestine under the sole control of the WZO, as well as the declaration of the whole of Palestine as a Jewish “commonwealth”—a code word for state. This was open political war against Britain and all-out war against the Palestinians.

The Biltmore Program was Ben-Gurion’s strategic stroke of genius. It committed the American Jewish establishment and its resources to a collision course with Britain and the Palestinians, while at the same time harnessing this establishment’s aversion to postwar Jewish mass immigration to the United States itself for fear of arousing the latent anti-Semitism of gentile America.⁶³

The Biltmore Conference took place in May 1942 before the horrific details of the Holocaust emerged in November of that year. Once these details did emerge, they were seized upon by Ben-Gurion's ultra-Zionist domestic foes in the Yishuv—the Revisionist Right and in particular its terrorist extensions, the Irgun and Stern groups—to escalate against Britain so as to embarrass and outbid the Laborites led by Ben-Gurion.

By 1944, the Irgun had acquired a new leader—Menachem Begin, a Pole from Brest-Litovsk. Begin had been the commander in Warsaw of the revisionist paramilitary organization Betar.⁶⁴ Fleeing his command at the approach of the German army after Hitler's invasion of Russia, he was arrested but released shortly thereafter by the Russians.⁶⁵ Begin set foot in Palestine for the first time in May 1942. He assumed command of the Irgun there and began operations against the British, soon thereafter in coordination with American Jewish Revisionists.⁶⁶ His declaration of war against Britain was made in February 1944 while British troops were still battling Nazi panzer divisions in North Africa and Italy and preparing to land in Normandy.⁶⁷

Jewish terrorist operations against the British continued in mounting spirals without respite until the very end of the Mandate in May 1948. Before 1944, Jewish terrorism had been directed exclusively at Palestinian civilians, particularly in 1937–39. It was during this period that Jewish terrorism had introduced for the first time into the Middle East the diabolical tactic of delayed-action electrically detonated mines hidden in kerosene containers, milk cans, and fruit baskets at Arab bus stops, vegetable markets, and cafés.⁶⁸ From 1944 onward, these tactics, with more sophisticated and shocking variations, were deployed against British targets by both the Irgun and Stern groups.⁶⁹

VI

There is no space in this article to discuss in detail the sequence of events leading to Britain's shameless abandonment of its ship of state in Palestine, but the central figure in these events was Ben-Gurion. Ben-Gurion was without doubt the most capable political leader operating in the Middle East in the 1940s and 1950s. He had his priorities right. He had not followed the Irgun and Stern groups in their attacks against the British because he had intuited that the real enemy was not Britain but the Palestinians and Arabs.⁷⁰

With the American Jewish community committed to the Biltmore Program, Britain had become, as far as Ben-Gurion was concerned, superfluous, a broken reed, an obstacle. Meanwhile the Yishuv had gained immensely in military strength. Since 1939, more than thirty thousand Jews from Palestine had acquired military training in the British army in North Africa.⁷¹ Thus in 1945, at the end of World War II, the time had come for the establishment of the Jewish state, with maximal possible borders. Britain had to be removed, but not by the direct military action of the Haganah itself.

Ben-Gurion's grand strategy to remove Britain involved: *first*, mobilizing the American Jewish community to put sustained pressure on Washington to put

sustained pressure on London;⁷² *second*, massive illegal Jewish immigration from Europe with American Jewish funding to undermine the White Paper restrictions, flood the Coast Guard facilities of the British Mandatory administration, and wear down the war-exhausted Royal Navy;⁷³ *third*, a worldwide propaganda campaign to denounce Britain for pitilessly preventing Jewish European displaced persons from reaching the shores of Palestine, this sliver of territory depicted as the only place in this wide world capable of absorbing them;⁷⁴ *fourth*, formulating a “partition” plan based on the Biltmore Program to win the support of the new unelected American president Harry Truman,⁷⁵ who had moved into the White House after Roosevelt’s death and who was facing presidential elections in November 1948;⁷⁶ and *finally*, looking the other way while the Irgun and Stern gangs escalated their vicious terrorist campaign against Britain to nudge it farther toward the exit.

