

PALESTINE 1948

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*War, Escape and the Emergence of the
Palestinian Refugee Problem*



YOAV GELBER

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Foreword by Walter Lacquer

I was a witness to the events related in this book first as a correspondent during the years 1946–7 and subsequently as a war correspondent in besieged Jerusalem from the beginning to the end of that war. The ideal of an objective correspondent as Trotsky once noted (who acted in this capacity during the Balkan wars of 1912–13) is on top of the outward walls of a fortress so that he can watch at one and the same time the movements of the two hostile camps. But this is hardly a practical proposition in modern warfare: it is dangerous, for the observer to risk being shot at by both sides; it does not give him specific insights into the plans of the commanders; and it ignores, of course, the famous, omnipresent fog of war.

Seen in retrospect, I observed at the time very little that others located near by could not watch. But if this correspondent was not particularly well informed about military operations he could still see and hear a great deal about other things of equal importance — the fears, hopes and expectations of the soldiers, officers and the civilian population; about the state of morale and discipline; about supplies or the lack of them.

On the basis of my experience, Professor Gelber's book is as balanced and truthful an account as we are likely to get. True, the historiography of the 1947–8 war is, as the author notes, almost entirely based on Israeli accounts for the simple reason that Arab archives have not been made accessible and because Arab historians have not been particularly eager to explore the war as conducted by their side with any kind of determination. We do not even know what can be found in the Arab archives, perhaps there was not that much material from the beginning, perhaps important files have been destroyed. But short of having this information, no definitive history can reasonably be expected. All this is not to say that in the foreseeable future the Israeli history of the war will be identical with the Palestinian-Arab history, just as the Prussian history of the war of 1870–1 differs from the French accounts.

Does this unfortunate state of affairs give the Iseaelis an unfair advan-

tage? I do not think so. Experience shows that the achievements and victories, the acts of wisdom, farsightedness and heroism are trumpeted from the rooftops whereas the failures, the intrigues and the war crimes are usually buried deep in the archives. If a generation of "new historians" such as emerged in Israel were to appear in the Arab countries, their findings could be quite interesting.

My own political sympathies until shortly before the outbreak of the war were towards those who favored a bi-national state. Events in virtually all other parts of the world have shown that this was an illusion. But counterfactual history still has its uses. What if the Arabs, despite everything, had accepted the UN resolution of 29 November 1947 concerning the partition of Palestine? Would a Jewish state in the borders of 1947 have survived? Would a Palestinian Arab state have been viable?

The Palestinian leaders, supported by public opinion, decided that the UN resolution was wholly unacceptable, hence the sporadic attacks which I witnessed, from the burning of the Jewish Commercial Center in Jerusalem onwards. Within a short time this turned into guerrilla warfare and later into a full-scale war. For a while this war went very badly for the Jews of Palestine: there was not much optimism in Jerusalem during March 1948. But then the tide turned, resulting in the Arab exodus.

I am a little less certain than the author that the decisive factor in the Jewish victory was the organizational, cultural and technical infrastructure of the Jewish *Yishuv* — in brief its modern character. Organization played a crucial role, but some recent examples (Vietnam, Afghanistan, the Caucasus) have shown the advantages of primitivism over a sophisticated infrastructure. What mattered more (and Professor Gelber stresses this) was the fact that the Palestinian Jews, unlike the Arabs, had nowhere to go: they were fighting with their backs to the wall.

Thus the refugee problem came into being. There have been similar such problems in the wake of the Second World War in many other parts of the world, some on a large scale such as the expulsion of the Germans from eastern Europe. The Germans accepted this not because they thought it was justified; after all, German children in Poland and Czechoslovakia were not responsible for Hitler's war of aggression and extermination. They accepted it because they knew that short of another world war the German refugees could not possibly be resettled in the regions where they had originally lived. But the situation in the Middle East was altogether different: even though the Arabs had been defeated in the first round, they were many and the Jews were few; the Arabs had international support; and there was always the hope that a second or third round of fighting would reverse the outcome of the first round.

It is worth noting that the Indian constitution passed after the bloody civil war on the Indian subcontinent in 1947 stated unambiguously in

paragraph seven that a person which had migrated from India to the territory now included in Pakistan after the first day of March 1947 shall not be deemed a citizen of India. But India was a big country. Israel was small and seemed vulnerable, and its leaders must have thought such unambiguous, definitive statements impossible or at least inadvisable.

If the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should come to a close in the foreseeable future, it will be on the basis of mutual, territorial concessions including no doubt Jerusalem. It is conceivable that there will be population transfers on a limited local basis. But given the fact that Israel is now an overpopulated country, the return of substantial numbers of refugees seems impossible. Many years ago a British High Commissioner of Palestine noted that as far as Palestine's absorptive capacity was concerned there was no room "to swing a cat" — and this was decades before the crucial issue of lack of water resources emerged.

Historically, nations and states have come into being not as the result of friendly understanding and amicable contracts but as the result of hostility and bloodshed — and this is true as much with regard to Switzerland and Holland as to countries in other parts of the world. Seen in this perspective, all countries were conceived in sin, and all were based on acts of injustice — for justice to one group in a world that was not ethnically homogeneous always meant injustice to another group. Nor did ethnic cleansing solve all the major problems; it simply shifted conflict from the struggle against the outside enemy to fighting adversaries at home.

It has been the historical tragedy of both Jews and Arabs that they attained statehood only in the twentieth century, that unlike Switzerland and Holland they had not centuries at their disposal for civilized and peaceful attitudes — and for tolerance — to develop. Standards of political behavior in the Middle East (or in Africa or South Asia) are unfortunately not yet those of western Europe where wars now seem impossible; survival in these inclement conditions involves, at least to a certain degree, behaving according to these standards. All this may change at some future date, but such a change can only proceed from a realistic assessment of how the Arab-Israeli conflict developed. Professor Gelber's sober and detached history of the war of 1948 and its consequences is a landmark in this respect.

Walter Laqueur
Washington, September 2000

Acknowledgements

This book has emanated from a study of the history of Israeli intelligence during Israel's War of Independence. The research brought me into greater familiarity with and gave me fresh insight into the Arab side of this war. Furthermore, observation on ethnic civil wars in Lebanon, the Balkans and the former Soviet Union throughout the 1980s, gradually provided new paradigms that revised my perspective of the war in Palestine in 1948 and its ramifications.

Incidentally, the writing of this book also paralleled the dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians that began in the Madrid conference of 1991, followed by the Oslo Accord in the Fall of 1993. This venture concentrated on the outcomes of the Six Day War in 1967 and evaded the basic issues of the Arab-Jewish conflict that had originated in 1948. As the parties had to cope with these unavoidable and apparently insurmountable obstacles, the process decayed. Thus, contemporary events had contributed to the historical perspective and *vice versa*: knowledge of the past enabled a sober analysis of current progress and quandaries.

During my research work that began in 1992, I used several archives in Israel and abroad, some of which are still closed to the public. In the latter case, I have referred the reader to the document only, and not to the file. Meanwhile, however, many of those documents have become accessible in the IDF and Israel State archives.

I am indebted to the staff of the IDF Archives, Ben-Gurion Archives, the Central Zionist Archives and the Israel State Archives for their invaluable assistance throughout my work. Anita Grahame of Sussex Academic Press saw the book through the press with praiseworthy attention and efficiency. Finally, Daniella Ashkenazi deserves special thanks for editing the manuscript and improving considerably the English style. I am particularly grateful for the helpful advice that she gave me for the readers' sake and for helping me to elaborate on certain issues and to avoid others.

October 2000

Abbreviations

AA	Anti Aircraft
AFV	Armoured Fighting Vehicle
AHC	Arab Higher Committee
ALA	Arab Liberation Army
AOC	Air Officer Commanding
AT	Anti Tank
BGA	Ben-Gurion's Archives
BMEO	British Middle East Office
BTE	British Troops Egypt
C in C	Commander in Chief
CAB	Cabinet Papers
CO	Colonial Office, Commanding Officer
COS	Chiefs of Staff
CZA	Central Zionist Archives
DEFE	Defence Ministry
Div.	Division
DMI	Director of Military Intelligence
DMO	Director of Military Operations
DP	Displaced Person(s)
FO	Foreign Office
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
FSS	Field Security Section
GSI	General Staff Intelligence
GSO	General Staff, Operations
HA	<i>Haganah</i> Archives
HHA	<i>Hakibbutz Hameuchad</i> Archives
HMG	His Majesty's Government
HQ	Headquarters
IAF	Israel Air Force
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
IDFA	Israel Defence Forces' Archives

IRC	International Red Cross
IRO	International Refugee Organization
ISA	Israel State Archives
IZL	<i>Irgun Zvai Leumi</i> (National Military Organization)
JNF	Jewish National Fund
JPS	Joint Planning Staff
LHI	<i>Lohamei Herut Israel</i> (Fighters for Israel's Freedom)
LP	Lebanese Pound
LPA	Labour Party Archives
MAMAN	<i>Machleket Modi'in</i> (Directorate of Intelligence)
MAPAI	<i>Mifleget Po'alei Eretz Israel</i> (Land of Israel's Workers Party)
MAPAM	<i>Mifleget Po'alim Meuchedet</i> (United Workers Party)
MELF	Middle East Land Forces
MI	Military Intelligence
MK	Member of <i>Knesset</i>
MO	Military Operations
PALMAH	<i>Plugot Mahatz</i> (Shock Troops)
PCC	Palestine Conciliation Committee
POW	Prisoner(s) of War
PREM	Prime Minister [Private] Office
PRO	Public Record Office
PUS	Permanent Under Secretary
PWD	Public Works Department
RAF	Royal Air Force
REAF	Royal Egyptian Air Force
SHAY	<i>Sherut Yediot</i> (Intelligence Service)
Sitrep	Situation and intelligence report
SM	<i>Sherut Modi'in</i> (Intelligence Service)
SoS	Secretary of State
TJFF	Transjordan Frontier Force
UKDEL	United Kingdom Delegation at the UN Centre
UN	United Nations
VCOAS	Vice Chief of Air Staff
WO	War Office

Introduction

The Israeli–Arab war of 1948 has been thoroughly researched. However, lasting interest in this encounter has not emanated from its significance to military history. Scholarly curiosity derives mainly from its wider historical repercussions that have changed the face of the Middle East. Among the war's outcomes were the emergence and shaping of Israel; its persistent existence as a spearhead of western civilization in the region; the protracted Arab–Israeli conflict and the unsolved Palestinian problem. Other processes have significant links to this war as well, including the vanishing of the ancient Jewish communities in Muslim countries through emigration to Israel and elsewhere; political and social upheavals in the Arab states and frequent changes of their global orientations. All have stemmed from the strategy and the outcome of this war.

The end to the fighting in 1949 through the armistice agreements did not resolve the causes of the war. For a long time, the threat of a “second round” hung over the Middle East. Incessant skirmishing along Israel's borders, and continuing political and economic warfare, naturally influenced the war's historiography. Writings reflected the contenders' deep conviction of their own righteousness and hatred of their antagonists for the evils their adversary inflicted upon them.

Propaganda, memoirs, journalistic writing and early historiography have enveloped the war in a thick cloak of stereotypes, myths, polemics and apologies. Younger generations — Jews and Arabs alike — have grown up under their shadow, forming their respective images of each other in accordance with these conceptions.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Israeli early historiography and fiction literature exalted the war as a miracle. Reminiscent of ancient models such as David and Goliath or the Maccabeans, it was perceived as the triumph of few over many, the weak successfully challenging the strong, the right cause winning against the wrong one. To amplify the heroic achievement, the writers blamed Britain for covertly directing the Arab onslaught on the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine) and the invasion of Israel.

They condemned the British for attempting to obstruct Jewish statehood and deny Israel the fruits of victory.

Arab narratives of the war — usually polemic or apologetic memoirs and rarely scholarly research — have chosen to concentrate on assigning guilt rather than analyzing events. The authors have exonerated their own conduct, seeking to place blame elsewhere for the calamity that has befallen the Palestinians and responsibility for the Arab armies' defeat. Since it was inconceivable that the tiny *Yishuv* could inflict this catastrophe on the Arabs on its own, it was essential to mitigate the disaster by suggesting accomplices. The Arabs accused Britain of betraying them; blamed the United States for supporting its Zionist protégé and finally vilified King Abdullah of Transjordan, who was the only Arab ruler who benefited from the general débâcle.

Another typical obsession has been the question of justice and unfairness. Arab scholars have scarcely endeavoured to find out what really happened, when, how and why. In place of this, they have elaborated on whose case was right and whose arguments were illegitimate.

The opening of official archives in the late 1970s has changed the scene. Yet, archival material at the disposal of scholars has been Israeli, British and American. No Arab parallel documentation has been made accessible to date. Studying the Arab perspective of the war is still confined mainly to British and American diplomats' reports from Arab capitals, British and Israeli intelligence material (reflecting also, although indirectly, important Arab documentation) and Arab apologetics and denunciations. Several Israeli scholars have studied the Arab side of the war. No parallel interest in the Jewish perspective has developed among their Arab colleagues.¹

A significant new feature in scholarly works on the war that were written in the late 1980s was the emergence of a new school of inquiry by scholars who diverted the focus of attention from Israel's accomplishments to the Palestinians' grim fate. These studies portrayed the Palestinians as the hapless objects of violence and oppression (Israeli), collusion (Israeli-Transjordanian) and a treacherous diplomacy (British and Arab).²

This was not a mere coincidence. The new trend paralleled a widespread reversal of attitudes in the western world towards Israel. From May 1948 until the mid-1970s, Israel's encounters with the Arab states stood at the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israeli historiography, emphasizing the triumph over the Arab armies, was compatible with conventional views of the conflict. Stabilization of Israel's relations with the Arab states after the 1973 Yom Kippur war shifted attention to the Palestinian problem.

