



Security Council

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Letter dated 1 May 1984 from the Permanent Representative of
the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to
the President of the Security Council

With reference to the letter from the representative of Israel circulated in document S/16479 dated 13 April 1984, I have the honour to state the following:

1. In his letter, the Israeli representative seeks once more to throw up a smokescreen in order to divert attention from the atrocities which Israel has committed and continues to commit against the Arab people, victim of Israeli occupation and colonization throughout Palestine and the Golan Heights, an occupation which in 1982 was extended to the southern part of fraternal Lebanon.
2. The Israeli letter reveals a violent hatred of the United Nations, which is due to the fact that Israel's aggressive objectives and expansionist policies are totally incompatible with the Charter of the Organization, since the United Nations and its various organs are calling urgently for a complete Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab lands and the recovery by the Palestinian people of the rights which Israel has usurped, first and foremost their right to self-determination and their inalienable right to return to their homes.
3. The aforementioned Israeli letter and other letters coincide with aggressive statements and suspicious military manoeuvres and movements on the part of Israel, which are viewed favourably by the United States of America; all of these indicate that Israel intends to commit renewed acts of aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic.
4. According to reports emanating from the occupied Arab territories, there is co-ordination between the Israeli occupation authorities and the Zionist settlers with a view to conducting extensive acts of terrorism against the Arab people. This leads us to the conclusion, in the light of our knowledge of the history of Zionist terrorism, that there is a distribution of roles, based on the practice of official terrorism by the Israeli army and the practice of private terrorism by the Zionist settlers against Arab citizens. The purpose of all this is to achieve the primary Zionist objective, namely, that of emptying the Arab lands of their indigenous population and of bringing in settlers to replace them.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

5. The record of world zionism and its territorial base, Israel, demonstrate that terrorism is the prop for Zionist ideology through which and by means of which Israel was able to seize Palestine and other Arab lands. We should like to point out on this occasion that Zionist Israeli institutional terrorism in no way differs from the terrorism pursued by the apartheid régime against millions of Africans in South Africa and Namibia (see annex VI), just as it in no way differs in essence and nature from the Nazi terrorism which shed European blood and visited ruin and destruction upon the peoples of Europe.

6. Israel's leaders today, like its leaders in the past, publicly boast of their past and present espousal of terrorism and, in their journals and memoirs, vie in eulogizing their crimes against the Arab people. These are crimes which according to the norms of international law constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, and Israel and the perpetrators of those crimes bear international responsibility for them. If we wish to recount the history of terrorist Israel, we need volume upon volume: suffice it, in the annexes to this letter, to recall some of the criminal acts systematically committed by Zionist gangs and Israel in order to attain the goal of colonization of the occupied Palestinian and Arab lands. Foremost among those criminal acts were the massacres of Deir Yassin, Qibya and Kafr Qasem, and last but not least, the massacre of Sabra and Shatila, for which full responsibility is borne by Israel and especially by the one who planned them - Sharon, the former Israeli Minister of Defence.

Despite all that, there are those who assert that the Israeli Zionist entity is an extension of the values of American democracy in the Middle East. We have recently seen how two candidates for the United States presidency compete in boosting this insane and bloodthirsty "democracy" by all available means so that it may commit more terrorism, murder and expulsion against our Arab mother country. They also go to the extent of violating the principles of international law by calling for the transfer of embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

In conclusion, the content of the aforementioned letter from the representative of Israel should be assessed in the light of the utterances of the one who assassinated Count Folke Bernadotte, the United Nations Mediator for Palestine (see annex III): Shamir, the head of the Stern Gang who now heads the Israeli Government, said that Israel

"... did not take the lands by invasion from the lawful owners; on the contrary, it liberated them from the countries which invaded them in 1948." He went on: "We have not annexed them and shall not annex them; they are part of Israel, and you do not annex what is part of your country."

I request that this letter and its annexes be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Dia-Allah EL-FATTAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Enclosures: 6

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ANNEXES

A LIST OF SOME OF THE ZIONIST TERRORIST ACTS AT THE TIME
OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ISRAELI ZIONIST ENTITY AND
UP TO THE PRESENT

Annex I

The following are some of the most important acts committed by the IZL gang against the Palestinian Arabs, taken for the most part from a book written by the well-known terrorist Shmuel Katz, who, after the rise of the Likud to power in Israel, worked as an information adviser to his famous terrorist colleague and chief, Menahem Begin and then resigned from his post and joined the Fascist rightist Tehiya movement, the title of his book in Hebrew being Yom ha-Esh (or "Battle Day"), from another book written by the Zionist historian David Neif, entitled National Military Organization Battles, and from other sources, most of them Israeli. The two above-mentioned books review the work of the Irgun Zvai Leumi or IZL, which is the gang which was led by Menahem Begin as from the last part of 1943. In 1940, there had split off from IZL another terrorist gang known as the Lehi or the Stern Gang, and Israel's current Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, was one of its most prominent leaders.

1. Before the establishment of the Zionist State (Israel) in occupied Palestine

(a) The most outstanding acts committed by the IZL gang during that period against the Palestinian Arabs were as follows:

On 11 November 1937, an IZL member threw a bomb at an Arab coffeehouse in a Jaffa garden, which caused the death of two people and wounded another.

On 6 March 1938, a bomb was thrown into the Haifa market, and 18 Arabs were killed and 38 others wounded.

On 6 July 1938, two cars, in which IZL had planted explosives, exploded in the Haifa market, and this explosion led to the martyrdom of 21 Arab citizens and the wounding of 52 others. On the same day, a bomb planted by IZL exploded in Old Jerusalem, causing the death of two people and wounding four others.

On 15 July 1938, a bomb exploded which had been thrown by an IZL element in front of a Jerusalem mosque as the congregation were coming out, and 10 people were killed and 30 wounded.

On 26 July 1938, a car planted with explosives by IZL exploded in the Arab market in Haifa. Thirty-five Arab citizens were martyred in the incident and 70 wounded.

On 26 July 1938, an element from the IZL gang threw a bomb into the Haifa market, killing 37 Arabs and wounded others.

On 26 August 1938, a car planted with explosives by the IZL gang exploded in the market in Arab Jerusalem, killing 34 people and wounding 35 others.

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On 13 November 1938, the IZL gang killed five Arabs and wounded four others in three incidents.

On 27 February 1939, the IZL gang exploded two bombs in Haifa. As a result, 27 Arab citizens were martyred and 39 others wounded. On the same day, three Arabs were killed in Tel Aviv and four wounded, and three were killed in Jerusalem and six wounded by a IZL terrorist.

On 29 May 1939, some IZL members threw bombs into Roxy cinema in Jerusalem, and 18 people were wounded.

On 26 August 1939, the IZL gang exploded a bomb in Jaffa which killed 24 Arabs and wounded 35 others.

On 23 March 1944, IZL blew up a four-storey house in Jaffa, on the pretext that it was a centre of the British-Arab police. On the same pretext, they blew up a second house in Jerusalem and a third in Haifa.

On 22 July 1946, the IZL gang blew up the southern wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, where the offices of the Mandatory Administration were located. This caused the death of 83 citizens and 5 passers-by, including a large number of Arabs.

In late December 1947, an IZL member threw a bomb into the vegetable market near the Nablus Gate in Jerusalem, killing dozens of Arabs, including many women and children.

On 31 December 1947, a terrorist unit belonging to the IZL gang threw a bomb at an Arab worker in the yard of the Haifa oil refinery. Six people were martyred and 31 others wounded.

On the night of 9/10 April 1948, the IZL and Lehi gangs, carried out, with the cognizance and consent of the leader of the Haganah, a terrible massacre in the district of Jerusalem called David Shali'el in the Arab village of Deir Yassin located on the western heights of Jerusalem. Two hundred and fifty-four people were killed there, most of them women, children and old men. The purpose of the massacre was to frighten and terrorize the Arabs so as to induce them to leave their villages and homes (see annex II).

(b) The Haganah gang, belonging to the Mapai Party and the so-called Zionist labour movement, took part in acts of terrorism and killing directed against Arab civilians - old men, women and children. Below are some of the acts committed by the Haganah and its strike force, the Palmach, in this area, as reported by Zionist sources themselves:

On 12 June 1939, Haganah elements attacked the village of Balad al-Sheikh, near Haifa, and abducted and killed 5 of the inhabitants.

On 19 December 1947, the Haganah attacked the village of Al-Khasas in Upper Galilee and killed 10 people, including 5 children. It also attacked the village

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of Silwad in the Jerusalem area and killed a woman and 2 children. It further attacked an Arab bus in Haifa and killed all its passengers.