The strategy succeeded brilliantly, and Britain was ignominiously driven out of Palestine by its own adopted child and protégé. The terrorist innovations used against the British army and government to achieve this end included the postal bomb, the booby-trapped vehicle, the booby-trapped suitcase, and the letter-bomb. According to the *Times* of London, Zionist letter bombs (all intercepted by Scotland Yard) were sent in 1947 to Mr. Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary; Mr. Anthony Eden, former Foreign Secretary; Sir Stafford Cripps, Minister of the Board of Trade; Mr. John Strachey, Minister of Food; and Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Minister without Portfolio.⁷⁷

Still other Jewish terrorist innovations were: taking British officers hostage in Palestine and whipping them (a first in the entire history of the British army); and kidnapping British noncommissioned officers, hanging them, and booby-trapping their hanging bodies (another first).⁷⁸ The masterminds behind these operations were Menachem Begin and Yizhak Shamir, later prime ministers of Israel⁷⁹—mentors and role models for the Tzipis,⁸⁰ Bibis, Liebermans, and other leading contemporary Israeli politicians.

The British army in Palestine in the last years of the mandate was 100,000 strong—one for every three adult members of the Yishuv. This army could have smashed the Irgun and Stern overnight, but its hands were tied largely by President Truman’s ardent pro-Zionism. Between 1945 and November 1947, the ratio of Britons to Jewish terrorists killed was on the order of six to one.⁸¹ This is an unheard-of ratio in the annals of colonial warfare between the regular army and “rebels,” to be compared, for example, to the 14 Israeli versus the 1,400 Gazan dead of recent times.

The green light for the Hebrew Reconquista came with the UNGA partition resolution of 29 November 1947. What followed could not be called military operations by one army against another army. There was no Palestinian army. And on the Jewish side, the Haganah, the Palmach, the JSP, Etzel, Lehi, and the recently constituted Gahal and Mahal⁸² were merely the vanguard of a “nation on the march” à la Aragon and Castile, a march that had started in Basel, Switzerland, in August 1897, bent on redeeming an “ancestral” land from Palestinian strangers and squatters in accordance with the operational orders

of Plan Dalet and, we are assured by Gentile and Jew alike, in conformity with Jehovah's own design.⁸³

* * *

The irony—indeed the mother of ironies—is that Ben-Gurion spent 1916 researching the history of Palestine in—of all places—the New York Public Library. One of the conclusions of his research was that the Palestinian peasantry were the real descendants of the ancient Hebrews.⁸⁴

NOTES

1. See Walid Khalidi, "The Jewish-Ottoman Land Company: Herzl's Blueprint for the Colonization of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22, no. 2 (Winter 1993), pp. 30–47.

2. Weizmann summarized his words to President Roosevelt as follows: "I maintained the thesis that we could not rest our case on the consent of the Arabs: as long as their consent was asked, they would naturally refuse it," in Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 534.

3. Ben-Gurion's challenge to Martin Buber occurred in a meeting in Jerusalem on 18 March 1941. The meeting was attended by Buber and some of his colleagues representing the Association of German and Austrian Immigrants to Palestine. As Ben-Gurion recounted the conversation: "All of us, all those sitting in that room and all those living in the country had settled in Palestine without the consent of the Arabs. Not even Martin Buber had asked the Arabs for their consent before coming to Eretz Israel. Did the Association believe that other Jews did not have a similar right? If we were asked if we had the moral right to immigrate without Arab consent, I was certain that each of us would reply without hesitation, we had no moral need for that consent." In *Jewish Observer*, 6 May 1964.

4. British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin announced his government's decision to submit the Palestine problem to the United Nations on 18 February 1947.

5. Thirty-three countries voted in favor of partition, including the United States and the USSR. No Afro-Asian country voted for it except Liberia and South Africa. Thirteen countries voted against partition,

including all Arab and Muslim member states, as well as India. Britain was one of ten countries to abstain, though Australia, Canada, and New Zealand voted in favor.

6. For the coercive tactics employed by the Truman administration to force through the UNGA resolution in favor of the partition of Palestine, see Walid Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987), pp. 645–745.

7. Strictly speaking, the sixteen administrative units were known as "sub-districts" (*qada*, sing.), which were grouped into six larger districts (*liwa*, sing.). See *A Survey of Palestine, Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Government Printer, Palestine, 1946; reprinted with permission, Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991), p. 145.