The self-proclaimed title "new historians" that these scholars have adopted — implying possession of objectivity and open-mindedness that

was not the province of “old” historians, alleged to harbour a partisanship and involvement — has been particularly irritating.³ This school’s emergence has not brought about a scholarly breakthrough, neither in revealing new horizons nor in methodological originality. It has, however, generated a questionable revision of accepted standards of presentation, based on incomplete use of the newly accessible source material that has been open to professional criticism no less than its predecessors.⁴

Awarding the revisionist historians’ standing as impartial and free from ideological bias is equally unwarranted. Although the fashionable tendency to exhibit Israel as “conceived in sin” has not necessarily been the motivation fuelling all revisionist scholars, they have rendered this charge a valuable service by sketching the Palestinians as innocent victims of others’ conspiracies and atrocities. In their works, the Israelis emerge as having no other worry in the most difficult time in their history than cynically plotting their enemies’ expulsion from their own homeland. This double simplicity appears unconvincing to anyone familiar with the sources — who has studied that period — unless the reader is utterly prejudiced.

Since in the eyes of revisionist historians the primordial sin was Jewish statehood — seemingly at the Palestinians’ expense — they treat the previous chapters of Zionist–Arab relations superficially, almost ignoring Palestinians’ violent opposition to the Zionist enterprise prior to 1948. Apparently, they consider this irrelevant, or perhaps even avoid it because a proper examination might contradict their theories.

In their handling of the 1948 war, the revisionists have bypassed elementary facts in order to underscore the particular issue of the Palestinians’ ordeal. A simple and yet undisputed fact of common knowledge is that the Palestinians and the Arab League — not the *Yishuv* — promptly rejected the UN resolution on partition following the vote in the General Assembly on 29 November 1947. Immediately and intentionally they embarked on frustrating implementation of partition by violence. At first, they instigated disturbances and gradually escalated them to a full-scale war. The Arab League backed the Palestinians’ campaign from the beginning and the Arab states joined in the fighting upon termination of the British mandate, invading the newly established Jewish state. The Arabs stubbornly repudiated any compromise that provided for a Jewish state, no matter what its borders were to be. Only in the wake of their military defeat did the Arabs make UN resolutions a cornerstone of their case and demand their strict fulfilment.

Any study describing solely Palestinian suffering is one-sided and incomplete without properly weighing this plain truth: As victims of war, the Palestinians’ own conduct gives adequate cause to deny them the adjective “innocent”. Truly, they have paid a heavy price in this war —

and ever since. They have been victims. But to a large extent they are the victims of their own follies and pugnacity, as well as the incompetence of their Arab allies.

The following modest contribution to the historical debate of this war is a continuation of several previous works that I have published in Hebrew. These studies have treated the creation of the IDF and accompanying military and political domestic controversies in Israel; the earlier development of the Arab-Jewish conflict, and the Jews' relations with Transjordan until the invasion (in English). Another book examines the development of the Israeli intelligence services during the war.⁵

Israel's War of Independence — the equivalent to the Palestinians' *Al-Nakba* (Arabic for "Disaster") — consisted of two distinct, consecutive, but separate campaigns fought by different enemies, under dissimilar circumstances, each phase under different rules. The first encounter commenced early in December 1947 and lasted until the British mandate in Palestine expired. It was a civil war between Jews and Palestinians that took place under British sovereignty and in the presence of British troops. The second contest began with the invasion of Palestine by the regular Arab armies on 15 May 1948 and continued intermittently until the conclusion of armistice agreements during the first half of 1949. This was a war between Israel and a coalition of Arab states, fought by armies using methods of regular warfare.

Throughout the civil war, the characteristic tactics were urban guerilla raids or shooting attacks on isolated rural settlements, and ambushes on the opponent's transportation lines. No territory could be gained — even temporarily — and decisive determination of an outcome of hostilities was impossible. Lacking proper military objectives, the antagonists carried out their attacks on non-combatant targets, subjecting civilians to deprivation, intimidation and harassment. Consequently, the weaker, less cohesive and backward Palestinian society collapsed under a not-overly-heavy strain. An increasing flow of refugees to the heart of Arab-populated areas and into adjacent countries underscored the defeat.

During this period, the principal Jewish paramilitary organization — the *Haganah* — was reshaped as a regular fighting force, based on conscription. A territorial militia of armed settlers backed the emerging army. Simultaneously, the network of autonomous Jewish national institutions that had been established by the *Yishuv* during the mandatory era were transformed into a system of independent and sovereign government that controlled and directed the *Yishuv*'s war effort.

The patriarchal Palestinian society lagged behind. Spontaneously, "national committees" emerged in the principal towns to deal with essential preparations for war on the local level. Yet, the Palestinians failed to establish central political, financial, administrative and military facilities.

This failure resulted in a rapid deterioration of local institutions and eventually led to complete anarchy. The Arab League contributed to the chaos by being able neither to determine Arab Palestine's political future nor to let the Palestinians shape their own destiny.

On the eve of the war, the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) and its associates in neighbouring countries — the committees for defending *Filastin* — recruited hundreds of volunteers: exiled Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqis and fascist Bosnians. In December 1947, they infiltrated Palestine and formed the nucleus of *Jihad al-Muqadas* ("Holy Fighters"). Several thousand indigenous youngsters joined their ranks. After the invasion, the regular armies employed these volunteers, augmented by other native recruits, as auxiliaries and garrisons in nonessential front sectors.

Following the outbreak of hostilities, the Palestinians improvised local militias for defending their towns and villages. Members of the pre-war paramilitary organizations *Najada* and *Futuwa*, ex-soldiers of the British army, former policemen and defectors from the Transjordan Frontier Force — all joined these "national guards", but their role remained limited and passive.

From the outset, the Palestinian combatants had a secondary role in the framework of the Arab war effort. In December 1947, the League undertook to raise the Arab Liberation Army (ALA) that should have carried the main burden of the Palestine campaign. This force hastily assembled and drilled in Syria, and during January–March 1948 moved into the country. Originally, the mission of the ALA should have been defending Arab areas until the end of the mandate, meanwhile avoiding incidents with the British and major clashes with the Jews. Yet, rapid escalation of the civil war dragged the foreigners into an untimely involvement in combat. Several abortive attacks on Jewish settlements exposed ALA incompetence and revealed numerous tactical and organizational deficiencies.

The evacuation's progression and the British army's preoccupation with safeguarding its lines of withdrawal enabled the adversaries to change their tactics. Early in April, the *Haganah* took the initiative and during the next six weeks launched several large-scale operations across the country. By contrast, the Arab forces remained dispersed and disarrayed, clinging to their traditional patterns of warfare and organization that were anachronistic under prevailing circumstances. The *Haganah* soon pushed the Arab forces onto the defensive. Between early April and mid-May 1948 the nascent Jewish army crushed the Palestinian irregulars and the League's expedition, although at the price of heavy losses.

Culminating in the last days of the mandate, this civil war between rival ethnic communities set a precedent. Hitherto, the civilized world had known very few such examples. The American civil war was too remote,

while the Russian and Spanish civil wars were fought by armies using methods and means of regular warfare. All three armed conflicts were fought between members of the same nation and society. The war of 1948 was the first modern civil war fought between competing ethnic communities. It was also the first national contest in the post-Ottoman Middle East. In the 1970s and 1980s, the civil war in Lebanon might have given some perspective and a better insight into the brutal nature of this kind of feud. Recent feuds in the Balkans or in the former Soviet Empire have further revealed the cruel essence of inter-communal flare-ups and their immense impact on civilian populations.

Encounters between akin societies such as Serbs, Croats and Bosnians; Armenians and Azeris; or Georgians and Ossetians are often indecisive. The rapid and decisive tipping of the scales in favour of one side in the civil war in 1948 — once the British left the rivals to themselves — rather than a protracted stalemate, was exceptional. The Palestinians' swift downfall surprised all concerned: Arabs, British and Jews.

In six weeks of fierce fighting, the *Haganah* occupied most of the area that the UN partition plan allotted to the Jewish state. In some regions, the Jews extended their control even beyond this line. They took over five Arab or mixed towns and 200 villages; between 250,000 to 300,000 Palestinians escaped (so far they were not driven out) to Palestine's Arab sectors and to neighbouring countries. The Palestinian irregulars and the League's army disintegrated, becoming militarily immaterial.

The Palestinians' rapid and almost total collapse astonished their Jewish opponents. It was unbelievable that plain defeatism lacking any ulterior motives had provoked their mass flight. The *Yishuv* suspected the flight was nothing but a conspiracy concocted by the AHC to embroil the Arab states in the war. Later, this hypothesis would become the official line of Israeli diplomacy and propaganda. Originally, the allegations emanated from popular hearsay claiming that the Mufti's followers encouraged running away by promising the escapees a quick return in the footsteps of the triumphant Arab armies. Often, fugitives from the fighting invented and disseminated these stories to exonerate their defection. However, all the documentary evidence clearly shows that the AHC (though not local leaders in certain places), the ALA and the Arab League did not countenance flight. On the contrary, they tried in vain to stop it.

Like other societies in the area east of Egypt and west of Iran, the Palestinians had no historical experience with national war or an understanding of its essence. For centuries, wars in this region had been fought either between foreign empires and rulers or between local lords competing for power. Napoleon and Muhammad Ali's wars against the Supreme Porte, or Britain's campaign against Turkey in the First World War, were irrelevant to a populace that did not associate itself with either

of the antagonists. Throughout the ages, the people of this region developed their own avenues of survival in others' wars. They were accustomed to evading the fighting by finding temporary havens nearby until the tempest had passed and they could safely return to their homes.

Many thousands of Palestinian *fallahin* (villagers) fled to Hauran (in today's Syria) during the First World War to evade conscription and forced labour, or to escape drought and famine in Palestine. They mostly returned after the British army occupied the country. During the rebellion of 1936–9, approximately 25,000 Palestinians moved to adjacent countries because they were hard pressed either by the British or by the rebel gangs. Most fugitives and exiles returned openly or clandestinely during and after the Second World War.

Unaware of the different historical circumstances, at the beginning of the civil war in 1948 the Palestinians reacted similarly. Their fragile social structure tumbled because of economic hardships and administrative disorganization. From the outset of fighting, those who could afford to had sent their families to neighbouring countries, and joined them later when the situation deteriorated. Others moved from the vicinity of the front lines to less exposed areas of the Arab sector, particularly if they had relatives there to receive them. Thousands of foreign Arab immigrants and temporary residents — Egyptians, Lebanese and Syrians — returned to their home countries to avoid the hardships of war. First-generation emigrants from rural hamlets to urban centres — mostly day labourers who were the first to lose their jobs because of the economic chaos — returned to their villages. They all set a model and created an atmosphere of desertion that soon embraced wider circles. Between half to two-thirds of the Arab inhabitants in cities such as Haifa or Jaffa had abandoned their homes before the Jews discharged the final blow and occupied the towns.

Dependence on towns that had fallen to the Jews, the impossibility of maintaining the agricultural routine and rumours of atrocities exacerbated mass flight to the countryside. Many hamlets that the *Haganah* stormed in April–May 1948 were empty. Under the pressure of the fighting, their tenants had gradually left during the campaign's earlier stages.

At this point in time, running away was for the most part voluntary. So far, the *Haganah*'s use of intimidation and other methods of psychological warfare was sporadic. Quantitatively, most of the Palestinian refugees fled under these circumstances of an inter-communal civil war. The Arab armies' invasion on 15 May 1948 terminated this phase of the flight. In certain places, escapees who had not gone far returned to their deserted homes in the wake of the invading troops.

During the civil war, the Palestinians' behaviour stood in sharp

contrast to the *Yishuv*'s performance. Not a single Jewish settlement was deserted before the invasion. Only a dozen kibbutzim in the Galilee and in *Gush Etzion* near Jerusalem sent mothers and children to safer places in the interior. In all other instances, the central leadership took measures to reinforce vulnerable posts and secure their capacity to survive. Unlike the Palestinians, the *Yishuv*'s main centres displayed a proven solidarity with its periphery.

The next waves of Palestinian escapees and deportees were the result of the Israeli Defence Force's (IDF) counter-offensives against the invading Arab armies. By July 1948, the Israelis' previous restraints about crossing the UN partition line disappeared. They also considered expulsion of the Palestinians who had summoned the invaders morally legitimate. These later refugees were sometimes literally deported across the lines. In certain cases, IDF units terrorized them to hasten their escape and a few isolated massacres expedited their flight.

When they ran away, the refugees were confident of their eventual repatriation at the end of hostilities. This term could mean a cease-fire, a truce, an armistice or a peace agreement. The return of escapees had been customary in the Middle East's wars throughout the ages. When the first truce began in June 1948, many tried to resettle in their hamlets or at least to gather the crops. However, they were fated for a surprise.