On the night of 30/31 December 1947, a Palmach troop attacked the village of Balad al-Sheikh near Haifa and killed more than 60 of the inhabitants.

On 1 January 1948, the Haganah attacked another village in the Haifa area and killed or wounded 111 Arab citizens.

On the night of 14/15 February 1948, a Haganah and Palmach force attacked the Arab village of Sa'sa in Upper Galilee, destroyed 20 houses over the heads of the inhabitants and killed more than 40 people.

(c) This is in addition to another series of terrorist acts which were committed by the Zionist gangs against Arab civilians in the case of which the name of the gang responsible was not determined:

On 13 December 1947, 18 Arab citizens were killed and 60 others wounded in three bomb-throwing incidents, the first in the Jerusalem market, the second in a Jaffa coffeehouse and the third in the village of Abbasiyah, near Lydda.

On 29 December 1947, 11 Arab citizens were killed and 32 others wounded in a bomb-throwing incident near the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem.

On 4 January 1948, 40 people were killed and 98 others wounded through the blowing-up of the Government Headquarters in a quarter of the city of Jaffa.

On 5 January 1948, the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem was blown up, and 20 of the residents, most of them Arabs and including the Spanish Consul in Jerusalem, were killed.

On 7 January 1948, 17 Arab citizens were killed in a bomb-throwing incident at the Jaffa Gate in the city of Jerusalem.

On 16 January 1948, 3 buildings were blown up. In one of them, 80 children with ages ranging between 1 and 12 years died.

On 3 March 1948, a building in Haifa was blown up, and 11 people were killed and 23 wounded.

On 31 March 1948, Zionist gangs, for the second time during the month, blew up the Haifa-Jaffa train as it was passing close to the Netanyah settlement of the north of Tel Aviv. Forty people were killed and 60 others wounded in the incident.

On 19 April 1948, Zionist gangs blew up an Arab house in the town of Tiberias, and 14 of the inhabitants were killed.

2. After the establishment of the Zionist entity (Israel) in occupied Palestine

Terrorism, killing, the demolition of villages and houses and the expulsion of their inhabitants, the use of violence and force for the usurpation of Arab rights and lands in the territories occupied by Israel in 1948, aggression and expansion at the expense of the neighbouring Arab territories became official and declared Israeli policy. Israel was not content with the land occupied in 1948, which constituted three quarters of the total area of Palestine, and with the destruction of more than 350 Arab villages and towns and their removal from existence after expelling the inhabitants and taking over approximately 3.25 million dunums of their agricultural land ^{1/} but continued the process of pillaging and confiscating the land of the Arab citizens who remained steadfast on their land in Galilee, the Negev and Muthallath. Israel tried and is trying by various ways and means to uproot them from their land and destroy their unity, using to that end various forms and kinds of racial discrimination, oppression and bloodbaths, in addition to impounding their human, national, political and cultural rights. On the pretext of security and emergencies, military rule has been imposed on the Arab minority in Israel, with all its arbitrariness and abuses, for a term of 20 years, and Israel has applied in respect of its Arab inhabitants the Mandatory emergency laws which the British Mandatory authorities enacted in 1936 and 1945 for the purpose, at the time, of suppressing the Arab nationalist movement in Palestine. The Israeli authorities have enacted another body of laws, which comprise the most repugnant and atrocious forms of racial discrimination against the Arabs. This is the body of laws known as the land laws, which seek to justify the confiscation and usurpation of Arab land and the expulsion of the occupants, such as the Absentee Property Law (1950), the Emergency Regulations (Cultivation of Waste Lands) (1948), the Emergency Regulations (Security Zones) and the Emergency Land Requisition Law (both enacted in 1949), the Land Acquisition Law (1953) and the Land Stabilization Law (1960). In the confiscation of Arab land, the Israeli authorities have also employed some Mandatory laws, such as the Emergency Regulations (1945) and the laws on forests and prescription, as amended.

(a) On the basis of those racist laws and regulations, the land of 62 other Arab villages in Galilee and Muthallath was seized and the inhabitants expelled outside the country or to neighbouring villages: ^{2/}

During the period 1949-1951, the Israeli authorities took over the land of the following villages in Galilee, after expelling the inhabitants: Birwa, Bass, Tafuriyah, Kafr Inan, Qumaym, Amqa, Manshiyah, Arab Sabt, Samhata, Ma'lul, Kuwais, Shajarak, Ghabisiyah, Mi'ar, Sha'b, Khasas, Fitah and Ja'unah.

In February 1951, the inhabitants of 13 Arab villages in Wadi Ara in the northern part of the Muthallath area were driven outside the boundaries of the area occupied in 1948, and their land was confiscated.

^{1/} 1968 Israel Yearbook, p. 235.

^{2/} Ha'aretz, 28 July 1972; Ma'ariv, 24 August 1977.

During the period 1948-1952, large numbers of Negev Bedouin were expelled to the West Bank and the area east of the Jordan, and their land was seized.

On 25 December 1951, on Christmas night, the Israeli army blew up the houses in the village of Aqrat in Upper Galilee, together with the village church. The inhabitants of the above-mentioned village had been expelled from it in October 1948 on the pretext of security considerations and had been promised that they would return to their homes within two weeks.

In 1952, the remainder of the population of the town of Majdal Asqalan were expelled to the Gaza Strip, and their lands and homes were seized.

On the night of 16/17 September 1953, the village of Kafr Bur'um in Upper Galilee met the same fate as that to which the population of the village of Aqrat had been exposed. The inhabitants of Kafr Bur'um were expelled from their village with the inhabitants of Aqrat and on the same pretext.

During the period 1948-1972, more than 1 million dunums out of a total of one and a half million dunums (the total area of the lands of the Arab villages in Galilee and Muthallath) was confiscated under the racist laws and regulations mentioned earlier. Extensive areas of Islamic waqf land were also confiscated, including, by way of example, the waqf land of Rubin to the south of Jaffa, totalling 160,000 dunums, the waqf land of Ridwan, a total of 200,000 dunums and the waqf land of Sayyidna Ali to the north of Jaffa, a total of 122,000 dunums.

The confiscation of the land of Arab villages resumed in 1976, when the Israeli authorities proceeded to confiscate 20,000 dunums of the land of the villages of Sakhnin, Deir Hanna, Arrabah and Arab al-Sawa'id in Central Galilee. This action was the direct reason for the outbreak of the Land Day incidents on 30 March 1976, as a result of which six Arab citizens were killed by the bullets of army troops and the Israeli Frontier Guards.

In early 1978, the inhabitants of the Arab village of Mafjar near Al-Khudayrah were removed from their land, which was seized to benefit the development of the neighbouring Jewish town of Caesarea. 3/

In mid-1978, the Israeli authorities confiscated approximately 1,300 dunums of the land of the villages of Julis, Al-Mukabbar and Jadidah in Western Galilee near Acre. 4/

3/ Al-Hamishmar, 24 January 1978.

4/ Al-Hamishmar, 25 January 1978-11 June 1978.

In April 1978, approximately 7,000 dunums of the land of the village of Beit Jinn 5/ and approximately 450 dunums of the land of the village of Kawkab Abu al-Haja 6/ in Central Galilee.

In June 1979, 300 dunums of the land of the village of Ma'liya 7/ in Upper Galilee was confiscated and a Jewish settlement post established there.

From 1976 up to the present the Israeli authorities have been plotting and seeking to take over 2,000 dunums of the land of the village of Rina and 3,000 dunums of the land of the village of Ayn Mahil, both situated to the north-east of Nazareth, in order to use it to expand the district of the Jewish municipality of Upper Nazareth. 8/

During recent years, particularly since the rise of the Likud to power, the Israeli authorities have enacted a new series of racist laws aimed at harassing the Arab inhabitants and expelling them from their homes and villages. These include: the Kotcheff Law (1979), which prohibits the water and electricity companies, telephone and postal services and local councils providing services to buildings which the Israeli authorities regard as illegal and which their owners have been forced to build because of the increase of the population in Arab villages and the policy of curtailing building services for these villages; this arbitrary racist law, whose application is retroactive, affects approximately 20,000 Arabs and 6,000 houses; the law on the "classifications tax", which provides for the imposition of a new tax on Arab farmers in order to induce them to leave their land; and the law on "expulsion of aliens from State land", i.e., the expulsion of the Arabs from their land confiscated by the Israeli authorities.

(b) With regard to the crimes of murder, demolition of houses, attacks against Arab villages and other terrorist acts committed by Israel since its establishment, these are too numerous to be listed in such an annex. It suffices to draw attention to the fact that the records of the United Nations and truce organs during the period 1948-1967 show that the number of incidents of aggression on the part of Israel during that period totalled more than 21,000. We shall therefore list only some of the incidents, by way of example and not by way of an exhaustive account.