8. Respectively 47 percent, 33 percent, 30 percent, 22 percent, 17 percent, 17 percent, 13 percent, and 1 percent. See UN map no. 93 (b), August 1950, in Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984), p. 239.

9. Respectively 39 percent, 38 percent, 35 percent, 34 percent, 28 percent, 18 percent, 17 percent, 14 percent, and 1 percent, in Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora*, p. 237.

10. The combined Jewish population of these three cities at the end of 1946 was 356,000 out of an estimated total Jewish population of 608,000. *Supplement to Survey of Palestine*, vol. 3, *A Survey of Palestine*, pp. 11–13.

11. Within the UN-proposed Jewish state, the Arab rural population was 268,000 while the Jewish population numbered 151,000. *Jewish Settlements in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Jewish National Fund Head Office, March 1948), p. ii.

12. *Jewish Settlements in Palestine*, p. ii.

13. *Jewish Settlements in Palestine*, p. ii.

14. Patrick French, *Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division* (London: HarperCollins, 1997).

15. French, *Liberty or Death*, pp. 347, 349.

16. N.A. Rose, *The Gentile Zionists: A Study in Anglo-Zionist Diplomacy, 1929-1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), pp. 124ff.

17. See Walid Khalidi, "Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine," *Middle East Forum* (November 1961); and Walid Khalidi, "Plan Dalet Revisited," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18, no. 1 (Autumn 1988), pp. 3-70. See also Uri Ben Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 170, 177; and Victor Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1891-1849* (London: Pluto Press, 2009), pp. 181-94.

18. A trial of strength in Jewish politics in Palestine on the eve of the partition resolution was the election to the twenty-second World Zionist Congress on 28 October 1946, with the vote counts and number of delegates for the leading parties as follows: Mapai (68,939 votes and 28 delegates), the Revisionists (26,964 votes and 11 delegates), and Achdut-Poalei Zion (24,049 votes and 10 delegates). See *Supplement to Survey of Palestine*, p. 153. The Revisionists aimed at "the early establishment" of a Jewish state on "both sides" of the Jordan River, while Achdut was "more maximalist in matters of Zionist policy" than Mapai, *Survey of Palestine*, vol. 2, pp. 957ff.

19. Contacts between the Haganah and Etzel (Irgun) to coordinate "military" operations started immediately after the UN partition resolution was passed in November 1947. The agreement on coordination was signed "at the beginning of March" 1948, and on 28 March, Haganah commanders were informed that the agreement had gone into effect. Ben

Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism*, p. 163. It should be recalled that Plan Dalet was launched in the first week of April, while the massacre of Dayr Yasin involved forces from the three organizations: Etzel, Lehi (Stern), and the Palmach, the Haganah's strike force.

20. For the capture before 15 May 1948 of Palestinian villages inside and outside the borders of the proposed Jewish state, see note 17 above on Plan Dalet and Walid Khalidi, *All that Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).

21. For eight major designated Haganah operations against Palestinian targets *outside* the borders of the UN-proposed Jewish state carried out within the framework of Plan Dalet *before* the end of the Mandate, see Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, appendix VII, p. 856.

22. With regard to the "existential threat," less than ten days after the start of the regular war on 15 May 1948, Ben-Gurion wrote the following entry in his *War Diary* on 24 May: "We must ask [Gen.] Allon to hit the Syrian army from the East and the North. Our air force must bomb Amman and destroy it. The weakest link in the Arab coalition is: Lebanon. Muslim power there is artificial and can be easily undermined. We should establish there a Christian State whose southern border should be the Litani River. We will conclude an alliance with it. Once the Arab Legion [of Transjordan] is destroyed and Amman is bombed, the power of Transjordan will be broken. Syria will follow suit. Should Egypt dare to continue fighting, we will bomb Port Said, Alexandria, and Cairo. In this way we will end the war and settle our ancestral accounts with Egypt, Ashur, and Aram." David Ben-Gurion *Yoman Hamilbima: Malbimet Hamatsmüt 1947-1948* (Tel Aviv: IDF Press, 1948), p. 454. Translated into Arabic by Samir Jabbour in *Yaumiyyat al-Harb 1947-1948* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993). Not surprisingly, this paragraph is missing from the English version of Ben-Gurion's entry on the same day in David Ben-Gurion, *Israel: A Personal History*, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1971), p. 117, whose other contents closely match the Hebrew original.