Their Jewish adversaries belonged to an alien European civilization whose historical experience and concepts of warfare were different. Three years after the end of the Second World War, it was inconceivable that Sudeten, Pomeranian or Silesian Germans who had been expelled by the Czechs, Poles and Russians would ever return to their former dwelling places. People still remembered the war between Turkey and Greece in the early 1920s that had ended with an exchange of populations between these two countries. Europe was full of White Russians who had left their homeland after the revolution and the subsequent civil war. The vast majority of the *Yishuv* did not think that the Palestinians should fare better.

In Europe, war refugees seldom returned to their former places of residence if the victorious enemy had occupied their homes. Usually, they resettled and began life anew elsewhere. This was particularly true after the Second World War. Hailing mostly from Europe, the Israelis applied this principle to the Middle East. They forcibly blocked the returning infiltrators during the truces and after the war. Concurrently, they seized their lands and their dwellings were used to accommodate evacuees from Jewish settlements that had been occupied by the invading Arab armies, such as *Gush Etzion* and the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. Later, new immigrants and demobilized soldiers settled in deserted Arab towns and on lands formerly cultivated by Arab villagers. Thus, the

presumably temporary flight turned into a permanent, almost eternal, problem of refugees.

Israel deemed the Arab League responsible for the refugees' fate and expected the Arab governments to resettle them in their countries as Germany had absorbed *Volksdeutsche* after the Second World War. Surrounding Arab culture — the refugees, the non-refugee Palestinians and the Arab states and people — refused to accept this alien code and have insisted on the refugees' "right of return" as a precondition for any reconciliation with Israel.

Late in April 1948, it seemed that without outside intervention to stop the *Haganah's* offensive, the Jews might take over the entire country. This implied the imminent demise of Arab Palestine and more escapees pouring into the adjacent states. The British evaded the Arab League's demands to rescue the Palestinians. They refused to prolong the mandate temporarily — pending finding a solution, or imposing a cease-fire. Last-minute efforts by the UN mission, foreign consuls and the International Red Cross to stop the fighting, at least in Jerusalem, failed. Thus, the Palestinians' débâcle in the civil war activated the regular armies' invasion and the Arab-Israeli war.

The Palestinians' collapse occurred when the British were still masters of Palestine. Britain had sufficient air and land forces in the country to stop the *Haganah* had the British authorities wanted to employ them. Determined to complete their withdrawal according to schedule, the British were reluctant to intervene. They also rejected Abdullah's plea to deploy the Arab Legion in Palestinian Arab hamlets and cautioned neighbouring states against any thoughts of premature invasion to hold back the Jewish offensive.

In April–May 1948, the British looked on while the *Haganah* crushed the Palestinians and the ALA. They passively witnessed the storming of Tiberias, Haifa and Safed, as well as many Arab villages. All the British did in the face of the Palestinians' mass flight was occasionally provide escapees with transport and escort them to the closest place of asylum. The only exception was Jaffa where the British intervened with vigour to stop the *IZL* assault. Contrary to the other three towns, Jaffa was within the boundaries of the partition plan's Arab state.

Britain's disposition did not stem from any particular sympathy with the Jewish cause. Its main objective was preparing the ground for Abdullah's seizure of the country's Arab areas after termination of the mandate. Already in February 1948, the British had reached the conclusion that annexing Arab Palestine to Transjordan was the only way to fill the vacuum and avoid chaos in the region at the end of the mandate. They decided to endorse the king's ambition although it violated the UN resolution to establish a Palestinian state. Yet, Abdullah's aspirations were

unpopular among the Palestinians and other Arab states; all the League's members except Iraq were likely to oppose their implementation. The Palestinians' defeat should have made them, and the Arab states as well, more amenable to annexation — in the absence of any practical alternative.

This was the only plot against the Palestinians if there was any at all. It was British, and not Israeli-Transjordanian. Between February and August 1948 the Jews and Abdullah had no political contacts except Golda Meyerson's (later, Meir) futile interview with the king in Amman on the eve of the invasion. Although the Arab Legion did not invade the territory of the Jewish state as the partition plan delineated it, the battles in Latrun and around Jerusalem were far from being faked or simulated. In Israeli eyes, the Legion was the principal enemy until July 1948.

This British-Transjordanian conspiracy against the Palestinians produced another intrigue to modify the original partition plan — at Israel's expense. Wishing to allay the Arab states' probable opposition to Transjordan's expansion, Britain sought to excise the Negev — Palestine's southern desert area — from the Jewish state. The prospect of preserving the Arab world's territorial continuity appeared sufficiently attractive to ease Egypt's opposition to merging Arab Palestine with Transjordan. A possible Saudi-Transjordanian condominium in the Negev might have compensated Ibn-Saud for his Hashemite foe's aggrandizement, by granting Saudi Arabia's monarch an outlet to the Mediterranean. Furthermore, it would force Abdullah's main dynastic opponent to cooperate with him — to the benefit of Britain's interests. For his part, Transjordan's king could show a spectacular achievement on behalf of the general Arab cause, while justifying his occupation of Arab Palestine and abstaining from war with the Jews. Israel, of course, was expected to pay the price for this scheme.

This plot, which began in the wake of the Transjordanian premier's visit to London in January-February 1948, became apparent after the invasion, through Count Bernadotte's mediation efforts. Although Abdullah was less interested in the Negev than in Palestine's populated Arab regions, he was not free to surrender the demand for this area and solely pursue his own interests. Israel's refusal to play its "part" notwithstanding, British diplomacy adhered to this scheme during the war and during subsequent Israeli-Arab negotiations. Several British diplomats in the Middle East persisted — fruitlessly cherishing and championing this idea until 1956.

Military intervention in Palestine had been a feasible contingency since the Arab League's conference at Bludan in June 1946. Nonetheless, the Arab governments had hesitated for a long time before deciding to employ their armies for that purpose. The Arab armies were young, untrained,

inexperienced and poorly equipped with pre- or early Second World War types of armaments. A singular exception was the small Arab Legion that was commanded, modelled and trained by British officers. None of these armies took any significant part in the Second World War. Their principal task was defending their respective regimes against domestic subversion. Dispatching them to Palestine was likely to expose the rulers to internal dangers. The expeditions' possible failure might have triggered further risk when embittered troops would return from the battlefields and possibly endanger political stability — precisely what happened after the war. In four years, all Arab regimes that had gone to war in 1948 collapsed, and their leaders were either murdered or exiled. Only in Iraq did the Regent and Nuri Sa'id manage to survive longer — until the revolution of 1958.

Despite the Arab League's resolutions at Bludan, the member states had done nothing to prepare for a military intervention in Palestine until late in September 1947. When Britain announced its determination to withdraw from Palestine, the League's conference at Alia in Lebanon nominated a "technical" committee to examine the military implications of the new situation. Its chairman, the Iraqi retired General Isma'il Safwat, estimated the balance of power between the Palestinians and the Jews, and rightly concluded that the former had no chance. Urging the quick mobilization of volunteers, arms and money to help the Palestinians, Safwat stressed that this aid would only enable the Palestinians to endure. Frustrating Jewish statehood was feasible solely through the participation of regular armies, and then only after making essential preparations.

Competition and animosity within the Arab League made creation of a military coalition a difficult task. Aware of their domestic necessities and military defects, the Arab premiers discarded Safwat's advice. As a substitute, they embarked on the hasty formation of the ALA as a common enterprise of the League as a whole.

In April 1948, the ALA's setbacks and the Palestinians' defeat thrust the issue again into the Arab leaders' laps. Under pressure of public opinion aroused by news from Palestine and incited by wild rumours spread by Palestinian refugees, they reluctantly decided to invade the country. Yet, their hesitation persisted. Egypt delayed its decision to join the invading coalition until 12 May, three days before the mandate expired. Abdullah restricted his role to occupying the Arab areas in Judea and Samaria; he also contemplated the rescue of the holy places in Jerusalem, although his British advisers tried to dissuade him from undertaking such a mission. Lebanon was active in forming the political coalition, but ultimately abstained from military participation, presumably owing to the still influential Christians' opposition, encouraged by Jewish bribes.

Miracles rarely, if ever, occur in wars. The stronger belligerent wins and the Israeli War of Independence was no exception. A detailed examination of the balance of power reveals that throughout most of the 1948 war, the Jews were superior in personnel, equipment and organization. The sole exception to this rule was the transition period between the two stages of the war: From the outset of the invasion up until the first truce in June 1948, the Arab armies enjoyed a considerable superiority over the IDF in the air, in artillery and light armour. Moreover, Jewish troops were exhausted after six months of combat and had already sustained heavy losses. By contrast, the invading formations were all fresh and complete. Nonetheless, even at this stage, the expeditionary forces and their local auxiliaries were quantitatively inferior to the scope of the *Yishuv's* mobilized personnel.

Throughout the rest of the war, the *Haganah* and the IDF were stronger in magnitude of military personnel although neither they nor their enemies fully realized this fact. At the beginning of hostilities, the Palestinians had nothing that might resemble the *Haganah*, with all its shortcomings, or would compete with it. The Palestinian's mobilized manpower never exceeded a few thousand, while during December 1947 alone the *Yishuv* enrolled 10,000 full-time recruits. The *Haganah* absorbed them and embarked on their training and organization in new and larger formations. Conscription according to age and marital status increased the number to 35,000 by mid-May 1948. Although the ALA and other foreigners simultaneously enhanced Arab power by a few more thousand fighters, the disparity grew in favour of the Jews.

Continuing enlistment of additional age groups, volunteers from abroad and new immigrants, brought the IDF peak for the duration of the war to 117,500 recruits. Owing to casualties and early discharges, however, there were never more than 90,000 on active duty at any one time. The Arab expeditionary forces at their utmost height did not reach half that number. To this number one should add a few thousand Palestinian auxiliaries. This statistic, however, is somewhat misleading, and the disparity was not as big as it appears. The Israeli figures included the IDF's entire logistic infrastructure, which lacked a parallel among the invaders whose supply depots and base installations remained at home. Nonetheless, there was still a considerable difference in the IDF's favour.

Jewish material superiority was also significant, though never admitted. Only one of the *Haganah's* experts on Arab affairs ("Arabists") claimed as early as 1 January 1948: "Our appreciation of the Arab armed forces is highly pretentious. They don't have as many weapons as we think." This correct statement held in question a deep-seated belief that was as old as the British reign in Palestine. A prevalent myth assumed that the Arabs enjoyed a considerable superiority of armaments over the

Haganah since 1918–19. Then, the Jews had surrendered their weapons to the British military administration while it was soon taken for granted that the Arabs had concealed theirs.

The disturbances during the 1920s did not lend credence to this persuasion. Except for sporadic raids by Bedouin on Jewish rural settlements, the Palestinians used solely cold steel. Firearms in private hands were scanty and obsolete. The existence of organized caches was highly doubtful. Only in 1930, did Palestinian leadership become conscious of the need to arm and start mobilizing funds for collective purchase of armaments. The fruits of this fund-raising campaign were insufficient to obtain substantial quantities.

In 1936–9, the Palestinians used the arms that they had accumulated since 1930, smuggling in additional consignments from adjacent countries. Italy — and later Germany — funded the purchases and occasionally granted the Palestinians modest shipments of small arms. The British army confiscated most of this arsenal during the 1936–9 rebellion and the Second World War. Nonetheless, the SHAY (the *Yishuv*'s intelligence service) reckoned that the Palestinians possessed in the vicinity of 50,000 pieces of light weaponry. This assessment was based on hearsay about thefts from military installations, private or semi-organized purchases and gun running from neighbouring countries.

During the civil war, the Palestinians' performance and the information on available arms in various places did not support the orthodox evaluation of the arsenal at their disposal. The shortage of arms and munitions was their principal source of anxiety, fuelled both by scarcity inside the country and difficulties of obtaining weapons abroad.

At the outset of the disturbances, the *Haganah* had a registered armoury of 10,000 small arms, but the actual figure was probably higher. It also had several hundred light and medium mortars and machine guns — weaponry almost totally absent from the Palestinians' arsenal. The *Haganah*'s stock of ammunition was also larger. The British blockade of the Palestinian coast prevented any substantial increase of these quantities until mid-May. Concurrently, the Arabs succeeded in smuggling into the country small arms that their emissaries had purchased in neighbouring countries. The ALA brought a certain number of support arms and a few artillery pieces and armoured vehicles. Although the gap narrowed, the picture did not materially change, and the *Haganah* continued to maintain its relative edge.

Most Arab armies depended on Britain for supply of arms, munitions, spare parts and other war matériel. Hence, they suffered heavily from the embargo that the UN Security Council imposed in May 1948. Only towards the end of the war did Arab governments find alternative sources of supply on the free European arms market and means of shipping

purchased armaments to Arab ports. By contrast, the Israelis — endowed with long-time experience in clandestine purchase of weapons — efficiently circumvented the embargo. Already in the autumn of 1947, emissaries hastened to Europe and America to buy aircraft, artillery pieces, armoured fighting vehicles, jeeps, trucks and other war matériel. In expectation of the end of the mandate, purchase missions amassed purchases in prearranged caches close to the eastern Mediterranean. Since April 1948, small deliveries arrived by air from Czechoslovakia and elsewhere but the large influx began only after the close of the British mandate. By July, the IDF had balanced the initial superiority of the Arab armies in heavy equipment, later regaining the lead in several types of weaponry.⁶

Yet, military superiority was insufficient to explain the final outcomes of the war. The quantitative advantages in personnel and equipment, as well as the qualitative gaps in training, organization, technical skills, battle experience, unity of purpose and unified command were not sufficient on their own to cause the Arabs' — and particularly the Palestinians' — unprecedented rout. On a man-to-man basis, neither the Palestinian urban garrison, nor the raiders in the countryside, nor the fighters in ambush along the roads were significantly inferior qualitatively to their Jewish opponents. Ultimately, the enormous Jewish advantage lay in the social, cultural, moral, organizational and technical infrastructure behind the warriors and successful transformation and application of these factors in the military sphere. The disparity between a modern, but still not pampered society, and a traditional-patriarchal community was a principal factor in deciding the outcome of the war.