On 12 July 1948, the Israeli forces perpetrated a massacre in the town of Lydda, after occupying it. Over 500 Arab citizens were killed, including 150 who were slaughtered in the town's mosque, which was used as a detention centre for prisoners. Moshe Gilman, the leader of the Yaftah brigade, which came under the

5/ Jerusalem Post, 20 April 1979.

6/ Davar, 29 April 1979.

7/ Ha'aretz, 17 June 1979.

8/ Al-Fajr, 20 December 1980.

Palmach and which had occupied the town, confessed to committing the massacre and claimed that the number of persons killed was 250. 9/

In the early 1950s, the Zionist authorities formed a special unit in the Israeli army, Unit 101, for the purpose of carrying out terrorist raids on towns and villages in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Ariel Sharon, the former Israeli Minister of Defence, was the leader of this Unit, which carried out a number of raids, among them:

An attack was made on Burayj refugee camp in the Gaza Strip on 28 July 1953, in which 30 citizens died and 62 others were wounded.

On the night of 14/15 October 1953, a group from the Israeli Unit 101 attacked the village of Qibya in the West Bank and blew up 45 houses. As a result of this attack 69 citizens were martyred, half of them women and children. The United Nations condemned this Israeli crime in resolution 101 (1953) of 24 November 1953 (see annex III).

On 8 February 1954, an Israeli military unit again carried out an attack on the Burayj refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, killing 38 people and wounding 31 others. The United Nations Security Council condemned this criminal act by Israel by its resolution 106 (1954) of 29 March 1954.

On the night of 28/29 March 1954, the village of Nahhalin in the West Bank was subjected to an Israeli attack in which 14 people were martyred and many village inhabitants wounded.

In February 1955, the outskirts of the town of Gaza were subjected to an Israeli attack which led to the killing or wounding of 55 people.

In May 1955, groups from the Israeli Unit 101 attacked Jenin and Qalqilyah in the West Bank and the town of Shawnah on the East Bank of the Jordan.

On the night of 21 August 1955, the town of Khan Yunis and the village of Bani Suhaylah in the Gaza Strip were subjected to an Israeli attack in which the attacking force blew up the police station in Khan Yunis; 46 people were martyred as a result of the incident and 50 wounded.

In September 1955, Qalqilya in the West Bank was subjected to a second attack, which resulted in many deaths among the civilian inhabitants.

On 4 and 5 April 1956, Gaza City was subjected to Israeli shelling with mortars, which caused the death or wounding of 56 people.

On the night of 10/11 October 1956, the town of Qalqilya in the West Bank was subjected to a third Israeli attack, and attacks were also made during the same night on the villages of Azzun, Nabi Ilyas and Khan Sufin in the Qalqilya area. In the attacks, a number of houses were blown up, 48 people killed and 31 others wounded.

On 29 October 1956, on the eve of the tripartite aggression against Egypt, Israeli Frontier Guard troops carried out the well-known massacre of Kafr Qasem, the victims of which totalled 52 people, half of them women and children (see annex III).

When Israeli troops occupied Rafah camp and the town of Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip at the time of the tripartite aggression against Egypt, dozens of civilians were slaughtered wholesale.

On 16 March 1962, the Israeli forces attacked the village of Tawafiq to the east of Lake Tiberias.

On 27 May 1965, the Israelis attacked Jenin and Qalqilya in the West Bank and the town of Manshiyah on the East Bank, and the attack left four people dead and seven others wounded.

On the night of 28/29 October 1965, an Israeli force attacked the village of Mis al-Jabal and the village of Hula in southern Lebanon; one woman was killed, and two houses were blown up.

On 14 July 1966, Israeli aircraft bombed the village of Suriyah; one woman was killed, and nine other civilians were wounded.

On 13 November 1966, an Israeli force attacked the village of Samu' in the Hebron area in the West Bank and blew up and damaged 125 buildings, including a school, a medical clinic and a mosque. Eighteen people were killed and 130 others wounded, all of them civilians. The Security Council condemned this aggression by its resolution 228 (1966), adopted on 25 December 1966.

In the aggression of 5 June 1967, the Israeli attackers killed civilians wholesale and without discrimination, destroyed whole villages, blew up houses and bombed hospitals and schools.

On 12 June 1967, the Israeli occupiers destroyed three villages in the Wadi Latrun area in the West Bank, removed them from existence and expelled the inhabitants, whose number totalled more than 10,000.

From 1967 up to the present time, the occupation authorities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have blown up more than 20,000 houses. The Israeli occupation forces also destroyed Quneitra, capital of the Golan Heights and all the villages in that occupied territory (annex IV).

(c) The Israeli aggressors stepped up their aggressive activities against neighbouring Arab countries following the aggression of 1967.

On 7 March 1968, the Israelis bombarded the Jordanian villages of 'Adsiyah and Mudrij, killing 11 persons, including 5 children.

On 21 March 1968, an Israeli force consisting of 15,000 troops supported by tanks, armoured cars and aircraft crossed the Jordan River and attacked the refugee

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camp at Karama, east of the Jordan, causing extensive damage and casualties in the town of Karama and the camp. The Security Council condemned the Israeli action in its resolution 248 dated 24 March 1968.

On 4 August 1968, Israeli warplanes attacked the town of Salt and the surrounding area, killing 23 residents and wounding 76 others; in their attack against the town and neighbouring villages the planes used napalm, destroying large areas of forest and cultivated land. The attack was condemned by the Security Council in resolution 256 (1968) dated 16 August 1968.

On 28 December 1968, an Israeli airborne force attacked Beirut International Airport, destroying 13 civil aircraft which were parked on the apron. This Israeli act of piracy was condemned by the Security Council in resolution 262 (1968) dated 31 December 1968.

Annex II

The massacre of Deir Yassin

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Deir Yasin*

April 10, 1948

JACQUES DE REYNIER**

On Saturday 10 April a very serious incident took place: I received a telephone call from the Arabs asking me to go immediately to the village of Deir Yassin,† where the civilian population of the whole village had just been massacred. I learned that this sector, situated very near to Jerusalem, was held by Irgun extremists.‡ The Jewish Agency and the Headquarters of the Haganah told me that they knew nothing of the affair and that in any case it was impossible for anyone to penetrate into Irgun territory. They advised me not to get mixed up in the affair, as, if I did, my mission would almost certainly be terminated.

Not only did they refuse to help me, they also refused to be responsible for what they were sure would happen to me. I replied that I intended to go, and that it was a matter of public knowledge that the Jewish Agency exercised its authority over all the territory in Jewish hands and was therefore responsible for my person as well as for my liberty of action, within the limits of my mission.

* From Jacques de Reynier, *A Jerusalem un drapeau flottait sur la ligne de feu* (Neuchâtel: Editions de la Baconnière, 1950), pp. 69-74. Reprinted by permission of Les Editions de la Baconnière, S.A. Translated by the Institute for Palestine Studies.

** Head of the delegation in Palestine of the International Red Cross throughout the period of hostilities, 1948.

† An Arab village of about four hundred inhabitants in the western suburbs of Jerusalem entirely surrounded by Jewish territory. A few weeks before the massacre its inhabitants had declared it an open village. The distance between Deir Yasin and Kastel is about two and a half miles.

‡ For the Irgun, see Jabotinsky, pp. 321-30, J. and D. Kimche, pp. 615-23, and "The Zionist Military Organisations, 1946," pp. 595-600.

However, I did not know what to do. Without Jewish help, it was impossible for me to reach the village. Then, by thinking hard, I remembered that a Jewish nurse in a nearby hospital had given me her telephone number, telling me, with an odd expression, that I could call her if ever I found myself in an inextricable situation. Taking a chance, I rang her up late at night and explained the situation. She told me to go to a certain place with my car at 7 o'clock next morning, and there pick up the person I found waiting. Then she rang off.

The next morning, at the appointed place and time, a man in civilian clothes, but with pockets bulging with revolvers, jumped into my car and told me to drive on without stopping. At my request, he agreed to show me the road to Deir Yassin, but admitted that he could not do much for me. We went out of Jerusalem, leaving the main road behind the rear of the regular army, and took a road that cut across it. Very soon, we were stopped by two soldier-like individuals, whose looks were far from reassuring, with machine-guns in their hands, and large cutlasses in their belts. From their appearance I gathered they must be the men I was looking for. I got out of the car and submitted myself to a thorough search, then realized that I was a prisoner. Everything seemed lost, when, suddenly, a huge fellow, at least two meters tall, and as large as a cupboard, appeared, pushed his comrades aside, and seized my hand and squeezed it in his enormous paws, shouting incomprehensibly. He did not understand either English or French, but in German we seemed to be able to communicate perfectly. He expressed his joy at seeing a member of the Red Cross because, as he explained, its intervention had saved his life no less than three times when he was a prisoner in a German concentration camp. He said that I was more than a brother to him, and that he would do everything I asked him. With such a bodyguard I felt I could go to the end of the world, and so to start with, we went to Deir Yassin.