23. The official *Präsenz-Liste* of the delegates to the 1897 Basel Congress

included 199 names. These were mostly from Eastern Europe: Russia, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Austrian Poland (Galicia and Bukovina). Five of the 199 names on the *Präsenz-Liste* were stated to be delegates from Palestine, but at least one of these (H. Loewe of Jaffa) was not a resident but a visitor to the country. See *The Jubilee of the First Zionist Congress 1897-1947* (Jerusalem: Executive of the Zionist Organization, 1947), pp. 95ff.

24. For a complete list of the thirty-seven signatories of the Israeli Declaration of Independence, see Susan Hattis Rolef, ed., *A Political Dictionary of the State of Israel* (New York: MacMillan, 1987), Appendix I, pp. 348-49. A thorough check of the places of birth of these signatories revealed them to be mostly from Eastern Europe (e.g., David Ben-Gurion: Plonsk, Poland; Mordekhai Bentov: Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Poland; Meir Grabovsky: Ribnita, Moldova/Transnistria; Zerach Wahrhaftig: Volkovysk/Vankavysk, Belarus; etc.). Behor Shitreet seems to have been the only one of the thirty-seven signatories to be born in Palestine (Tiberias).

25. *Supplement to Survey of Palestine*, pp. 132-33.

26. For American Jewry's financial contributions to the Yishuv during the British Mandate, see Samuel Halperin, *The Political World of American Zionism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961), Appendix IV, p. 325. A comprehensive table by Halperin listing these contributions is reproduced with permission in Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, Appendix V, p. 850.

27. Article 4 of the Mandate stated: "An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purposes of advising and cooperating with the administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home. . . . The Zionist Organization . . . shall be recognized as such agency." *A Survey of Palestine*, vol. 1, p. 5.

28. The headquarters of the WZO were respectively in Vienna (1897-1905), Cologne (1905-11), Berlin (1911-20), and London (1920-46). During 1947, they were for all intents and purposes located in New York. Ironically, while the WZO was based in the imperial capital of London during the Mandate years, it was headquartered in Berlin in 1917, which meant that the

Balfour Declaration was issued to a movement based in the enemy capital.

29. The major international Zionist financial institutions (all based in London) included the Jewish Colonial Association (established 1891), the Jewish Colonial Trust (established 1899), the Jewish National Fund (JNF, established 1907), the Palestine Foundation Fund (PFF, established 1921), and the Women's International Zionist Organization (established 1920). In the United States, both the JNF and the PFF were beneficiaries of the annual American United Palestine Appeal. Other major American Jewish funds included, among others, the American Committee for the Weizmann Institute, the American Friends of the Hebrew University, American Technion Society, Hadassah, and the Joint Distribution Committee. Major American investment corporations included Palestine Economic Cooperative and Ampal-American Palestine Trading Corporation.

30. *Survey of Palestine*, vol. 2, p. 959.

31. Quoted in Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall* (London: Zed Books, 1948), p. 144.

32. *Palestine Royal Commission: Minutes of Evidence Heard at Public Sessions*, Colonial Series no. 134 (London: HMSO, 1937), p. 34.

33. *Palestine Royal Commission*, p. 288. For Ben-Gurion's ham eating, see Dan Kurzman, *Ben-Gurion: Prophet of Fire* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 322. Kurzman reports that Ben-Gurion "lived by the Bible which he considered more a historical than a spiritual document" (p. 322). Ben-Gurion's statement about the Bible and the Mandate seemed to have such resonance with the Yishuv and Israelis that it was considered worthy of quotation many years later in the official history of the Haganah, Yehuda Slutsky, ed., *Sefer Toldot Haganah* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1972), p. 1215.

34. The paragraph reads: "Eretz Israel (Land of Israel) was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious, and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained statehood . . . and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books." H. E. Baker, *Legal System of Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1968), p. 92.

35. For the "historic coalition" between Mapai and Hamizrahi, see Hatis Rolef, *A Political Dictionary*, p. 147.

36. Baker, *Legal System of Israel*, p. 92. Emphasis added.

37. See Hans Kohn, "Zion and the Jewish National Idea," in Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, pp. 807ff.