The military triumph notwithstanding, the war of 1948 was the most costly that Israel has ever fought. Lack of preparedness, dilettantism and mistaken conceptions — not Arab might — were the main reasons for the high death toll. Until the war, the *Yishuv's* political and military leadership believed that the Great Powers should safeguard implementation of the partition solution adopted by the General Assembly against any outside onslaught. Ben-Gurion was the only exception to this rule. His colleagues, however, did not share Ben-Gurion's vision of the approaching war and consistently objected to his demands to prepare the *Yishuv* for a total war and modify or transform the *Haganah* accordingly. Before the outbreak of hostilities, this organization conceived its responsibility only in terms of overcoming the likelihood of local Palestinian opposition. It prepared for an enhanced repetition of the Palestinian revolt of 1936–9, ignoring potential dangers from across the border. Various setbacks that the *Haganah* sustained in the course of the early phase of the civil war demonstrated that it had not been properly prepared even for that contingency. Response and reorganization in the midst of battle

took time, and a high proportion of casualties paid the price of this lack of preparedness. Several myths surrounding the war have masked guilt-feelings about this lack of preparedness and were circulated to vindicate the enormous number of casualties.

All these reservations notwithstanding, the 1948 war was Israel's most significant and triumphal campaign against the Arabs. It was the only war in which Israel succeeded in translating a military victory into a political settlement. Despite all the difficulties, this settlement survived eighteen crucial years during which the State of Israel consolidated its position through the admission of millions of immigrants and development of the infrastructure necessary to absorb and integrate them into a cohesive and vibrant society.

The Outbreak and the Expansion of Hostilities

A day after the UN General Assembly adopted the 29 November 1947 resolution to partition Palestine into two states — one Jewish, one Arab — the test of forces between Jews and Arabs commenced. The *Yishuv* rejoiced while the Palestinians condemned the UN decision. The Arab Higher Committee (AHC) declared a three-day general strike in protest, and mobs began rioting.

A week after the vote, a British intelligence summary noted that the Jews had quickly sobered from their joyful reaction to the UN resolution. Within a few days, its author indicated, “they have realized that even a handful of unruly Arab hooligans could seriously disturb their life”. Eventually, the AHC and the Arab League would join in and escalate disorders. Worst of all, no one had the faintest idea how to implement partition.¹

At first, hostilities took the form for which both sides had prepared since the end of the Palestinians’ rebellion in 1936–9. The incidents were local and their scope limited. Soon, however, the intensity of the violence exceeded all previous expectations, and responses to check hostilities required a different approach.²

Reliance on the British to maintain law and order as they had done during the previous disturbances was likely to prove futile. Britain was bent on withdrawing from the country and this determination overshadowed all her other considerations. The mandate was scheduled to end on 15 May 1948, and government officials and police officers were reluctant to undertake risks for a lost cause. Despite attempts to put on a show of “business as usual”, mandate authorities were rapidly losing control. In the aftermath of a visit to the country and numerous conversations with government officials, a British diplomat from Amman described their frame of mind:

Few people seemed to believe that it would be possible to hold the position until the beginning of May . . . and all appeared convinced that it was most undesirable that we should attempt to do so.³

The British army's morale was higher and its performance better, but it was preoccupied primarily with securing the evacuation. Demonstrative "showing the flag" marches in Jewish and Arab centres ceased in mid-January 1948. The police withdrew from Tel Aviv, Nablus, Hebron and Jericho at the end of that month. In a large part of the country British jurisdiction waned long before the mandate expired.

Thus, Jewish and Palestinian antagonists were increasingly left alone to skirmish with one another. No clearly defined lines separated Jews from Palestinians. Except for the country's mountainous regions (Hebron, Samaria and central Galilee), which were almost exclusively Arab, both communities lived in mixed towns and separate clusters of rural settlements lacking territorial continuity.

Events on the day after the vote in New York did not indicate the dawn of a new era. The initial riots were scattered and of limited scope with an attack on Jewish buses near Lydda (now Ben-Gurion) Airport being the bloodiest incident. The perpetrators were well-known criminals who had committed several homicides during the previous summer. This ambush seemed to be "a robbery disguised as a reaction to the UN decision" or, possibly a revenge for an *LHI* action a few weeks earlier.⁴

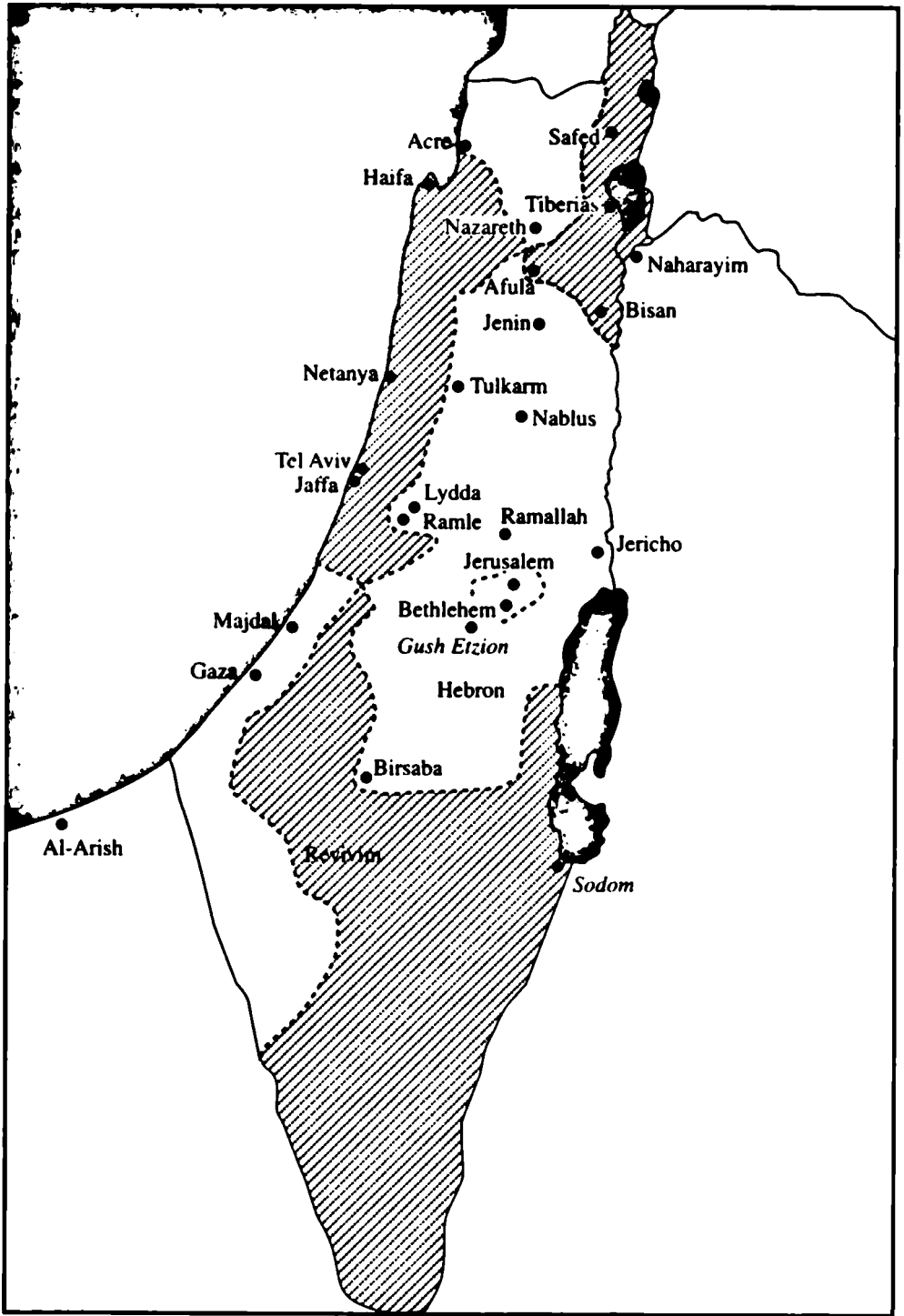
Three Jewish Agency officials in charge of Arab, intelligence and security affairs — Eliass Sasson, Reuven Shiloah and Yehezkel Saharov respectively — recommended instructing the public to avoid crowding, while resuming normal life. Concurrently, they alerted the *Haganah* to take precautions and be ready for any contingency.⁵

On 1 December 1947, the AHC announced a three-day general strike that began the next morning. Isolated clashes took place in Jerusalem, and Arabs moved from Jaffa's neighbourhoods bordering on Tel Aviv to the town's inner parts. Arab prisoners rampaged at Acre's central jail and a gang ambushed a bus on the Haifa–Nazareth road.⁶

The strike on 2 December gave Palestinians across the country an opportunity to demonstrate in protest against the UN resolution. In Jerusalem a violent mob burst forth, plundering the new commercial centre adjacent to Jaffa gate. Vague alerts concerning Arab designs for the future and stories about those pulling strings behind the scenes flowed in:

On Friday, a general revolt will be announced. Warriors and arms will arrive from Syria and Lebanon . . . Associations and notables across the country are waiting for orders.⁷

Exclusively-Arab towns were free to help their brethren in mixed cities. Gunmen from Lydda and Nablus took part in incidents in Jaffa and Haifa.



The UN Partition Plan

A few were killed in these early skirmishes. Nonetheless, the contribution of inhabitants from the hinterland to the riots in the cities was meagre. The countryside remained unexpectedly quiet. In several instances, villagers approached their Jewish neighbours offering peace and suggesting "good neighbour" pacts.⁸

Most peasants did not flock enthusiastically to the gangs that were organizing to harass Jewish settlements. Before making up their mind about participating in the riots, the villagers preferred to wait for the outcome of clashes in the cities. Samaria notables, who since 1936 had been on good terms with Fauzi al-Qawuqji and had traditionally opposed Hajj Amin al-Hussayni, wished to defer actions pending their hero's arrival.⁹

The *Yishuv* was still hopeful. Relying on "[British] military circles" and stressing the Palestinians' difficulties and demoralization, the SHAY estimated that "without the Arab states' assistance, the disorders would not gain ground".¹⁰ *Haganah* leadership held a more prudent view. On 19 December, Director of Operations Yigael Yadin briefed Ben-Gurion on the situation. The enemy, he said, was active in the mixed cities, along the roads and in the Negev. While citing first signs of strategic planning, Yadin noted the Palestinians' lack of a countrywide organization and a chain of command. On the tactical level, he wrote, they had made little progress compared with the previous rebellion in 1936-9, noting: "So far their performance has been ineffectual."

According to Yadin, the main innovation was a local guard system introduced by the *Najada*. He accredited the *Futuwa* for the militant onslaughts in the towns and ascribed road ambushes to veteran brigands. The urban mob and Negev Bedouin were also active. Yet, Yadin could not discern any co-ordination among the various Palestinian forces.¹¹

By the end of December 1947, violence had spread over most of the country. Its intensity, however, was disproportional. Contrary to previous forecasts that had foreseen the countryside as more dangerous and the peasants as the most-likely troublemakers, in actuality the cities were the spotlight of the campaign.¹² Owing to its proximity to the *Yishuv*'s vital centre in Tel Aviv, Jaffa was the principal cause for anxiety.