After reaching a hill, 500 yards away from the village which we could just see, we had to wait a long time for the order to proceed. Arab firing broke out whenever anybody tried to cross the road, and the commander of the Irgun detachment did not seem willing to receive me. At last he arrived, young, distinguished, and perfectly correct, but there was a peculiar glitter in his eyes, cold and cruel. I explained my mission to him, pointing out that it was no part of my task either to pass judgment or arbitrate-- I only wanted to save the wounded and take back the dead. The Jews, in any case, had signed the Geneva Convention, so that my mission was an official one. This last statement angered the officer who asked me to under-

stand once and for all that here the Irgun were in command and no one else, not even the Jewish Agency, with whom they had nothing in common. Here my "wardrobe" intervened, seeing the tension growing higher, and he seemed to find the right arguments, for suddenly the officer said that I could do as I wished but on my own responsibility. He told me the story of this village, inhabited exclusively by Arabs, to the number of approximately 400, never armed, and living on good terms with the surrounding Jews. According to him the Irgun had arrived 24 hours earlier and ordered the inhabitants by loudspeaker to evacuate all houses and surrender: the time given to obey the order was a quarter of an hour. Some of these miserable people had come forward and were taken prisoners, to be released later in the direction of the Arab lines. The rest, not having obeyed the order, had met the fate they deserved. But there was no point in exaggerating things, there were only a few dead, and they would be buried as soon as the "cleaning up" of the village was over. If I found any bodies, I could take them, but there were certainly no wounded. This account made my blood run cold.

I went back then to the Jerusalem road and got an ambulance and a truck that I had alerted through the Red Shield. The two Jewish drivers and the Jewish doctor who boarded them were more dead than alive, but followed me courageously. Before reaching the Irgun outpost I stopped and inspected the two vehicles. A good thing I did, too, as I discovered two Jewish journalists preparing to get the scoop of their lives. Unfortunately for them, I very firmly got rid of them. I reached the village with my convoy, and the Arab firing stopped. The gang was wearing country uniform, with helmets. All of them were young, some even adolescents, men and women, armed to the teeth: revolvers, machine-guns, hand grenades, and also large cutlasses in their hands, most of them still blood-stained. A beautiful young girl, with criminal eyes, showed me hers still dripping with blood; she displayed it like a trophy. This was the "cleaning up" team, that was obviously performing its task very conscientiously.

I tried to go into a house. A dozen soldiers surrounded me, their machine-guns aimed at my body, and their officer forbade me to move. The dead, if any, would be brought to me, he said. I then flew into one of the most towering rages of my life, telling these criminals what I thought of their conduct, threatening them with everything I could think of, and then pushed them aside and went into the house.

The first room was dark, everything was in disorder, but

there was no one. In the second, amid disembowelled furniture and covers and all sorts of debris, I found some bodies cold. Here, the "cleaning up" had been done with machine-guns, then hand grenades. It had been finished off with knives, anyone could see that. The same thing in the next room, but as I was about to leave, I heard something like a sigh. I looked everywhere, turned over all the bodies, and eventually found a little foot, still warm. It was a little girl of ten, mutilated by a hand grenade, but still alive. As I was about to carry her out, the officer tried to stop me, blocking the doorway. I pushed him aside and went through with my precious load protected by my good friend the glass cupboard. The ambulance set off, with orders to come back as soon as possible. As the gang had not dared to attack me directly, I could continue. I gave orders for the bodies in this house to be loaded on the truck, and went into the next house, and so on. Everywhere, it was the same horrible sight. I found only two more people alive, both women, one of them an old grandmother, hidden behind a heap of firewood where she had kept quiet for at least 24 hours.

There had been 400 people in this village; about fifty of them had escaped, and were still alive. All the rest had been deliberately massacred in cold blood for, as I observed for myself, this gang was admirably disciplined and only acted under orders.

Back in Jerusalem I went straight to the Jewish Agency where I found the leaders dismayed, apologetic and pretending, which indeed was true, that they had no power over the Irgun or the Stern Gang.* However, they had done nothing to try and prevent about a hundred men from committing this unspeakable crime.

Then I went to visit the Arabs. I said nothing about what I had seen, but only that after a preliminary hurried visit to the place, it seemed to me that there were several dead people, and that I wondered what to do with them and where to put them. The indignation of the Arabs was understandable, but it prevented them from taking a decision. They would have liked the corpses brought back to the Arab side, but feared a revolt of the population and did not know where to put them or bury them. Finally, they decided to ask me to see to it that they were decently buried in a place that could be recognised later. I agreed to undertake this task and went back to Deir Yassin. I found the Irgun people in a very bad temper; they tried to prevent me from approaching the village. I understood their attitude when I saw the number, and especially the state of the corpses that had

* Cf. "White Paper on Violence, 1946," pp. 601-12.

been lined up all along the main road. I asked very firmly that the burial be started and insisted on being present. After discussion, digging was started on a big grave in a small garden. It was impossible to check the identity of the dead as they had no papers, but I took careful note of all their particulars, with approximate ages. As night fell, I went back to Jerusalem, stating clearly that I was coming back the next day.

Two days later, the Irgun had disappeared from the place, and the Haganah had taken over; we discovered several places where the corpses had been stacked, without decency or respect, in the open air.

After this last visit, I went back to my office where I was visited by two gentlemen, well-dressed in civilian clothes, who had been waiting for me for more than an hour. They were the commander of the Irgun detachment and his aide. They had prepared a paper that they wanted me to sign. It was a statement to the effect that I had been very courteously received by them, and obtained all the facilities I had requested, in the accomplishment of my mission, and thanking them for the help I had received.

As I showed signs of hesitation and even started to argue with them, they said that if I valued my life, I had better sign immediately. The only course open to me was to convince them that I did not value my life in the least and that a declaration quite contrary to theirs had already gone to Geneva. I added that in any case I was not in the habit of signing statements written by others, but only those exclusively drawn up by me. Before I let them go, I tried to explain to them once more the purpose of our mission and asked them whether or not they intended to oppose us in the future. I did not get an answer that day, but later, in Tel Aviv, I saw them again; they needed our help for some of their own people, and in gratitude for our cooperation, they were of great assistance to us on several occasions, returning some hostages we claimed without argument.

The affair of Deir Yassin had immense repercussions. The press and radio spread the news everywhere among Arabs as well as the Jews. In this way a general terror was built up among the Arabs, a terror astutely fostered by the Jews. On both sides, it was made into a political argument, and the results were tragic. Driven by fear, the Arabs left their homes to find shelter among their kindred; first isolated farms, then villages, and in the end whole towns were evacuated, even when the Jewish invader had done no more than make it appear that he intended to attack. Finally, about 700,000 Arabs became refugees, leaving

everything behind in their haste, their one hope being to avoid the fate of the people of Deir Yassin. The effects of this massacre are far from being over today, as this immense crowd of refugees is still living in makeshift camps, without work and without hope, the Red Cross distributing to them emergency aid provided by the United Nations.

The Jewish authorities were terribly shocked by the affair, which took place four days after they had signed the Geneva Convention. They begged me to use my good offices with the Arabs to persuade them that it was an isolated incident. I replied that I would try, but did not hide my displeasure nor my fears for the future. The Arabs were absolutely furious and totally discouraged. For their part, they had no further hopes of anything good coming from the Jewish side, and could not help wondering whether it would not be better to abandon such humanitarian ideas as they had concerning the Jews. It was not easy to appease them, or to persuade them that the mistakes of one people can in no way excuse those of another. On the contrary, we said, the fact that the Arabs had kept their promise would prove to the world their honesty and faithfulness to their word of honour. We assured them that our long experience made it impossible that we should doubt them, and that we knew that they would act with dignity and humanity, whatever happened. After this memorable meeting, we had the impression that all was not lost, although it had been a very near thing.

Annex III

**THE GUN AND
THE OLIVE BRANCH**

The Roots of Violence in the Middle East

David Hirst

FABER AND FABER
3 Queen Square, London

/...