38. "Memorandum by Mr. Balfour," 11 August 1919 in E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*. First Series, vol. IV, 1919 (London: HMSO, 1952), p. 345.

39. Nicholas Bethel, *The Palestine Triangle: The Struggle for the Holy Land, 1935-48* (London: Putnam Adult, 1979), p. 44. Churchill's contempt for the natives was not confined to the Palestinians. He thought Gandhi "an old humbug . . . a rascal . . . a thoroughly evil force," in French, *Liberty or Death*, p. 166.

40. Rose, *The Gentile Zionists*, p. 132.

41. The Jewish population figures for the years 1917, 1931, and 1944 are from *A Survey of Palestine*, vol. 1, pp. 144, 149, and 152, respectively.

42. For Prussian influences on Zionist colonization of Palestine (and particularly on Arthur Ruppin, its chief pre-World War I architect, himself a Prussian Jewish native of Posen), see Derek J. Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine 1870-1918* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 80, 94-96, 124, 134, 144. See also Shalom Reichman and Shlomo Hasson "A Cross-cultural Diffusion of Colonization: From Posen to Palestine," in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74, no. 1 (1984), pp. 57-70; Ben Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism*, pp. 62, 157, 195-96, 201-02; and Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), p. 598.

43. For a crisp description of the "Stockade and Tower Settlements," which could be set up "within a day," and their role during the Mandate in defining the future borders of the Jewish state, see the article under this designation in Raphael Patai, ed., *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel* (New York: Herzl Press, 1971), vol. II, p. 1975.

44. For the international Hehalutz organization within the WZO, which trained its members "for pioneering . . . and self-defense," see the article "Hehalutz" in Patai, *Encyclopedia*, vol. I, p. 483. See also article "Hakhshara" (pl. *Hakhsbarot*; p. 451). These were training centers

established mainly in Poland, Lithuania, and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s by the Hehalutz organization to prepare candidates for immigration to Palestine and particularly for joining a kibbutz.

45. See Ben Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism*, pp. 70-71.

46. For the impact of the German Youth movement on the Kibbutz group affiliated to the Yishuv's Hashomer Hatzair (Young Watchman) party, see Henrik F. Infield, *Cooperative Living in Palestine* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1946), pp. 91ff. The author affirms, "From that source they took over antagonism to bourgeois life and to urban decadence. . . . They took over the German costume: dirndl and braids for girls, short pants, open shirt and sandals for boys. They imitated German youth in hikes, sang 'Landsknecht-Lieder,' camped in the woods. . . . At annual youth gatherings they proclaimed their 'unbendingheit' or rejection of compromise."

47. For the pervasive role of the Histadrut in the kibbutzim, see Gerhard Münzner, *Jewish Labour Economy in Palestine* (London: V. Gollancz, 1946).

48. For the relationship between the Palmach and the Kibbutz movements, see Ben Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism*, pp. 52ff.

49. Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 136ff.

50. Ben Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism*, pp. 52ff, but particularly pp. 149-90.

51. The 1920 Iraqi rebellion against Britain lasted only from July to October. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1945), p. 314.

52. For the casualties suffered by the Palestinians during the 1936-39 rebellion, see Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, appendix IV, pp. 846ff. For the systematic disarmament of the Palestinians by the British authorities in the period 1936-45, see *A Survey of Palestine*, vol. 2, p. 594.

53. Following the publication of the Peel report, the Jewish Agency established toward the end of 1937 a "Committee for the Transfer of Population." The committee included inter alia Dr. Jacob Thon, director of the Palestine Land Development Company; Joseph Weitz, director of the Jewish National Fund's Land Development

Division; and Eliahu Epstein, director of the M. E. Section of the Jewish Agency's Political Department. Rabbi Chaim Simons, *International Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947: A Historical Survey* (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1988), pp. 163ff.

54. Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought 1882-1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).

55. Emerging from a secretly arranged one-on-one meeting at the Jewish colony Nahalal in January 1937 with Professor Reginald Coupland (a member of the Royal Commission and its most ardent pro-partitionist), Weizmann told the curious settlers, "Today we laid the basis for the Jewish state." Rose, *The Gentile Zionists*, p. 128.