Nimr al-Hauari, the *Najada*'s chief and Jaffa's commander, had been in touch with the SHAY since 1946. Although he was not on the Jews' payroll, Hauari was a first-hand source on the Arabs' reactions to the UN decision. He attributed the riots' expansion to the general strike that had allowed the mob plenty of time and had given agitators an opportunity to incite the masses. He pledged to preserve peace in Jaffa if the Jews did not get edgy every time some unruly thugs shot at them, but Hauari stressed his inability to restrain the Hussaynis for long. The Mufti, he warned, would ultimately succeed in undermining the moderates'

position unless King Abdullah stood behind his Palestinian partisans.¹³

Hauari's assurance gave room for some hope that escalation might still be checked. Soon, however, rumours spread in Jaffa that Hauari was flirting with the Jews. Drawing the self-evident conclusion, Hauari departed for Egypt, where the Mufti subsequently did his best to frustrate his return.¹⁴ Hauari's successors in Jaffa cancelled the arrangements he had made. The municipal defence committee dissipated, and for a short period the Hussaynis controlled the city.¹⁵ Late in December, Jaffa quieted but adjoining Arab villages still harassed Jewish traffic on the road to Jerusalem. There was a prevailing feeling that the *Haganah* had missed an opportunity for a display of force in Jaffa:

The *Haganah* has lost prestige. It did not respond vigorously enough . . . Now, mercenaries have settled inside [the villages] and even native lads are shooting . . . Had we liquidated Abu Kabir, the disturbances would have been over long ago.¹⁶

On 4 January 1948, precisely when Jaffa appeared to calm down, the *LHI* planted a car bomb near *Najada's* headquarters at the former *Saraya* (Ottoman government) house. Arab casualties were 15 killed and 80 wounded — 20 of them seriously. The explosion heavily damaged all surrounding buildings. This was the first of many similar acts in the civil war perpetrated by both sides, and the blast generated panic. Although local politicians and *Najada's* chiefs survived, they were shocked and displayed impotence in face of ensuing mass-hysteria.¹⁷

Isolated skirmishes continued, and recurrent shooting incidents took place along the front line between Jaffa and neighbouring Jewish quarters. Late in January, a first ALA detachment comprised of 200 Iraqi and Bosnian troops showed up in Jaffa. Their arrival enhanced Arab morale and slightly improved management of the city's affairs.¹⁸ Willing to rely on the newcomers more than on their own people, Jaffa's citizens placed their safety in the foreigners' hands. The *SHAY* commented that although almost every man in Jaffa owned a firearm (a highly erroneous assumption), only a small fraction had taken to the field. Abd al-Ghani al-Karmi — a journalist and the Jewish Agency's agent in the city, estimated the total number of fighters in the city — natives and guests — at 700.¹⁹

In Haifa, disturbances developed along similar lines. This town had long been the stronghold of the Qassamites — the disciples of sheikh 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam who had been killed in 1935 after calling for rebellion against the British. In the Jews' view, this group was likely to play a key role in any future outburst — as it had done in the past. This assumption, however, proved incorrect. None of the remaining veterans were prominent among the city's Arab activists and the Qassamites as a group, were inactive.²⁰

At the beginning of hostilities, Haifa was relatively quiet and the *Haganah's* resolute stand deterred the Arab leadership, which had been caught unprepared.²¹ Having little contact with the AHC, local leaders strove to conclude a cease-fire accord with their Jewish neighbours. The pact was almost consummated and the negotiators devised arrangements for mutual liaison to secure its functioning.²² However, an IZL action near the refineries, the subsequent massacre of Jewish employees on the premises of the plant and the *Haganah's* retaliation against two adjacent villages on the following night, increased tension and undermined the agreement.²³

Frictions between Christian and Muslim Arabs, and between the national committee and radical groups that pretended to act upon the Mufti's orders, hindered a truce. In mid-January, the national committee once more explored the possibility of concluding a local cease-fire. Messengers on its behalf, as well as the Christian leader Bishop Hakim, met with the Jewish Agency's local representative in Haifa, Tuvia Arazi, and suggested a temporary truce. Arazi insisted on the expulsion of the foreign combatants from the town. At least, the national committee should inform the Jews in advance of any attack they were planning, demanded Arazi. Consequently, the Arabs dispatched a delegation to Egypt to obtain Hajj Amin's approval of the pact designed to stop violence in the city.²⁴

Reporting to Ben-Gurion on the situation in Haifa, Arazi conveyed the Arabs' despondent state of mind, their leaders' readiness for a truce and the delegation's errand to Cairo.²⁵ While the delegates were in Egypt, the ALA arrived in Samaria. The self-confidence of Haifa Arabs was bolstered and their readiness for a cease-fire waned. Upon their return, the delegates evaded their Jewish liaisons. Arab newspapers denied any contacts with the Jews, stating that the Mufti had approved all the mission's requests and that Haifa was loyal to the AHC. Arazi regarded this "curious, since before their journey they had often courted us".

Ultimately, a nocturnal meeting took place on 30 January between the national committee's chairman, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, and a Jewish liaison. Ibrahim took a firm stand, claiming that the Jews should come forward with peace proposals. Simultaneously, another Jewish liaison met with Hakim, who told him about the delegation's deliberations in Cairo. The Bishop emphasized the unfeasibility of a compromise between the Jews and the Mufti, and added: "Azzam [Pasha, the Arab League's General Secretary] thinks that a federation might be discussed." Finally, Hakim promised that Haifa's Arab leadership was capable of keeping the city quiet until the end of the mandate.

Both liaisons briefed Arazi on their talks, but he doubted the prospects of a cease-fire. In his view, the appearance of the ALA had changed the

situation.²⁶ The negotiations with Haifa's local Arab leaders ran aground. Only a group of radical Maronites, inspired by their chiefs in Lebanon, maintained contacts with the Jews and worked for a Christian-Jewish understanding.²⁷

Subsequently, tension in Haifa grew. Both sides introduced new tactics — such as planting bomb-devices in public places or car bombs deep inside the enemy's territory. In several instances, Arab Legion soldiers who were stationed in the city as part of the British garrison intervened in incidents. The death toll on both sides rose, and the situation rapidly deteriorated.²⁸

Now that they had been reinforced, the Arabs prepared to take the initiative in Haifa. The number of shooting incidents, bomb explosions and skirmishes with the Legion grew.²⁹ At the same time, the *Haganah* activated a pre-war scheme to assassinate radical Arab leaders. On 19 February, a team of *PALMAH* commando disguised as Arabs tracked the car of sheikh Nimr al-Khatib, the chief of Haifa's Muslim Brethren, on his way back from Beirut to Haifa. Assaulting the car south of Acre, they wounded the sheikh and his bodyguard. Al-Khatib thus ended his role in the war and in Palestinian politics.³⁰

Late in February and early in March the *Haganah* and the *LHI* planted car bombs in Haifa's downtown district, inflicting many Arab casualties. At the same time, the *Haganah* obstructed an attempt to smuggle a similar device into a Jewish neighbourhood. Each of these onslaughts precipitated prolonged exchanges of fire along the town's front line.³¹

By this time, a detachment of Syrian and Iraqi *ALA* troops arrived in Haifa. Initially, the foreigners' relations with the local population were tense, but their very appearance elevated Arab spirits. Furthermore, their contacts with the *ALA* in Samaria guaranteed a new phase of intensified combat in the city.³²

The *Haganah*, however, pre-empted the Arabs: On 17 March 1948, the *SHAY* found out about the impending arrival of a convoy from Lebanon carrying the ammunition of the *ALA* detachment in Haifa. Following this alert, an ambush was quickly set up near Nahariya but missed its target and only a second, hastily improvised, trap south of Acre succeeded in destroying the convoy. Amongst the twelve Arab casualties was Muhammad al-Khunaity, a former Legion officer who had retired to assume the post of Arab Haifa's military commander.³³

This loss had a crucial impact on Haifa's Arabs — particularly on the foreign soldiers who had lost their ammunition. Their confidence level dropped and internal disputes brought the town to the verge of anarchy. Rapid disintegration followed, eventually leading to the city's swift downfall a month later.

The most complex town was Jerusalem, where a British presence and

exercise of authority were tighter than elsewhere. Riots broke out in the city immediately following the UN resolution. They escalated during the general strike, culminating in the mob storming and looting the new commercial centre.

The majority of the population in Jerusalem was Jewish, but the Jews were a minority in the Old City. Fearing economic hardships and isolation, approximately 40 percent of the Jewish quarter's 3,500 residents moved after the outbreak of hostilities to Jewish neighbourhoods outside the walls. Soon "the quarter" came under practical siege and only British escorts could safeguard passage of sporadic convoys from the new city.³⁴

As early as December 1947, the SHAY had warned of Arab attempts to escalate the situation in Jerusalem by terrorist attacks such as planting car bombs or shooting into crowds from passing vehicles. For the time being, however, these warnings were pipe dreams rather than an actual capability and would only materialize a few months later. In the meantime, the Palestinians were satisfied with random firing at Jewish neighbourhoods and harassment of Jewish traffic moving through their areas.³⁵

Unlike Haifa, throughout December 1947 the *Haganah* in Jerusalem remained passive. The Palestinians appeared to gain the initiative, and Jews moved out of predominantly Arab areas and frontier zones. In an attempt to turn the tide, the *Haganah* raided a site presumed to be *Najada* headquarters in Qatamon and blew up the building. The High Commissioner, Sir Alan Cunningham, promptly reported 45 missing persons. Rescue teams later recovered dozens of bodies from the ruins, including many civilians and one foreign diplomat — the Spanish acting consul. This act shocked the Arabs and temporarily achieved its double purpose: scaring the Arabs on one hand and halting demoralization among the Jews on the other. Two days later, the growing panic among the Arabs was intensified when an *IZL* squad threw explosives into the crowd near Jaffa gate, killing 15 people. British soldiers killed three of the perpetrators as they retreated from the scene.³⁶

A tap on the telephone at the AHC office revealed the extent of fright in the Arab camp after these retaliatory acts. Their leadership was at a loss and the AHC local chief, Dr Hussayn Khalidi, grumbled: "The Arabs are frightened. They leave Jerusalem and the city must be rescued . . . This is the true picture."³⁷

At this lowest ebb, Palestinian leaders recovered and took measures to halt disintegration. An emergency committee dealt with security matters. It stationed guards in quarters that had been subject to Jewish acts of retaliation and encouraged attempts to re-inhabit houses that had previously been abandoned. Visiting vulnerable areas, its officials reassured residents and introduced an element of order into prevailing chaos by nominating

neighbourhood commanders and liaisons with the central administration. At the same time, however, age-old rivalries between the Hussayni and Nashashibi clans or between Muslims and Christians continued as usual — despite the emergency.³⁸

As in Haifa, in Jerusalem as well the fighting assumed a new dimension following the planting of three car bombs in the Jewish downtown district. The first bomb exploded near the editorial offices of *The Palestine Post*; the second on Ben Yehuda Street and the third in the courtyard of the Jewish Agency's building. The death toll was exceedingly high: 22 in the first explosion; 53 in the second and 13 in the third. Having been alerted in time, the *Haganah* frustrated several additional outrages in the same vein.

Doubtful of the Arabs' capability of executing operations of this magnitude and technical complexity, the Jews suspected British complicity in the *Palestine Post* explosion. Several subsequent incidents provoked tension between Jewish forces and British servicemen in Jerusalem. After policemen arrested four *Haganah* members and deliberately released them near the Damascus gate to be lynched by an Arab mob, the *Haganah's* district commander ordered his men to forcibly resist arrest. Apprehensive of this order's possible ramifications on the *Yishuv's* relations with British authorities, Ben-Gurion promptly directed him to rescind the order.³⁹

Tension in the city climaxed after the Ben Yehuda Street's outrage. The perpetrators were British defectors in Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni's service. Stories of British involvement promptly provoked a series of reprisals against British soldiers by the *IZL* and *LHI*. In five separate incidents on the same day, 22 February 1948, they killed 10 servicemen and seriously wounded eight.⁴⁰

Reluctant to open a second and unwarranted front against British security forces, the *Haganah* strongly prevailed upon the dissidents to cease their attacks immediately. Nonetheless, on 29 February *LHI* laid an ambush to a military train as a reprisal for the Ben Yehuda Street bombing. British soldiers retaliated against a *Haganah* position near Jaffa, confiscating the garrison's weapons, leaving the personnel unarmed at the site where subsequently Arabs attacked and killed 12 of them. Reporting on deteriorating relations between the *Yishuv* and the government, Cunningham defined the situation "as bad as at any time since the beginning of the mandate".⁴¹

Early in March, 300 ALA Iraqi troops arrived in Jerusalem bringing with them arms and other military equipment. They reinforced the local militia and bolstered public confidence. Complaining to Ben-Gurion about the inadequacy of his forces, *Haganah* district commander David Shealtiel voiced his determination to abstain from taking initiatives until

his Etzioni brigade was complete and fit.⁴² The Arabs were gaining the upper hand in the town and its environs. In the following weeks Jerusalem and the road linking it with the coastal plain became the focus of the campaign.

The Arab villages that had carried the main burden of the 1936–9 rebellion hesitated to join in the disturbances. Early in December 1947, agitators from the towns toured the villages, urging the *fallahin* to enlist in the war against the Jews. Generally speaking, agitation was ineffective and the villagers eluded the instigations. As strife spread across the country, however, Arab villagers were unable to remain passive bystanders in the conflict.

Although fighting in the countryside intensified in February 1948, it was carried out mainly by outside forces: the ALA, the *Jihad al-Mukadas* and criminal gangs that had clustered before the war or infiltrated from neighbouring countries. Sometimes the *fallahin* extended help to them when summoned by a *Faz'a* (a traditional custom of extending aid to a hamlet under attack), but they were unequipped and unwilling to do more.⁴³

Before the war, the *Haganah* had considered the Upper Galilee and Hula valley especially prone to attacks in the event of an outburst of hostilities; therefore, they reinforced it with a *PALMAH* battalion. Contrary to previous expectations, the region remained quiet during the general strike and in the aftermath — until a raid on the hamlet Hissas on 18 December 1947 ignited the area. The Arabs responded on 9 January 1948 by attacking kibbutz Kfar Szold on the Syrian border. This was the first violent infringement of Palestine borders in this war. Urging the British ambassador in Damascus to make the strongest protests before the Syrian government against this violation of the mandate's sovereignty, Cunningham demanded withdrawal of "these guerrillas" from the border zone.⁴⁴

This incursion was probably a diversion to cover the ALA Yarmuk regiment's simultaneous penetration of the central Galilee from Lebanon. Yarmuk's commander Adib Shishakli attempted to assault a Jewish settlement and on 20 January attacked kibbutz Yechi'am in the western Galilee. In the wake of the assault's failure, the Yarmuk regiment withdrew to Arab villages in the central Galilee, although occasional encounters between Shishakli's troops and *Haganah* forces continued.