1. The massacre of Qibya

As the *Paratroopers' Book* described it: 'The operation at Qibya was to be distinguished from other operations by its purposes and its effects. The dynamiting of dozens of houses in Qibya was an ambitious undertaking surpassing anything in the past. Once and for all, it washed away the stain of the defeats that Zahal [the Israel army] had suffered in its reprisal operations.'¹⁷ As the UN military observers, who reached the village two hours after the soot-smeared Israeli commandos had left, described it: 'Bullet-riddled bodies near the doorways and multiple bullet hits on the doors of the demolished houses indicated that the inhabitants had been forced to remain inside until their homes were blown up over them. . . . Witnesses were uniform in describing their experience as a night of horror, during which Israeli soldiers moved about in their village blowing up buildings, firing into doorways and windows with automatic weapons and throwing hand grenades.'¹⁸ Sixty-six men, women and children died in an operation which reminded even pro-Israeli newspapers like the *New York Post* of Lidice.¹⁹

The Israeli government did not admit responsibility for the reprisal raid. Public opinion still lagged behind the Arab-fighters; there were still too many people who could not reconcile such methods with 'purity of arms'. Ben-Gurion announced in a special broadcast that 'the government of Israel emphatically denies the false and fantastic tale according to which 600 Zahal soldiers participated in an operation against the village of Qibya. We have examined the facts in detail, and we can state without hesitation that not a single unit, not even the smallest, was absent from its barracks on the night of the attack on Qibya.' It was frontier settlers who had done it, the Prime Minister insisted, 'mostly Jewish refugees from Arab countries or survivors of Nazi concentration camps'; it had been their impulsive response to the murder of a mother and her two children. Such became the official explanation for all the exploits of Unit 101.

In time, however, public opinion did catch up, and by March 1955 the government all but officially announced to the world that 'there has been nothing reckless or impulsive about the lethal raids across the borders. On the contrary, the policy of reprisals is the fruit of cold, unemotional political and psychological reasoning.'²⁰ Unit 101 was never a large force, and it was composed entirely of volunteers, but its example was to be lasting and profound. Established as an antidote to the *Palmach*, the virus it carried did meet with some resistance. Of one squeamish recruit the *Paratroopers' Book* records, 'As an ex-Palmach who believed in the purity of arms he refused to participate in an expedition directed not against enemy soldiers but against the civilian population. Arik [Sharon's nickname] did not force him to take part. In a heated discussion, Shlomo Baum [Sharon's adjutant] hurled a remark at him: "There are no pure or impure arms; there are only clean weapons that work when you need them and dirty weapons that jam the moment you fire."'²¹ In spite of resistance, the virus quickly spread. Three months after

Qibya, at Dayan's initiative, Unit 101 was merged with the newly formed paratroop corps. According to Sharon, who assumed command of the combined force, Dayan 'was aware of the decisive influence the small unit would have on the Airborne (paratroopers) and, later, on the whole Zahal. . . . One might say that the ideology of reprisal operations was, in all respects, crystallized among the Airborne units.'²² The army did in fact fall increasingly under the influence and command of men of the 101 and the Airborne. The spirit and methods of the *Palmach*—and the *Palmach* was hardly gentle—gave way to the spirit and methods of the *Irgun*. Meanwhile, in the country as a whole, there developed around Unit 101 the aura of heroic legend. Its centrepiece was the Arab-fighter extraordinary, Meir Har-Zion. Two or three nights a week, for months on end, this young commando took part in reprisal raids, 'laconically killing Arab soldiers, peasants, and townspeople in a kind of fury without hatred'.²³ He would introduce variations into a monotonous routine. Once, he and his comrades crossed the frontier, seized six Arabs, killed five of them with a knife as the others watched, and left the sixth alive so that he could tell.²⁴ His private exploits revealed the same natural bent. On leave, and bored, he once made a daredevil foray deep into enemy territory; on his way back to Jerusalem he shot an Arab soldier on the main highway. Later his sister was killed by a bedouin on one of her own sorties into enemy territory. Har-Zion revenged her by killing two bedouins whom he deemed to be connected with her death. Eventually he was critically wounded in action; his life was saved by a battlefield tracheotomy performed with a penknife. His memoirs and numerous press interviews are the story of a man who can describe, with dry relish, what it is like to stab an Arab shepherd in the back—and who recommends that anyone who wishes for the 'marvellous, sublime feeling' of 'knowing that you are a male' should kill with a knife rather than a gun.²⁵

The cult which surrounded Har-Zion was both official and popular. Ministers and generals would glorify him as a 'model' for Israeli youth, the 'fighting symbol' of the entire Israeli army. He was placed above the law; when he killed the two bedouins, he was arrested and could have been charged with murder, but, on Ben-Gurion's personal intervention, he was released without trial.²⁶ Half-crippled and forced into retirement, he was pre-

sented with a large piece of confiscated Arab land on Mount Kaoukab high above Lake Galilee. In this desolate spot, not far from his old *kibbutz*, he set up his private cattle ranch and played host to the soldiers who came, as pilgrims, to see and admire him. 'A whole ceremony developed around Kaoukab,' he recalls in his memoirs; 'they arrived after a long march that lasted a day and a night. At the end of the march, the Unit's insignia were distributed to the soldiers. The goal of the march was the ranch. To ascend it has become a tradition; it is a summit one must reach.'²⁷

2. The massacre of Kafr Qasem

Armed with such Draconian powers, the military authorities lost no time in exploiting them. Outright violence, entirely punitive in intent, may not have been their characteristic method, but there is no more revealing example of the Arabs' plight than one notorious occasion when they did use it. The Arabs remember Kafr Qasem as the Deir Yassin of the established State. Less revealing, perhaps, than the event itself was the reaction it generated. On 29 October 1956, on the eve of Israel's invasion of Egypt, a detachment of Frontier Guards imposed a curfew on villages near the Jordanian frontier. Among them was Kafr Qasem. The Mukhtar was informed of the curfew just half an hour before it was due to go into effect. It was therefore quite impossible for him to pass the message on to the villagers who would be returning, as dusk fell, from their various places of work. Major Shmuel Melinki, the detachment commander, had foreseen this eventuality, and he asked his superior, Brigadier Yshishkhar Shadmi, what should be done about anyone coming home in ignorance of the curfew. The Brigadier had replied: 'I don't want any sentimentality . . . that's just too bad for him.'³⁰ And there was no sentimentality. In the first hour of the curfew, between five and six o'clock, the Frontier Guards killed forty-seven villagers. They had returned home individually or in batches. A few came on foot, but most travelled by bicycle, mule cart or lorry. They included women and children. But all the Frontier Guards wanted to know was whether they were from Kafr Qasem. For if they were, they were curfew-breakers, and once they had ascertained that they were, they shot them down at close range with automatic weapons. 'Of every group of returning workers, some were killed and others wounded; very few succeeded in escaping unhurt. The proportion of those killed increased, until, of the last group, which consisted of 14 women, a boy and 4 men, all were killed, except one girl, who was seriously wounded.'³¹ The slaughter might have gone on like this had not Lieutenant Gavriel Dahan, the officer on the spot

. . . informed the command several times over the radio apparatus in the jeep of the number killed. Opinions differ as to the figure he gave in his reports, but all are agreed that in his first report he said: 'one less', and in the next two reports: 'fifteen less' and 'many less—it is difficult to count them'. The last two reports, which followed each other in quick succession, were picked up by Captain Levy, who passed them on to Melinki. When he was informed that there were 'fifteen less' in Kafr Qasem, Melinki gave orders which he was unable to transmit to Dahan before the report arrived of 'many less—it is difficult to count them', for the firing to stop and for a more moderate procedure to be adopted in the whole area. . . . This order finally ended the bloodshed at Kafr Qasem.³²

All this was established in the trial which, as the scandal slowly leaked out, the government was obliged to hold. The trial was a *pro forma* affair. There was little moral outrage in the courtroom, and, apart from a few lone voices, very little outside it. During the proceedings the leading newspaper *Haaretz* reported that 'the eleven officers and soldiers who are on trial for