56. For an anthology of statements favoring the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs by the leading Zionist leaders of the Right, Left, and Center from Herzl to Ben-Gurion, see Simons, *International Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine*, and Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*. For the continued vibrancy of the concept of transfer in Israel today, see Nur Masalha, *A Land without a People: Israel, Transfer and the Palestinians 1949-96* (London: Faber, 1997).

57. Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006).

58. Slutsky, *Sefer Toldot Habaganab*, p. 895, frankly acknowledges that "Jewish Settlement Police" was a euphemism to allay Arab fears and that the force was indeed a military formation closely modeled on the Territorial Army of Britain.

59. Ben-Gurion believed that by 1939 the Yishuv had a military force "the size of which the Jewish people had rarely commanded." Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs*, p. 187.

60. See note 39 above.

61. The proposals for the creation of a Legislative Council were made at the end of 1935 by the British High Commissioner for Palestine himself. The Council would be composed of 28 members: elected (12), nominated (11), and official (i.e., British, 5). Of the 12 elected, 8 would be "Moslems," 1 "Christian," and 3 Jews. Of the 11 nominated, 3 would be

"Moslems," 2 "Christian," 4 Jews, and 2 "representatives of commerce." Even if all the "Christians" were Arab, they, together with the "Moslems" (both elected and nominated), would add up to a total of only 14 Arab members (i.e., 50 percent of the Council) at a time when the Arabs of Palestine constituted 72 percent of the total population. *The Political History of Palestine under British Administration* (Jerusalem: British Information Services, 1947), p. 18.

62. Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs*, p. 193.

63. For the restrictive U.S. immigration policies affecting Jewish immigration to the United States during the British Mandate in Palestine, see the testimony of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise (former president of the Zionist Organization of America) before Congressional Subcommittees on Immigration, "Admission of German Refugee Children, Joint Hearings," in S.J. Res. 64 and H.J. Res. 168, 76th Congress, 1st session, 1939, pp. 155-60 (reproduced in Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, p. 451). See also Robert A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy 1924-1952* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 112-28; and Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, Appendix VI, pp. 853ff.

64. Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, pp. 111ff.

65. Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, pp. 120ff.

66. Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, pp. 129-30.

67. Brenner, *The Iron Wall*, p. 130.

68. Slutsky, *Sefer Toldot Habaganab*, reports that Etzel (Irgun) introduced the "new tactic of placing a delayed-action mine in crowded Arab meeting places," (p. 812). See also Bethel, *The Palestine Triangle*, p. 187. For a detailed list of Irgun bombings of Arab marketplaces in 1937-39, see Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora*, pp. 193-94.

69. In February 1944, Menachem Begin announced that "although the world war hadn't ended, a truce no longer existed between the Hebrew nation and the British administration in the Land of Israel." He went on to declare, "The time has come to take the Land of Israel for ourselves as a state." Ben Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism*, p. 116.

70. Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs*, pp. 194ff.

71. The number of Palestine Jews who enlisted in the British Army in Egypt during World War II is put at 32,000

by Zeev Schiff, *A History of the Israeli Army 1870–1974* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1974), p. 22; and at 35,000 by Morris Beckman, *The Jewish Brigade: An Army with Two Masters* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1998), p. 42.

72. See Ben-Gurion's article, "We Look towards America," *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, 31 January 1964, pp. 14–16 (reprinted in Khalidi, *From Haven to Conquest*, pp. 481 ff) describing an April 1940 discussion with colleagues in Jerusalem about "the great importance" of the American Jewish community, "the world's largest Jewish community—perhaps the largest in our people's history." At this meeting, disillusioned with Britain's Palestine policy and convinced that "the center of decision was shifting from Europe to America," Ben-Gurion talked about the "latent energies of American Jewry which could render loyal service to the needs of European Jewry."

73. See Fritz Liebreich, *Britain's Naval and Political Reaction to the Illegal Immigration of Jews to Palestine, 1945–48* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005); and Walid Khalidi's review of this work in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 4 (Summer 2006), p. 63. According to Liebreich 69,563 illegal Jewish immigrants were organized on ships to be brought to Palestine between August 1945 and May 1948. Almost 50 percent of these illegals sailed on vessels purchased in the United States, manned by U.S. "volunteers," and financed by American Jewish organizations.