Mount Hebron to the south of Jerusalem was another tract of Palestine's countryside that became the focus of fighting. An isolated block of five Jewish settlements (*Gush Etzion*) in this region, which was out in the wilds, constituted a likely target for attacks. The first assault took place on 14 January 1948. This attack should have glorified the reputation of the Palestinian chief, Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni, and attracted

recruits to his base at the nearby village Tzurif. Hundreds of *fallahin* joined in the onslaught following a *Faz'a* throughout the region. The foray, however, ended in a fiasco.

The British ascribed the attackers' withdrawal neither to the successful Jewish defence nor to their own troops' arrival on the scene, but to an order from the Mufti to the AHC that their listeners probably intercepted. Despite the Arab press' claims of a resounding triumph, this "ignominious failure" in the words of the High Commissioner sparked criticism in Hebron and the vicinity. Accusations of misconduct in face of the enemy were rampant. The AHC was charged with neglecting the wounded and its officials criticized for poor organization and the shortage of arms.⁴⁵

Warnings that a renewed attack was imminent did not materialize. The Arabs' compensation was the complete annihilation of a 35-strong *Haganah* detachment that was caught in hostile territory as they rushed on foot to reinforce *Gush Etzion* in expectation of further assaults. Contented with this achievement, al-Hussayni gave up the idea of storming the settlements.⁴⁶

Assaults on Jewish transport passing through Arab towns and villages were the most painful and effective Arab tactic. The first attacks were spontaneous and rudimentary: The *Shibab* (youth) blocked the road and stoned cars. Occasionally, single bullets were fired from guns or rifles.⁴⁷ Consequently, Jewish vehicles on their way to remote settlements and using insecure routes gathered in convoys. The first organized attack on a convoy took place on 10 December between Bethlehem and *Gush Etzion*. Ten passengers and escorts were killed.⁴⁸

On 7 December 1947 one of the *Haganah*'s most senior commanders, Yehoshua Globberman, was killed by an Arab ambush on his way back from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. Grouping vehicles into convoys did not deter the Arabs from further attacks along this traffic artery. In most instances, the ambushing gangs operated from Arab villages along the route.⁴⁹

According to British intelligence estimates, Arab ambushes of Jewish traffic sought to destroy the *Yishuv*'s economy, while avoiding a major clash in which the Jews' superiority would be decisive.⁵⁰ Sporadic forays on isolated settlements continued, but by mid-January 1948 the main Palestinian effort was clearly directed against Jewish transportation. To persist in these raids, al-Hussayni met with Hassan Salameh, a veteran gang leader who was roaming about in the area between Jaffa and Lydda, in order to co-ordinate harassment of traffic in their respective sectors.

The first time masses of *fallahin* joined in the war on the roads was during the battle at Qastel, west of Jerusalem. On 25 January 1948 al-Hussayni's Tzurif-based gang assailed a Jewish convoy on the steep upgrade to Qastel, and deployed roadblocks to obstruct arrival of reinforcements or possible British intervention. The plan went badly and Abd

al-Qadir summoned a *Faz'a* to rescue his men. Several villages north-west of Jerusalem responded to his call. A few villages, fearing retaliation by the *Haganah*, preferred to hide their involvement and others pretended to come only to loot, not to confront the Jews. Several *mukhtars* apologized to their Jewish neighbours claiming the *Faz'a* had been launched to defend the adjacent village Bet Suriq, not to attack the convoy.⁵¹

Following intensification of encroachments on Jewish transportation, several Arab *effendis* approached the Jewish Agency and offered their services in preserving peace along the roads. In return, they asked for arms and funds to raise and maintain private gangs. They also expected, of course, a financial reward for themselves. This was reminiscent of the "peace gangs" that Fakhri Abd al-Hadi and Fakhri Nashashibi had organized during the previous disturbances in 1936–9. However, the "peace gang" concept was an anachronism. The campaign for control of the roads took an increasing military character, and was transformed into the focus of the Arabs' war effort.⁵²

The Negev — the vast desert area in southern Palestine — was a unique sector during the early stage of the disturbances. Rapid expansion of hostilities into this district surprised the *Haganah*. Little was known of the region and of its Bedouin and other residents. Contacts with the Palestinian population were mainly in the hands of the Jewish National Fund and limited to land purchase. These transactions were apparently the principal reason for the Bedouin belligerence; faced by new circumstances, they were anxious to clear themselves in the eyes of their fellow Arabs.

In November 1947, Bedouin sheikhs and other dignitaries made frequent pilgrimages to the Mufti in Egypt. The townsmen of Gaza, Birsaba and Majdal ventured to establish national committees and organize the surrounding tribes, but did not take military precautions similar to those reported from other regions. Indications to the contrary, such as the disintegration of the anti-Jewish boycott and continuing land sales to Jews, suggested that the region might stay calm.⁵³

It was not long, however, until tranquillity waned. After the vote at the UN, conditions in the Negev escalated almost overnight, and clashes between Jewish settlers and Bedouin became a day-to-day affair. A few incidents might have emanated from the new settlers' ignorance of the region — its residents and their customs.⁵⁴ These remote Jewish hamlets founded in October 1946, were "green" — their residents young, and some total newcomers to the country. Isolated from the *Yishuv's* centre, scattered over a large area and still lacking a sound economic basis, British authorities demanded their evacuation, claiming that the army might not be able to reach them in time, should the settlers' lives be in jeopardy.

Sensing that the Negev was in danger, the *Haganah* supreme command

dispatched a large reinforcement to the region in terms of those days: a full *PALMAH* battalion. Since the Negev's problems were extensive — and not only military — the Jewish Agency established a special committee to care for the region and address its unique needs. The Agency's Arab section attempted to sponsor a local "peace gang" to balance hostile Bedouin elements. In addition, Sasson asked King Abdullah to restrain the Bedouin and Gaza notables — groups long considered the king's partisans. Sasson judged that he could still pacify the region by paying Abdullah a suitable bribe. He suggested earmarking an appropriate sum for this purpose out of the special budget allocated for strengthening the area.⁵⁵ The time of "peace gangs" and protection bribes, however, had passed.

Contrary to anxiety in Tel Aviv regarding the Negev's fate, Jewish settlers on the spot were calm and confident. Their self-confidence proved justified. By mid-January, the area had quieted down. The *PALMAH*'s arrival and its frequent patrolling of the vast territory discouraged the Bedouin. The liaison with the British army also appeared effective. Convoys received military escorts and RAF aircraft patrolled the area.⁵⁶ After the early outbursts of December 1947, the Negev remained quiet from January until April 1948. The sheikhs were preoccupied with rivalry with one another for regional hegemony, the youth were not belligerent and the local *Najada* branches were inactive.⁵⁷

In February 1948, a few "foreigners" appeared in Gaza. They came to prepare the ground for the arrival of the ALA's Egyptian contingent and train a local militia. The town's National Guard numbered a mere 200 men, relying on *Faz'a* should necessity arise. One of the Egyptian officers put his men's competence to the test by ambushing a Jewish patrol. The assault ended in a fiasco, and the disappointed Egyptian informed his superiors that "he would never go into action with the untrained *fallahin* of Gaza because they were cowards and lacked any military skills".⁵⁸

More volunteers from Egypt as well as Transjordanian tribesmen arrived in Gaza and Birsaba to reinforce their National Guard. The Muslim Brethren established a training centre in Sheikh Zuwaid, between Rafah and al-Arish, where Egyptian volunteers and Palestinian youth trained. Concurrently, local hostilities continued on a small scale. The incidents included raids on Jewish transport by Bedouin gangs; mining of roads used by *PALMAH*'s patrols and sporadic sniping at settlements, but no attempts to storm them.⁵⁹

The arrival of Egyptian volunteers encouraged local gangs to escalate their actions, but until the Egyptian army's invasion, the Negev was less militant than other regions. Its Arab population lacked central command and the national committees of Gaza and Birsaba disintegrated. Preparations for war lagged behind, defence plans were non-existent, the

economy was not organized on an emergency footing and even the arms market remained in private hands, as it had been at the outset of hostilities.

Economic warfare was another unique feature of the civil war. An Arab blockade of the *Yishuv* preceded the war of 1948. First but fruitless endeavours to organize an anti-Jewish boycott in Palestine had followed the riots of 1929. A more comprehensive effort in Palestine and in neighbouring countries accompanied the Arab rebellion in 1936–9. In December 1945, the Arab League declared a boycott of the *Yishuv*'s products to demonstrate its support of the Palestinians' struggle. This boycott was launched on 1 January 1946 and has persisted ever since, to varying degrees.⁶⁰

The outbreak of hostilities intensified the Arab blockade. Even before the Arab states' military intervention in the war, Iraq demanded a complete cut-off of Iraqi petrol supplies to the Haifa refineries. Against the British argument that this would bring Palestine's industry to a standstill and inflict damage on Palestinians as well as Jews, Prime Minister Salih Jaber retorted that he did not care. Public opinion, he argued, would not tolerate a situation in which Iraqi petrol enables Jews to kill Arabs.⁶¹

In Palestine, efforts to enforce the boycott multiplied. The national committees stationed pickets at villages in proximity to Jewish settlements to ensure that they had severed their relations with their neighbours. Gang leaders pursued and arrested Arabs for having commercial relations with Jews. Twenty suspects were detained in Hassan Salameh's prison near Ramle for having traded with Jews. Members of respected clans such as Tuqan or Dujani were not exempted.⁶²

Maintenance of economic activity was an important precondition for the *Yishuv*'s vitality and ability to meet the challenges of war. As long as the British were in the country and territorial gains were impractical, striking at economic objectives was the principal vehicle for inflicting damages on Palestinians and deflating their fighting spirit. Raiding economic targets was a cornerstone of the *Haganah*'s strategy.⁶³

Relating to the economic side of the conflict, Ben-Gurion emphasized the Arabs' growing vulnerability in comparison with the previous Arab rebellion: "Jaffa and Arab Haifa are at our mercy. We could easily starve them. The Arabs' motorized transport that has become a significant factor of their economic life, is also to a large extent at our mercy."⁶⁴

For two months, the political leadership hesitated before embarking in earnest on this form of warfare. From the beginning of the disturbances, the *Haganah* wanted to exploit the dependence of Arab industry on raw materials and other materials supplied by the Jewish economy. Imposing a ban on these supplies, and enforcing it through the chambers of commerce and other merchants' organizations might seriously hamper the

Arab economy.⁶⁵ Yadin advocated striking forcefully at Arab economic targets, claiming that such actions would be effective in restoring the situation. *PALMAH* commander Yigal Alon agreed: "By economic reprisals we can hurt them more than they can harm us."⁶⁶

In a sense, economic warfare could boomerang. It might hinder not only the Arabs but also interests of private Jewish enterprises and powerful pressure groups. Injured parties might ignore its edicts, while the *Yishuv's* voluntary society was still incapable of enforcing obedience upon recalcitrant individuals — particularly if they had the right political connections. Thus, for example, the most effective avenue for economic warfare was to besiege Jaffa — blocking Arab citrus exports. However, such a step might provoke retributions against Jewish citrus growers and this influential group in the economy vehemently opposed such a measure.

Another cause for hesitation was uncertainty as to the ramifications of economic warfare on the security situation. Material losses might strengthen the clout of Palestinian moderates and inspire the cessation of hostilities, but they could also have the opposite effect: "Expansion of the economic depression may increase the robberies. If gang leaders will pay for participating in actions, they may bolster motivation to take part in them."⁶⁷

Conflicting arguments and interests delayed political decisions. Meanwhile, the *Haganah* established an improvised "Committee for Economic Warfare" in Tel Aviv to collect data on Jewish property in Arab hands and vice versa. It also established a warehouse for confiscated Arab merchandise. Professional bodies such as the chamber of commerce and shipping agents offered their assistance. Soon, however, the obstacles became evident.⁶⁸

Attempts to enforce rules of economic warfare occasionally provoked violent incidents among Jews. Consequently, the Jewish national institutions established a new committee under David Horowitz to co-ordinate vehicles of economic warfare and take possession of Arab abandoned property.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, it was only with intensification of the war in April 1948 that economic warfare became comprehensive, assuming a significant role in the framework of the *Yishuv's* overall war effort.

During the first four months of the war, the three large and mixed cities (considering Tel Aviv and Jaffa as one urban front), the frontier settlements, the roads throughout the country and the Negev were the focal points of civil war. Jerusalem combined all these characteristics: It was simultaneously mixed, isolated and dependent on a single road that linked the city to the coastal plain. Soon, the campaign turned to focus on the fate of the city and on the road leading to it from Tel Aviv.

The Palestinians' Organization for War

A few weeks went by before the *Yishuv* grasped that the disturbances were a war, not just a wave of passing turmoil and agitation. Despite forewarnings of the Arabs' probable reaction should the UN ignore their demands, and AHC preparations for riots, the Jewish leadership was still uncertain that the ultimate test was inevitable. The only exception to this rule was David Ben-Gurion.