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the massacre in Kafr Qasem have all received a fifty per cent increase in their salaries. A special messenger was sent to Jerusalem to bring the cheques to the accused in time for Passover. A number of the accused had been given a vacation for the holiday. . . . The accused mingle freely with the spectators; the officers smile at them and pat them on the back; some of them shake hands with them. It is obvious, that these people, whether they will be found innocent or guilty, are not treated as criminals, but as heroes.³³ One Private David Goldfield reportedly resigned from the Security Police in protest against the trial. According to the *Jewish Newsletter*, his testimony merely reflected what most Israelis thought: 'I feel that the Arabs are the enemies of our State. . . . When I went to Kafr Qasem, I felt that I went against the enemy and I made no distinction between the Arabs in Israel and those outside its frontiers.' Asked what he would do if he met an Arab woman, in no sense a security threat, who was trying to reach her home, he replied: 'I would shoot her down, I would harbour no sentiments, because I received an order and I had to carry it out.'³⁴ The sentences were *pro forma* too. Melinki and Dahan got gaol terms of seventeen and fifteen years respectively, but it was a foregone conclusion that they would only serve a fraction of them. In response to appeals for a pardon, the Supreme Military Court decided to reduce the 'harsh' sentence; and, following this generous example, the Chief of Staff, then the Head of State, and finally a Committee for the Release of Prisoners all made contributions, so that within a year of their sentence Melinki and Dahan were free men. As for Brigadier Shadmi--the 'no sentimentality' senior officer--a Special Military Court found him guilty of a 'merely technical' error, reprimanded him and fined him one piastre. But the twist in the tail was yet to come. Nine months after his release from prison, Dahan, convicted of killing forty-three Arabs in an hour, was appointed 'officer responsible for Arab affairs' in the town of Ramleh.³⁵ And the last that has been heard of Major Melinki was that, through his influential connections in the army, he had secured a coveted permit, sought after by many an entrepreneur, to set up a tourist centre in southern Israel.³⁶

3. The assassination of the United Nations Mediator for Palestine

On 17 September, the day after he submitted his report to the UN, the Mediator flew to Jerusalem to inspect the building to which he was thinking of transferring his headquarters. It seemed foolish to risk his life on a mere administrative chore. That there was indeed such a risk he was well aware. The Jerusalem front line was the scene of constant ceasefire violations; it was infested with snipers and assorted gunmen who subjected the UN Observers to hold-ups. Only the previous day Rhodes radio station had picked up a report about a policeman coming across Bernadotte's dead body in a Haifa street. As his aircraft approached Jerusalem, the radio operator received a message, purporting to come from Haifa, warning that all aircraft landing at the city's Kalendia airport would be fired upon.

They landed without incident, but when General Aage Landström, the Mediator's Personal Representative and Chief of Staff of the UN Observer Corps, suggested that they take a round-about route into the city so as to avoid the 'hot' area of the Mandelbaum Gate, Bernadotte demurred. 'I would not do that,' he said, 'I have to take the same risks as my Observers and, moreover, I think no one has the right to refuse me permission to pass through the line.'²³

They were on their way back when the assassins struck. 'We drove rapidly through the Jewish lines without incident,' Lundström wrote.

The barrier was up, but when the guard saw us, he let it down halfway, then drew it right up, and finally let it down completely. This forced us to stop. The Jewish liaison officer shouted something to the guard in Hebrew, after which he drew up the barrier completely and we were able to pass. It was suspected after the murder that this mysterious manipulation of the barrier must have been a signal to the murderers that we were on our way, possibly even indicating which car Folke Bernadotte was travelling in. That pre-supposes, however, that the Jewish Soldiers at the road barrier were accomplices in the plot. . . . In the Qatamon Quarter we were held up by a Jewish army-type jeep, placed in a road block, and filled with men in Jewish army uniforms. At the same

time I saw a man running from the jeep. I took little notice of this because I merely thought that it was another check-point. However, he put a Tommy gun through the open window on my side of the car and fired point-blank at Count Bernadotte and Colonel Sérot. I also heard shots fired from other points and there was considerable confusion. . . . Colonel Sérot fell in the seat at the back of it and I saw at once that he was dead. Count Bernadotte fell forward and I thought at the time he was trying to get cover. I asked him: 'Are you wounded?' He nodded and fell back. I helped him to lie down in the car. I now realized that he was severely wounded; there was a considerable amount of blood on his clothes mainly around the heart. . . . On reflection after the incident, I am convinced that this was a deliberate and carefully planned assassination. The spot where the cars were halted was carefully chosen, and the people who approached the cars quite obviously not only knew which car Count Bernadotte was in but also the exact position in the car which he occupied.²⁴

Count Bernadotte died a few minutes after the shooting, and three days later the assassins identified themselves as *Hazit Hamoledeth* (Fatherland Front), a sub-group of the *Stern Gang*. In a letter to *Agence France Presse* in Tel Aviv, they declared that 'in our opinion all United Nations Observers in Palestine are members of foreign occupation forces which have no right to be in our territory'. They conceded, however, that the killing of Colonel Sérot was 'a fatal mistake. . . . Our men thought that the officer sitting beside Count Bernadotte was the British agent and anti-Semite General Lundström'.²⁶

In a letter of protest, General Lundström described the assassinations as 'a breach of the truce of utmost gravity, and a black page in Palestine's history for which the United Nations will demand a full accounting'.²⁶

There was to be no accounting, however, either to the UN or to any other authority. To the UN demand that the assassins be brought to justice, the Israelis at first replied that they could not find them. Then, after two months of international pressure, they arrested Nathan Yellin-Mor, the head of the *Stern Gang*, and Matitiahu Schmulevitz, both Polish Jews who had emigrated to Palestine a few years before.

The two were tried by military court in Acre. They claimed that there was no case against them. Their organization was not a terrorist one, nor had they themselves been party to terrorist acts, since the prosecution furnished no proof. Yellin-Mor further objected to the trial of civilians by a military court.²⁷ As for Bernadotte, he denounced him, in a lengthy tirade, as an enemy of Israel. Among other things 'he stood in the way of Jewish absorption of the Kingdom of Transjordan as well as the whole of Palestine'.²⁸ The two men were sentenced to eight and five years. They were, however, to receive special treatment as political prisoners. Then, growing even more lenient, the court ordered that they and their witness be released altogether, since they had protested their sincere desire to be law-abiding citizens. . . .²⁹

Annex IV

The destruction of the city of Quneitra

THE ZIONIST CONNECTION II

What Price Peace?

ALFRED M. LILIENTHAL

**"To the Jew as a man—everything;
to Jews as a nation—nothing."**

*—Count Stanislas Clermont-Tonnerre
to the French Assembly, October 12, 1789*

**"Peace in Palestine cannot be achieved by
force, but only through understanding."**

—Albert Einstein

**"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
but in ourselves, that we are underlings."**

—William Shakespeare

NORTH AMERICAN

New Brunswick, New Jersey

QUNEITRA

The Syrian returnees in June 1967 were greeted by a Hebrew inscription on a demolished wall: "You wanted Quneitra. You will have it in ruins." This threat was carried out.

Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the U.N., after visiting the former capital of the Golan Heights, remarked: "I was very shocked by what I saw at Quneitra." For the Soviet Ambassador to Syria, Quneitra revived memories of Stalingrad at the end of the last war. And to Father George Muhassal, when he and his flock were finally permitted to reenter the city, it was Hiroshima all over again.

In a statement released through the Near East Ecumenical Bureau in Beirut, this pastor of the Greek Orthodox Church in Quneitra charged the Israelis with bulldozing 80 percent of the city and with desecrating-looting Christian churches and the cemetery just prior to their withdrawal on June 26: "The concrete tombs were opened by machine-gun fire and, in some cases, hand grenades. The bodies were brought outside and systematically looted. Hands were broken off to get bracelets, teeth with gold were taken, and parts of the bodies were not put back in the proper coffins."

Such accusations coming from a priest of a church in the city might be dismissed as exaggerations. But Irene Beeson, writing in the *Guardian*, was most explicit in her description of the systematic Israeli destruction before leaving. These are the words, as recounted by Beeson, of one of the ten inhabitants who alone had remained under the Israeli occupation in 1967:

They had about eleven bulldozers stationed in the town, but they had to bring in reinforcements to cope with the huge task. The smaller houses collapsed under a single thrust. For the larger two, three and four-story villas and buildings, they had to build earth ramps so that the bulldozers could reach the upper floors.

They worked from dawn to dusk for several days with grim determination and great expertise. It took them practically a whole day to finish off the three-story house down the street. Only the houses of the ten Arab inhabitants who had not fled were intact. Left standing, also, was the gutted, bullet-ridden 300-bed hospital which the Israelis used for target practice. One of the town's churches was destroyed. Others left standing and only slightly damaged structurally, but had been stripped of everything—marble facings on the walls, furnishings, precious 4th-century icons, statues, lamps.

The shell of the Officers' Club is another landmark. What remains of this wall is riddled with bullet holes, decorated with sexy murals, insulting and pornographic graffiti. . . . Generators were removed and carted away by the Israelis, who made off with all the town's pumps for drinking and irrigation water. Into the water reserves and wells the Israelis had poured diesel oil, petrol and garbage, making good the inscription they had left behind.⁶²

You can always read what others have to say, but that is not the same as viewing for yourself, as I did a year later, the utter emptiness and desolation of Quneitra, a city that had been bulldozed in its entirety. The tracks of the machines were still evident everywhere. Smaller houses had collapsed under a single thrust, while the larger villas and buildings had obviously been bulldozed in the manner described by Irene Beeson.