74. At the height of the anti-British campaign in the United States, a full-page advertisement (authored by the American Jewish writer Ben Hecht) that appeared in summer 1947 in several New York newspapers ended with the words, "Every time you blow up a British arsenal . . . or send a British railroad train sky high . . . or let go with guns and bombs at British betrayers and invaders of your homeland, the Jews of America make a little holiday in their hearts," quoted in Bethel (a pro-Zionist Anglo-Jewish writer), *The Palestine Triangle*, p. 309.

75. A Jewish Agency partition plan for "a viable Jewish state in an adequate area of Palestine" was in fact drawn up in August 1946 and submitted to President Truman for approval. On 4 October 1946, the eve of Yom Kippur, Truman issued a statement

(preempting pro-Zionist declarations by his Republican presidential rivals) endorsing this partition plan. George Kirk, *The Middle East 1945–1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 229.

76. For Truman's complex motivation in his pro-Zionism, see David McCullough, *Truman* (Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 286, but also the statement, "No candidate since 1876 except Woodrow Wilson in 1916 had won the presidency without carrying New York, and crucial to New York, along with the black vote, was the Jewish vote concentrated in New York City. But unless the Palestine issue was 'boldly and favorably handled' by the administration, the Jewish vote was certain to go to the 'alert' Dewey or to Henry Wallace," McCullough, *Truman*, p. 591.

77. *The Times* (London) 5 June, 6 June, 7 June, 10 June, 1947; *The Sunday Times*, 24 September, 1947.

78. The noncommissioned officers so treated were Clifford Martin and Mervyn Paice. *The Times* of London (1 August 1947) had this to say about their fate: "They were kidnapped unarmed and defenseless. They were murdered for no offence. As a last indignity their bodies were employed to lure into a minefield the comrades who sought to give them a Christian burial. The bestialities practiced by the Nazis themselves could go no further."

79. For Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir as masterminds of terrorist operations, see Dan Kurzman, *Genesis 1948: The First Arab-Israeli War* (London: International Specialized Book Services, 1972), pp. 555ff; Bethel, *The Palestine Triangle*, p. 187; Thurston Clarke, *By Blood and Fire* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), passim.

80. Tzipi Livni's father, Eitan Livni, was Menachem Begin's "chief of operations" until 1947. See Amos Perlmutter, *The Life and Times of Menachem Begin* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), p. 138.

81. According to *The Times* of London (14 May 1948) quoted in Bethel, *The Palestine Triangle*, p. 358, the number of Britons killed by "Jewish groups" in the "three years of postwar conflict" (i.e., 1945–48) was 338. All available evidence shows that the number of Jews killed by the British army and police during this same period could not have exceeded 50 in all.

82. Gahal and Mahal are Hebrew acronyms for “Recruitment from Abroad” and “Volunteers from Abroad,” respectively. The former involved the training before 15 May 1948 of twenty thousand young men recruited from displaced persons in European transit camps. Palmach members undertook the training in some twenty facilities in France and Italy. The training included courses for platoon commanders (Slutsky, *Sefer Toldot Habaganab*, pp. 1464ff). Mahal refers to high-level “volunteers” from Western Europe, North and South America, and South Africa called to serve with the Zionist military. About three thousand, many of whom had served in the Allied armies during World War II, went to Palestine. Some “held high rank” and brought “a wealth of military skill and experience.” Patai, *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, vol. II, p. 746.

83. U.S. president George W. Bush and British prime minister Gordon Brown are

among the Western leaders who apparently subscribe to these views. In their separate statements before the Israeli Knesset on the sixtieth anniversary (2008) of Israel’s establishment, Bush described the “landmark anniversary” as “the redemption of an ancient promise given to Abraham and Moses and David—a homeland for the chosen people of God.” Brown congratulated Israel on “the achievement of 1948 . . . the age-long dream realized, the ancient promise redeemed.” Gush Emunim mentor Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook (died 1982) succinctly sums up the relationship between the Jewish people and Palestine from a Jewish perspective as “part of a divine scheme, and the Land of Israel is endowed, as is the people of Israel, with an immanent holiness.” Hattis Rolef, *A Political Dictionary of Israel*, p. 186.

84. Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs*, pp. 30–31.