The varying and often conflicting estimates of Jewish experts on Arab affairs echoed the Palestinians' own confusion. Since 1939, Palestinian society had not faced a similar venture. In the aftermath of their fiasco in challenging the British army a decade earlier, the Palestinians in 1947 lacked an organizational, political and military infrastructure to confront the Jews. The paramilitary organizations *Najada* and *Futuwa* established in 1945 were still in their infancy. Apart from encouraging the committees for defending *Filastin* in the Arab countries, the AHC did not make any advanced provisions for the day after the UN decision.¹

Their weakness and lack of preparedness notwithstanding, Palestinians clung to their radical and intransigent positions, adopting an extremely pugnacious rhetoric inside the country and abroad.² They expected volunteers from Syria, Lebanon and other Arab countries to rally to their cause and mask their own shortcomings in preparation. Contrary to their expectations, two months elapsed before the Arab countries' assistance became effective. In the meanwhile, the Palestinians had to rely on their own inadequate resources and forces.

In Jewish eyes, the Palestinians' reaction indicated a blend of defeatism and rebelliousness. The Arab section of the Jewish Agency pinned the first violent onslaughts on mercenary thugs whom the Mufti's agents had secretly trained and agitated. At the same time, the official Palestinian leadership endeavoured to take over the initiative

from the hands of the mob.³ Aware of the Palestinians' unpreparedness for war, the AHC disapproved of serious outbreaks of violence.⁴ Nonetheless, the Jewish Agency openly accused it of inciting the riots. By tapping the telephone at the AHC's office in Jerusalem, the *SHAY* obtained proof of Palestinian leaders' involvement in the disturbances. This evidence attested to trips by AHC members to Egypt and the national committees' frequent appeals to the Mufti in Cairo to send men, money and firearms. The AHC office in Jerusalem allocated arms that arrived from Transjordan. Various towns requested munitions and reinforcements. Centralized organization of the anti-Jewish boycott and the Arab press' continuous inflammatory rhetoric also testified to the AHC's complicity.⁵

Undoubtedly, the Hussaynis dominated the Arab public. Their traditional opponents — the Nashashibi clan, Samaria's dignitaries and several mayors — remained silent. Nonetheless, the Opposition was influential in towns such as Jaffa and Haifa and was still capable of consolidating its own power. A statement condemning domestic terrorism seemed to foster this hope.⁶

The Jewish experts on Arab affairs waited for domestic feuds in the manner of 1936–9 to break out among the Palestinians and continued to argue over the status and relative strength of the Opposition. Some believed that the Mufti's opponents were stronger than a decade ago but had no incentive to act. Meanwhile, the Opposition was unifying its ranks in anticipation of the struggle for hegemony over the future Palestinian state. Others maintained that the Opposition would do nothing on its own initiative or single-handedly. At most — and depending on Abdullah's support — it might defend itself against violent assaults by the Mufti's partisans. Only if the Arabs' plight mounted, the Mufti's opponents might denounce his way and suggest an alternative.

Referring to reinforcements from Nablus (a traditional Opposition stronghold) that had arrived in Jaffa and Haifa, Sasson questioned the Opposition's "non-hostile" image. Danin retorted that this proved nothing, since the assistance rendered had been immaterial: "It was a pretence, not a display of power."⁷ Admitting that Opposition leaders were relatively moderate, the *SHAY* nevertheless expected them to join in the riots, otherwise their position might become untenable.⁸

The British ascribed assaults to the feeble authority of Arab leadership. At first, the AHC appeared effective in repressing any dissent. Yet, lacking the capability to exercise continuous and systematic control, its monopoly of the Arab public was short lived. At the beginning of January 1948, Cunningham commented:

[The AHC] is anxious to curb Arab outbreaks but probably not to stop them entirely and is known to be worried at its lack of control and inability, due

to the absence of administrative machinery, to deal with the many matters with which it is importuned by the Arab public. It seems likely that if the Arabs are left to themselves authority will . . . pass over to guerrilla leaders.⁹

Eventually, Cunningham's forecast proved correct, but before the arrival of the guerrilla leaders the riots hastened the emergence of local national committees in Arab and mixed cities. This process had started a few months prior to the war. On 27 November, the AHC published regulations for their operation, and a week following the UN resolution such committees were established in all towns — except Jerusalem. These committees arose on a basis of local coalitions embracing all social circles. Nevertheless, the Arab section of the Jewish Agency doubted the strength of this solidarity, choosing a "wait-and-see" attitude to see how such unions would stand up and function in practice.¹⁰

In each town, the national committee represented local influential groups that did not necessarily belong to Hajj Amin's camp. An activist of the *Istiqlal* (Pan-Arab) party — Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim — headed the committee in Haifa. His colleagues included members of the Christian communities, the Muslim Brethren and even the communists. Only four out of fourteen were Hussaynis.¹¹ Several committees strove to avoid any dependence on the AHC, seeking direct links to neighbouring Arab countries where they hoped to obtain reinforcements, arms and munitions.¹² Cunningham praised the committees for exercising their influence to prevent clashes between Arabs and Britons. Yet he admitted with regret their inability — and sometimes unwillingness — to suppress attacks upon Jews.¹³

Endeavouring to introduce order into the state of turmoil, national committees attempted to look after their towns' urgent needs: evacuating frontier zones, securing the supply of essential products; and handling transportation problems. The *Haganah's* retaliations forced them to pay increasing attention to defensive measures in their respective localities.¹⁴

In Haifa, for example, the national committee supervised distribution of weapons, organized guard posts and tried in vain to calm the frightened population and bring snowballing wholesale flight from the city into check.¹⁵ Sub-committees dealt with public security, health services, supplies, employment and finances. However, in Haifa — as in Jaffa — radical Muslim leaders undermined the national committee's position.¹⁶

Behind the scenes, the driving forces among the Arabs of Haifa were sheikh Nimr al-Khatib's Muslim Brethren and ex-soldiers in the British army. They were active in organizing defence, recruiting a local militia and obtaining arms.¹⁷ The committee for defending *Filastin* in Damascus dispatched Iraqi volunteers that turned up in the city in late December

1947. Each of these groups pursued its own independent course of action, defying Hajj Ibrahim's authority.¹⁸

Before the war, the AHC central machinery consisted of six departments. In the aftermath of the UN resolution, only the treasury continued to function in the same manner. The department for "national organization" responsible for the *Najada* and *Futuwa*, the economic department and the department for prisoners and injured persons merged into a united "emergency committee". This new body dealt with various pressing matters: issuing identity documents, regulating commerce, gathering intelligence, collecting dues, organizing medical services and purchasing arms. Its authority, however, did not extend beyond Jerusalem and even there was incomplete. In practice, this body was a substitute for a national committee. Apart from the duties carried out by the emergency committee, the AHC opened an information bureau that responded to current events — guiding domestic propaganda and briefing foreign diplomats and journalists.¹⁹

Other Palestinian institutions had been paralyzed by the war. The National Fund ceased to raise money for the rescue of lands — that is, prevent them from falling into Jewish hands through sale transactions. Musa Alami's Arab Office — established to promote the Palestinian case abroad — functioned on an irregular basis, and the chamber of commerce was dormant. Although they still controlled the AHC, the Hussaynis vanished as a party. The Muslim Brethren of Jerusalem were inactive and their offices used to house a regional militia headquarters. The *Najada* was the nucleus of the National Guard, but seemed to lose its control over the masses to new, still anonymous, elements.²⁰

Seeking to organize a police force to maintain law and order in Arab cities, the AHC's deputy in Jerusalem, Hussayn Khalidi, negotiated with the Chief Secretary the creation of an Arab municipal police. In late January 1948, the High Commissioner sanctioned the formation of police forces in eighteen purely-Arab towns and large villages. Recruitment for the new corps started immediately.²¹

A top priority was improvising a health system to replace disintegrating mandatory governmental services. The emergency committee provided the villages with first-aid facilities and set up a few hospitals in the cities. Assisted by colleagues in neighbouring countries, the Arab doctors' association and the Red Crescent undertook the project. In the face of a growing number of casualties, they requested that Arab states swiftly dispatch urgently-needed medical staff.²²

Delays in extension of aid from the Arab states undermined the AHC stature in the country. Its members on-site put pressure on Hajj Amin to hasten arrival of assistance; despatch his associates who had quit the country *back* to Palestine to share the burden; and work out a clear func-

tional division among all activist factions.²³ Competing for honours and status, the principal Palestinian activists barely coped with ever-mounting problems. The national committees' telephone conversations with the Mufti and his aides exposed internal divisions and sundry predicaments they faced in carrying the burden.²⁴

By mid-January, Jaffa's short-lived national committee dissipated and the municipality assumed its role. Yet, Mayor Yussuf Haikal was powerless to confront his rivals and unable to establish his authority. A delegation of notables departed for Egypt to solicit help from the Mufti. Hajj Amin promised them volunteers, arms and money.²⁵ However, before delivering the aid, the Mufti sent an emissary to investigate the situation in the city. The envoy uncovered inefficiency in the town's administration, reported on the quarrels among its notables and recommended the prompt removal of the Hussaynis' chief leader Rafiq al-Tmimi, from the city.²⁶

The bottom line underscored the Palestinians' failure to formulate a concerted leadership and co-ordinate their efforts. A principal weakness was the Mufti's predilection to conduct the war from safe asylums abroad, in the manner of 1938–9, while an inter-communal war against the Jews was fundamentally different from an anti-colonialist uprising. Unawareness of the present conflict's distinct character was to have grave ramifications for the Palestinians. The personal example set by most AHC members was followed by other dignitaries: By the end of April 1948, the Palestinian elite scattered to Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan. Several heads of national committees had sent their wives and children abroad promptly after the outburst of riots, only wishing to join them as soon as possible.²⁷

While their colleagues in Cairo were broaching the establishment of national institutions, Palestinian leadership in the country itself was on the verge of collapse. Complaining to the Mufti on conditions in Jerusalem, Khalidi warned that the AHC might lose control:

The hospitals are full. There are no shrouds . . . Anarchy prevails in the town. The army disarms the Arabs. There are no supplies in the Old City. We may be unable to handle the situation . . . I cannot predict for you what may happen.

Khalidi and his colleagues in Bethlehem, Jaffa and Haifa complained of the scarcity of weapons, the disintegration of the guard system, indifference among leaders and the growing number of casualties. Khalidi anticipated a general desertion if absent AHC members would not appear immediately on the scene to share the burden.²⁸

Chairman Jimal Hussayni and most AHC members continued to keep their distance from Palestine where problems were thorny and laurels

were rare. Distanced in Cairo, Beirut and Damascus, they appeared ignorant of the hardships at home and largely detached from Palestine realities. Deliberations focused primarily on whether to launch a terrorist campaign or create a regular military force to invade Palestine upon the end of the Mandate. Hajj Amin and his close entourage concealed from the leaders of the Arab states distressing reports on the arduous state of the Palestinians. Concurrently, they sent words of encouragement to Khalidi, promising to extend him aid.²⁹

Due to incompetence of their leaders, the Palestinians failed to build a centralized capability for directing, co-ordinating and supervising their civil and military activities. Furthermore, the AHC and the national committees failed to extend their authority to control individuals and groups acting on their own and recognizing no central authority. Jerusalem was the only exception. Here, centralized authority was tighter and the Palestinians succeeded in creating a continuous area under their jurisdiction, with the Old City as its nucleus.³⁰

However, in February 1948 the Palestinians were forced to revamp their organizational framework in Jerusalem. Criticism of the emergency committee's performance spread. Supplies were becoming short, corruption was rampant and residents avoided paying taxes imposed by the AHC to support community needs and the staff. In face of increasing financial difficulties, the AHC was forced to reduce its staff.³¹ Realizing the impossibility of exercising country-wide domination from besieged Jerusalem, the emergency committee confined itself to local military matters. A newly created Arab municipality dealt with the Arab quarters' financial and civil affairs.³²

An inconsistent system of military command as well as rivalry between self-appointed chieftains and civilian activists added to the disarray among Palestinians. In the absence of an agreed hierarchy or clear division of roles and functions, overlapping and contradictions in authority were rampant and separate and divided loyalties widespread. The confusion and disunity increased after Hajj Amin designated his cousin Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni as Commander-in-Chief in Palestine. When the newly appointed commander arrived in Jerusalem in December 1947, Khalidi and his associates gave him a cool welcome. Al-Hussayni encamped at Tzurif, a village south-west of Jerusalem, and called upon the young *Fallahin* in the Hebron district to join him — promising recruits a salary and subsistence. Upon completing one month's training, the recruits were deemed qualified for operational duty harassing Jewish settlements and transportation.³³

Approximately one hundred combatants who had trained in Syria before the war formed Abd al-Qadir's permanent cadre of personnel. A few hundred local recruits — young villagers and veterans of the British

army — joined them.³⁴ Together, the two groups formed the skeleton for the would-be Palestinian army, *Jihad al-Mukadas*. After their commander's death in April, members of the force remained loyal to the Mufti, prevailing throughout the war as a fighting unit. From their base at Tzurif, the *Mujahidin* expanded to Lydda, Ramle and other localities. The headquarters and training centre of the force moved to Bir Zeit near Ramallah. Although their numbers swelled in the following months, numerical improvements barely changed the basic status or the fundamental weaknesses in the Palestinians' camp. They were too few and too weak to have an impact on the balance of power in the country.