Such dark devastation visited by man upon man has had few equals. The only signs of life were the stray, hungry-looking cat streaking across the road and a few wild red poppies that had sprung up beside the burnt-out framework of what once had been Quneitra's proud hospital. To me came a flashback to childhood:

In Flanders Field the poppies grow
Between the crosses row on row
That mark their place.

My visit to Quneitra was on a cold May afternoon, but the temperature in no way could match the frigidity of the scene—dramatized by nearby snow-capped Mount Herman, where so many fierce aerial battles between the Syrians and the Israelis had occurred. The approaches to Quneitra were guarded by the Austrian U.N. peacekeeping force.

This tragedy can best be seen through neutral eyes. However, despite continued widespread coverage of violence and terrorism in the U.S. media, there were no reports on Quneitra. In July 1974 an Australian delegation comprised of two members of Parliament, two

Labor leaders, two journalists, and the Federal Secretary of the Young Labor Association visited the Golan Heights. Leader of the delegation George Petersen wrote an article, "The Town That Used To Be," for the Australian publication, *Nation Review*:

The most striking feature of the Quneitra buildings is that, in most cases, there are no walls and the roofs are resting on the ground. How this was done is only too apparent by the caterpillar tracks on the ground near the destroyed buildings.⁶³

After describing the conditions he found in the city, Petersen concluded:

Quneitra was destroyed for the same reasons that most of the original inhabitants were expelled from Palestine—because the Zionists intend to take over the land, expel the original inhabitants and use it for their own purposes. . . . Looking across the cease-fire lines to Ajn Zivan kibbutz in Israel, I know whom I would hate the most if I were a native of Quneitra. Not the soldiers, not even the bulldozer operators, but the men, women and children living on that kibbutz for the benefit of whom and of others like them the destruction of Quneitra was instituted at an enormous cost to the native inhabitants. And I know that I would want to cross the cease-fire line and kill those usurpers.

In the same publication, many letters from Zionists who knew nothing whatsoever about Quneitra emotionally reacted to the Petersen article. In a reply to one of the letters signed by five persons, Petersen struck back:

When I was at Quneitra on July 5, the bulldozer tracks were clearly visible. . . . I am puzzled why the apologists for the Israeli government deny that Quneitra was destroyed by bulldozers and explosives! The Israeli practice of bulldozing Arab villages to the ground is well substantiated in past reports by such impartial parties as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights. . . . Why should the Zionists have made an exception of Quneitra? I would particularly like your five correspondents to explain how they justify the forcible eviction to Syria of over 100,000 native inhabitants of the Golan Heights area. Does Israel's right to exist justify turning the civilian residents into homeless refugees? Or are your correspondents' concepts of humanity confined only to people who describe themselves as "Jews"?

Zionists contend that Quneitra had been destroyed during the 1967 and 1973 wars rather than methodically bulldozed at the time of the Israeli withdrawal. But a BBC documentary film showed Commentator Peter Snow some three or four days before the Israeli evacuation in a very alive city with many houses all intact—further proof that the city had been calculatingly destroyed, house by house, church by church.

Another eyewitness from the Australian delegation was Stewart West, President of the South Post Branch of the Waterside Workers Federation of Australia. Under the title "The Destruction of Quneitra," he wrote as follows:

In most war-damaged cities, you see heaps of rubble, bomb and shell craters, burned-out buildings, with walls still standing and sometimes whole streets left undamaged. But not in Quneitra. The city was completely destroyed in a couple of days immediately prior to the Israeli withdrawal on June 25, 1974. Most of the houses were demolished with explosives or pushed down with bulldozers. . . . The destruction of Quneitra must be in the same category as *the destruction of ancient Carthage, as the destruction of European cities by the Huns, and the Mongols, and with Hiroshima and the Nazi destructions during World War II.*⁶⁴ [Italics added.]

Australian trade union newspaper *Scope*, in a special twenty-eight page supplement of August 1, 1974, devoted two of its pages to the Quneitra atrocities with a lead that read: "Syrian city of Quneitra used to be half-way between the Israeli border and Damascus. In June of this year, Israeli bulldozers destroyed the last of its houses, ripped down the last of its trees and orchards and pulled back up the hills of the Golan Heights." The main piece, presumably written by *Scope*'s Editor, George Coote, added in part:

June 26 was days after the disengagement between Israeli and Syrian troops, and the last Arab house in Quneitra was destroyed minutes before UN peace-keeping forces moved in. . . . Quneitra was smashed with dynamite and bulldozers which made sure nobody would live there again. . . . This was a puzzle for the Australian delegation visiting the city. Did the Quneitra story hit the Australian media?

The answer to this question and to the query posed by British journalist Kathleen Evan's contribution to the same special issue, "Had You Really Heard About Israel's Genocide?" was identical. Next to nothing had appeared in Australia and Britain—and nothing in the U.S.—on the story of a gutted city where nearly 45,000 people once had happily lived.

Annex V

The destruction of Beirut's hospitals
and other vital facilities

THE FATEFUL TRIANGLE

**The United States, Israel
and the Palestinians**

Noam Chomsky

SOUTH END PRESS

BOSTON, MA

/...

5.2 Beirut: Precision Bombardment

Repeatedly, Israel blocked international relief efforts and prevented food and medical supplies from reaching victims.* Israeli military forces also appear to have gone out of their way to destroy medical facilities—at least, if one wants to believe Israeli government claims about “pinpoint accuracy” in bombardment. “International agencies agree that the civilian death toll would have been considerably higher had it not been for the medical facilities that the Palestine Liberation Organization provides for its own people”¹¹⁶—and, in fact, for many poor Lebanese—so it is not surprising that these were a particular target of attack.

In the first bombing in June, a children's hospital in the Sabra refugee camp was hit, Lebanese television reported, and a cameraman said he saw “many children” lying dead inside the Bourj al Barajneh camp in Beirut, while “fires were burning out of control at dozens of apartment buildings” and the Gaza Hospital near the camps was reported hit.¹¹⁷ This, it will be recalled, was in “retaliation” for the attempt by an anti-PLO group with no base in Lebanon to assassinate Ambassador Argov. On June 12, four bombs fell on a hospital in Aley, severely damaging it. “There is nothing unusual” in the story told by an operating room assistant who had lost two hands in the attack: “That the target of the air strike was a hospital, whether by design or accident, is not unique either,” William Branigan reports, noting that other hospitals were even more badly damaged. Fragments of cluster bombs were found on the grounds of an Armenian sanitarium south of Beirut that was also “heavily damaged during the Israeli drive.”¹¹⁸ A neurosurgeon at the Gaza hospital in Beirut “insists that Israeli gunners deliberately shelled his hospital,” it was reported at the same time.¹¹⁹ A few days later, Richard Ben Cramer reported that the Acre Hospital in Beirut was hit by Israeli shells, and that the hospitals in the camps had again been hit. “Israeli guns never seem to stop here,” he reported from the Sabra camp, later to be the scene of a major massacre: “After two weeks of this random thunder, Sabra is only a place to run through.”¹²⁰

* The International Red Cross, World Vision International, UNICEF and other relief agencies report long delays in supply of food and medicines caused by Israeli interference.¹¹⁹ This is confirmed by Israeli officials responsible for relief, as we will see directly.

The Acre hospital was again hit on June 24, along with the Gaza hospital and the Islamic Home for Invalids, where "the corridors were streaked with blood." The hospitals were short of supplies because Israel was blocking tons of medical supplies ready for shipment in Cyprus, according to the International Red Cross.¹²¹ By mid-August, the Islamic Home had been repeatedly shelled, only 15 of 200 staff members remained, and "several of the retarded children have died of starvation for lack of someone who has the time to feed them properly." At the Palestinian Hospital for the Disabled (perhaps the same institution), "a visitor walking the gloomy corridors is approached by stumbling figures crying 'Food, food' in Arabic"; 800 patients remained, all mentally ill, half of them children, cared for by a dozen nurses.¹²²

A French doctor reported witnessing "an intense Israeli bombing raid around and against the [Gaza] hospital, which forced the evacuation of the hospital at the time."¹²³ When the Beirut mental hospital was hit shortly after, "800 patients varying in condition from senile dementia to violent schizophrenia were released into the streets of Beirut." The hospital, clearly marked by Red Cross flags, was hit by artillery and naval gunfire, including four phosphorus shells. Medical personnel reported that the patients, including children with mental problems whose nursery was hit by rockets that set beds on fire, were 90% Lebanese. No military target was found within a half-mile. The hospital was, however, "precariously located near the Palestinian ghettos of Sabra and Shatila, frequent targets of Israeli bombardment," though the "immediate surroundings are residential" (i.e., not Palestinian slums).¹²⁴

Most of this was before the bombing escalated to new levels of violence in August. By August 4, 8 of the 9 Homes for Orphans in Beirut had been destroyed, attacked by cluster and phosphorus bombs. The last was hit by phosphorus and other rockets, though clearly marked by a red cross on the roof, after assurances by the International Red Cross that it would be spared.¹²⁵ On August 4, the American University hospital was hit by shrapnel and mortar fire. A doctor "standing in bloodstained rags" said: "We have no more room." The director reported: "It's a carnage. There is nothing military anywhere near this hospital."¹²⁶ The hospital was the only one in Beirut to escape direct shelling, and even there, sanitary conditions had deteriorated to the point where half the intensive-care patients were lost and with 99% of the cases being trauma victims, there was no room for ordinary illnesses. "Drive down any street and you will almost always see a man or woman with a missing limb."¹²⁷

The Red Cross reported that by August 6, "there were 130 beds available in west Beirut out of a total of about 1,400." The American University Hospital was admitting only "those who look salvageable" on bad days, the staff reported. The Berbir hospital was "just an underground dormitory with generators churning away to give the few patients

als." At the Hotel Bristol, hit by an Israeli phosphorus shell, the Red Cross had set up an underground hospital. "The majority of the doctors and nurses working in the city have fled."¹²⁸ "Even the Red Cross delegation has been shelled twice. In an Israeli naval bombardment on July 30, six shells struck the building and on Aug. 5 it was again hit by two artillery shells." The Berbir hospital was already seriously damaged by mid-July, with trails of blood in the corridors, many of the patients removed from the wreckage, and the mortuary full of corpses until the remaining doctors were able to leave the building to bury the unidentified bodies in a communal grave when the shelling and air attacks temporarily stopped.¹²⁹

One of the true heroes of the war is Dr. Amal Shamma, an American-trained Lebanese-American pediatrician who remained at work in Beirut's Berbir hospital through the worst horrors. In November, she spent several weeks touring the U.S., receiving little notice, as expected. She was, however, interviewed in the *Village Voice*, where she described the extensive medical and social services for Palestinians and poor Lebanese that were destroyed by the Israeli invasion. For them, nothing is left apart from private hospitals that they cannot afford, some taken over by the Israeli army. No medical teams came from the U.S., although several came to help from Europe; the U.S. was preoccupied with supplying weapons to destroy. She reports that the hospitals were clearly marked with red crosses and that there were no guns nearby, though outside her hospital there was one disabled tank, which was never hit in the shelling that reduced the hospital to a first-aid station. On one day, 17 hospitals were shelled. Hers "was shelled repeatedly from August 1 to 12 until everything in it was destroyed." It had been heavily damaged by mid-July, as already noted. Hospital employees stopped at Israeli barricades were told: "We shelled your hospital good enough, didn't we? You treat terrorists there."¹³⁰ Recall that this is the testimony of a doctor at a Lebanese hospital, one of those liberated by the Israeli forces, according to official doctrine.

An American nurse working in Beirut, who was appalled by the "watered-down descriptions in American newspapers," reported that Israel "dropped bombs on everything, including hospitals, orphanages and, in one case, a school bus carrying 35 young schoolgirls who were traveling on an open road"; she cared for the survivors.¹³¹ The U.S. Navy Lieut. Commander in charge of removing unexploded ordnance in Beirut reports that "we found five bombs in an orphanage with about 45 cluster bombs in the front yard. We were called there after five children were injured and four killed." About 3-5% of the shells and bombs failed to go off and are considered highly dangerous, he said.¹³² This particular orphanage, then, must have been heavily bombed.

One of the most devastating critiques of Israeli military practices was provided inadvertently by an Israeli pilot who took part in the bombing,

an Air Force major, who described the careful selection of targets and the precision bombing that made error almost impossible. Observing the effects, one can draw one's own conclusions. He also expressed his own personal philosophy, saying "if you want to achieve peace, you should fight." "Look at the American-Japanese war," he added. "In order to achieve an end, they bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki."¹³³

The precedents this pilot cited can be placed alongside of others offered by Prime Minister Begin in justification of the war: Dresden and Coventry, for example. The reference to Coventry particularly amazed Israeli listeners; "We know who carried out the bombardment of Coventry," Abba Eban wrote—commenting also on the "delegations of diaspora Jews [who] came to Israel, or rather to Lebanon, and applauded the decision to make war as enthusiastically as they would have applauded a decision not to make it," and the "embarrassing vulgarity in holding [United Jewish Appeal] fundraising appeals" in occupied Lebanon. These precedents give some insight into the mentality of the Israeli political leadership and segments of the officer corps, and also of American supporters who appeal to the same precedents, for example, former Supreme Court Justice and UN Ambassador Arthur Goldberg. In his interesting comments in support of the invasion, to which we return, he cites the precedent of the bombing of Dresden and more generally, the war "against the demented barbarian who sought to enslave the world." "Is not the government of Israel faced with the same terrible dilemma in view of repeated PLO acts of terrorism against Israeli civilians and the bombing of its northern settlements?"¹³⁴ Recall the actual scale of PLO terrorism and the comparison to Israeli terrorism, already discussed, and the fact that there had been no unprovoked bombardment of northern settlements for a year, none at all for 10 months despite extensive Israeli provocation, including bombing in April.

Goldberg's notion that Israel's invasion of Lebanon is comparable to the war against Hitler was also invoked by Prime Minister Begin in a letter to President Reagan in which he portrayed himself as marching to "Berlin" to liquidate "Hitler." To the Labor Party spokesman on foreign affairs, Abba Eban, this seemed "a dark and macabre fantasy," "one of the most bizarre documents in recent diplomatic history," an example of "losing touch with reality."^{*} Other Israeli commentators also ridiculed this comparison, suggesting that it raised questions about Begin's sanity. I noticed no comment here on Goldberg's sanity. It is, perhaps, not too surprising that a liberal American hero should surpass the "macabre fantasies" of Israel's Nobel Peace Prize winner in his own ruminations on the topic.

^{*} Eban remarks that "Arafat's ideology and rhetoric, repulsive as they are, are identical with those of Anwar Sadat until a few months before Begin embraced him in the Knesset."¹³⁵ There is some truth to what he says, though not in the sense that he intended his audience to understand, as we see when we recall Sadat's rebuffed efforts to make peace with Israel for over six years before his visit to Jerusalem, and Arafat's moves towards the accommodationist international consensus, also regularly rebuffed, from the mid-1970s. See chapter 3. Eban surely knows all of this, and more, very well. He is able to exploit his reputation as a dove to conceal the historical record with considerable effectiveness.

Annex VI

On the subject of the resemblance between Israel and South Africa, allow me to quote from the Zionist journalist Jacobo Timerman, who published a book entitled:

The Longest War - Israel in Lebanon
(Vintage Books Edition, December 1982)

The writer counselled his son, who was fighting with the Israeli army in Lebanon, I quote:

"Son, you can't compare an Argentine jail to an Israeli jail. In our jails, only Arabs are maltreated, and you are a member of the superior race. It's true that once we were the people chosen by God to be witnesses of his truth, but now that we have girded ourselves for the murder of another people, we are a superior race since, as our government says, nobody can defeat us. They won't torture you in jail. Once you arrange your daily routine, thirty or sixty days pass quickly. But if you don't go now to your base, it will be merely an individual act. Perhaps others in your regiment think as you do, and together you can organize a collective protest. In any case, all of you must refuse to go to Lebanon. One can't be an accomplice in a crime and justify oneself by citing orders from above. It's time to rebel."

The journalist added:

"Derech Haifa, the highway to the north, runs in front of my house. Every morning at seven o'clock a truck or a bus brings the Arab workers from the villages near Tel Aviv where they are authorized to live. They are preparing the soil to plant a row of palms. My city has a good administrator who is filling it with flowers and trees. The Arab laborers toil, rest, pull out their water bottles, their meals, go back to work, and then get into the trucks or buses to return to their homes. They leave behind a touch of beauty. Each time they leave, my city is more beautiful. Looking at them from my balcony, I can only relieve myself by vomiting for this Israel which wants to be like South Africa. The heat is terrible; vomiting does me good. This is South Africa."

/...

He concluded his description of Israel by saying:

"What is it that has turned us into such efficient criminals? I fear that in our collective subconscious, we may not be wholly repelled by the possibility of a Palestinian genocide. I don't believe we Israelis can be cured without the help of others."