The British expected Abd al-Qadir to terrorize the Mufti's Palestinian opponents in the manner the Hussaynis had adopted in 1936–9, as much as to fight the Jews. Clearly, Abd al-Qadir gave preference to the Mufti's supporters in distribution of arms. He rejected the authority of the AHC office in Jerusalem and the national committees, under the pretext that "being comprised of civilians, they have no authority in military matters".³⁵ Tense relations only worsened when Abd al-Qadir competed with the AHC for funds coming from the Arab states, gradually commanding the bulk of the money at the AHC's expense.³⁶

Abd al-Qadir and the AHC had little control over the actions of Palestinians in the countryside, particularly in Samaria. Al-Hussayni received a lukewarm reception in Tulkarm where local dignitaries repudiated his call to join in the fighting. Their reservations were sufficient to prevent the villages' youth from rallying to his banner.³⁷

Questions of hierarchy and jurisdiction became all the more complicated following the appearance of the ALA on the scene. The army of the Arab League was not subordinate to any Palestinian authority in or outside the country. While the Mufti's Palestinian opponents accepted the ALA commanders' supremacy, Hajj Amin's partisans challenged the ALA's power — openly or covertly, depending on place and time. The departure of the Palestinian elite (and subsequent disintegration of indigenous leadership) against a backdrop of fragmentation and growing chaos left a leadership vacuum that only the ALA could fill pending its own disintegration. Early in March, the High Commissioner reported:

In Samaria, and to a lesser extent in Galilee, Jerusalem and Jaffa, a form of military government is steadily emerging . . . The local Arab civil authorities . . . continue to function, but play the diminished role inevitably assigned to civil bodies under a military regime.³⁸

By the end of March 1948, the last members of the AHC left the country. On the threshold of the most crucial period of the war, the Palestinians remained without any effective leadership — central or local. Gang leaders and ALA officers became the sole regime in their respective local-

ities. Their hands were increasingly filled with administrative problems that they had neither the resources nor the competence to tackle. Calls for appointing governors alongside the military commanders to relieve them of the need to handle civil affairs engendered no response.³⁹

Apart from endeavours to organize their society on an emergency footing, the Palestinians also sought to build up an army. At the outset of the civil war, they had nothing that could even remotely resemble the *Haganah*, and had to start from scratch.

Initially, reservoirs of personnel were available and the main problem appeared to be obtaining armaments and financing. In the first skirmishes, the Palestinian irregulars employed mainly rifles, sub-machine guns and hand grenades. Yadin also mentioned the discovery of 2" mortars in a cache and the use of Bren and *Schpandau* machine guns in certain incidents. He did not know who was responsible for distribution of arms, and speculated that "a large part of the stock is still in the hands of dealers who sell it on the free market".⁴⁰

For the Palestinians (also for the Jews), the British army was a traditional source for obtaining arms. Under prevailing circumstances, the British evacuation offered plentiful opportunities to bribe service personnel into selling weapons. Organized thefts from barracks yielded larger quantities. The biggest operation of this kind was the looting of the ordnance at the training centre for Arab auxiliary policemen in Ramle on 14 December 1947. The raiders' booty included 400 rifles and sub-machine guns as well as a large quantity of ammunition.⁴¹ In the following weeks, train robberies increased and the efficiency in employing such a tactic improved. Cunningham suspected that their aim was "acquisition of funds for maintaining the gangs and the National Guard".⁴²

The quantity of weapons stolen or otherwise obtained from the British army and the police was marginal in terms of raising an army and waging a war. The Palestinians purchased the bulk of their arsenal abroad and secretly smuggled the weaponry into the country. As early as the summer of 1946, the committees for defending *Filastin* had acquired small arms from salvage depots in the Western Desert. They stockpiled them in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, and occasionally smuggled compact shipments into Palestine. This traffic intensified in 1948, employing a variety of methods.

Throughout the war, the AHC procured about 6,000 pieces of small arms; 500 machine guns; 124 AT projectors; 23 mortars; 66 AA and AT guns of various calibres and seven million rounds of ammunition. In addition, it bought explosives, mines, hand grenades, detonators, wireless equipment, medical supplies, maps, uniforms and helmets and delivered them to Palestine.⁴³ In terms of a civil war, these quantities were significant, but a long time would pass until AHC purchasing efforts bore fruits. Most of this arsenal arrived in Palestine *after* the invasion of the regular

armies' by which time its impact was negligible. It helped to sustain the *Jihad al-Muqadas* serving under the Arab armies, but ultimately the Legion confiscated the arsenal.

In the meantime, arms dealers in Palestine and in adjacent countries had a field day: Many individuals bought guns, prices soared and those who could not afford the expenditure were deprived from joining the fighting.⁴⁴ Private trafficking in arms was overt, but of a limited scope. Agents of the AHC gradually took over the market. They acquired firearms in Syria and sent them to Palestine where the AHC distributed them to the villages. The quantities that reached the villages were substantial in terms of disturbances, but were insufficient for war. Many weapons were of poor quality, obsolete and often damaged.⁴⁵

The *Haganah's* common assessment of the Palestinian arsenal was excessive. As early as 1 January 1948, Gad Machnes, a senior *SHAY* officer, claimed: "Our estimate of the Arab armed forces is inflated. They do not possess so many weapons."⁴⁶ His statement contradicted a deep-seated belief, dating back to the British occupation of Palestine. According to a widespread myth, the Arabs enjoyed a considerable superiority in armaments over the *Yishuv* ever since the naive Jews had turned over their weapons to the British military administration in 1918–20, while the craftier Arabs had concealed their arms. The disturbances in 1920, 1921 and 1929 did not lend credence to this contention. Apart from sporadic raids by Bedouin on Jewish settlements, the Arab rioters used solely cold steel. The only volleys were fired by the security forces, or by Jews licensed to carry firearms.

Only in 1930 did the Palestinian leadership began mobilizing funds for arms purchase. The results were meagre. During the rebellion of 1936–9 the Palestinians used the weapons that they had accumulated since 1930, while smuggling in additional consignments from adjacent countries. The British confiscated a large portion of this inventory. Nonetheless, in 1942 the *SHAY* calculated the number of firearms at the disposal of the Palestinians at 50,000.⁴⁷ This highly exaggerated estimate grew even higher after the war due to proliferation of reports of thefts from military camps, private as well as organized purchases and gun running from adjacent Arab countries.

The scope and nature of the Palestinians' actions at the beginning of the war did not support orthodox assessments of the scope of their arsenal. Nevertheless, Sasson insisted on the conventional figures and dismissed Machnes' doubts. He admitted the scarcity of centrally-controlled caches but claimed that individuals were holding a huge stock of weaponry. Danin shared this opinion, but was sceptical of the quality, volume and disposition of Palestinian arms. In his view, it was sufficient for harassment but inadequate for larger-scale military operations.⁴⁸ The

flow of intelligence at the disposal of the SHAY supported Machnes' revisionism in contrast to Sasson and Danin's conservative arguments. For example, in January 1948 Tira — a large village near Haifa and close to military installations from which arms could readily be stolen — possessed 40 revolvers; 64 rifles, four light machine guns and one heavy machine gun without ammunition. In nearby Ain Ghazal — a village of 3,000 residents with 900 individuals of service-age — there was a total of 83 weapons: nine sub-machine guns; 6 shotguns; 23 obsolete rifles and 45 revolvers. Tayba in the Sharon — a community of 5,000 inhabitants — possessed 24 rifles, nine sub-machine guns, and a few automatics — all private, and 100 rounds per weapon.⁴⁹

These figures illustrate conditions at the outset of the war, before AHC purchasing efforts yielded results. Still, the imported arms did not change the balance. In Isdud, for example, at the beginning of the war the inhabitants had at their disposal ten licensed firearms — mostly shotguns. Early in March, the village received 23 rifles from Egypt and in April it bought four Brens and one "gun" that was probably a mortar. The village-dossier of Masmiya reveals the same picture.⁵⁰

Information from the towns portrayed a similar state of affairs. Jaffa, for example, possessed 400–500 rifles and 30–40 machine guns. Many were in poor shape, and support weaponry was non-existent until the arrival of the ALA in March 1948.⁵¹ In view of the scarcity of arms in the country and difficulties in obtaining them abroad, shortage of weaponry was the prime source of Palestinian anxiety.⁵²

Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni, Hassan Salameh and a number of other Palestinian commanders were veterans of the 1936–9 Arab rebellion. The rank-and-file were younger and came from a different background. Since 1946, ex-soldiers of the British army had undertaken the paramilitary training of Arab youngsters in the villages and of *Najada* members in the towns.⁵³ Before the war, young Palestinians were accustomed to meeting in Jerusalem and elsewhere to drill under instructors described as "area commanders". Their names were unfamiliar and no one recalled them from the time of the rebellion. Following infiltration of the ALA into Palestine, its officers took over most of the villagers' training.⁵⁴

During December 1947 and January 1948, local militia groups, usually known as "National Guard", emerged in several places. In Jerusalem, the militia established its headquarters in the *Haram* (Temple Mount). Armed pickets blocked the Old City's gates and sentries wearing armbands searched those who wished to enter the municipality. The militia also included a medical service and a civil guard. Commanders of neighbourhoods were responsible for organizing a watch system and taxing local residents to finance operations. They planned the defences of their areas and determined the location of stationary positions, patrol routes and

stationing of reserve units. In the absence of public facilities, they conducted their affairs from cafes.⁵⁵

Ex-soldiers from the British army and *Najada* members formed the nucleus of the militia in Jerusalem. Retired officers from the Arab Legion, the Transjordan Frontier Force and the Iraqi army assumed the command posts. Usually, the inhabitants paid the guards' salaries while their weapons were supplied from a central depot in the al-Aqsa mosque. In wealthier quarters such as Baq'a, the residents preferred to guard themselves and purchased their own weapons. Probably, they were afraid to admit armed foreigners into their neighbourhood.⁵⁶

The national guards' equipment and discipline improved, and they performed both stationary lookout duties and patrolling. Yet, their competence was low — there were instances of lost arms, firing of stray bullets, theft from secured installations and pilferage of military equipment. The mission of the militia was defensive in nature, while better-trained guard members would join the gangs to take part in active combat.⁵⁷

Haganah retaliations against Arab hamlets engendered adoption of similar security measures in the countryside. By mid-December 1947, night watches were a regular state of affairs in all Arab villages in proximity to Jewish settlements.⁵⁸ In certain areas, the *Najada* endeavoured to undertake the villages' defence but usually the rural guards began on a semi-private basis and were paid for using their own weapons.⁵⁹

At Tayba, for example, the militia apparently included all men aged 18–50 but only males aged 20–35 were mobilized for active duty — usually without any compensation. They belonged to the simple folk and poor families, and lacked military training, a chain of command or any previous experience in the rebellion. In Qalansawa as well, no veteran 1936–9-vintage rebels enlisted in the militia, but organization seems to have been more efficient than in Tayba. The militia's members belonged to all social classes, those of distinguished families serving as commanders. In Qalansawa guards wore uniforms and performed a systematic day and night watch.⁶⁰

Jewish reprisals for Arab attacks on Jewish transportation and settlements forced Palestinians to organize their own transportation and villages on an emergency footing. They used alternative routes or attached escorts to public transport services.⁶¹ Early in February, special rapid intervention units replaced the traditional *Faz'a* in reinforcing localities under attack, particularly around Jerusalem. Volunteers from Transjordan joined the militia. Following the demobilization of the TJFF, the national committees sought to recruit its veterans.⁶² By that time the national guards were fully mobilized and completely under the national committees' control. In Jerusalem, they were billeted in the *Haram*, while

in other towns national guardsmen lived in hotels. They had regular personal equipment, and their service consisted of a routine sequence of guard duties and furloughs.⁶³

Concurrent to preparations for war inside Palestine, the committees for defending *Filastin* in Arab countries endeavoured to sustain the riots and bolster the Palestinians. Early in October 1947, the Syrian committee established a training centre for Palestinian and other recruits in Qatana, south-west of Damascus. Veteran Arab officers came to this centre to prepare the Palestinian youth for junior command posts and train saboteurs.⁶⁴ Enlistment was meagre, and at the outset of hostilities, only 30 Palestinians were undergoing a course in sabotage under former Iraqi officers.⁶⁵

Early in December 1947, the number of trainees grew. In the wake of the general strike, youngsters from Samaria and Galilee flocked to Qatana, but a cholera epidemic in Syria temporarily halted the flow. Upon completion of their training, the Palestinian graduates returned home and waited further instructions. Late in December, a first detachment of 150 non-Palestinian volunteers that had enlisted in Syria infiltrated via Lebanon, arriving in Haifa.⁶⁶

Desertion from the police and the TJFF could have served as a welcome addition to Palestinian forces. At the beginning of the war, the Arab press cited exaggerated numbers of *ghaffirs* (auxiliary policemen) that had allegedly deserted with their weapons. In fact, only 233 armed Arabs deserted from the police during the first three weeks.⁶⁷ Owing to the general curtailment of its operations, the police force discharged the Arab *ghaffirs*. Frequently, national committees hired discharged *ghaffirs* to serve in municipal police forces. Thus, they continued to carry legal weapons, performing primarily duties tied to maintenance of law and order and crime prevention.⁶⁸

Since the beginning of riots, the TJFF's performance was a concern to the authorities. Under the new circumstances now prevailing in the country, the force — comprised primarily of Arabs — was reluctant to take a resolute stance against the Palestinians. Fears of mass desertion hastened the timetable for demobilization of the unit. Cunningham insisted on the TJFF early transfer to Transjordan. Kirkbride was apprehensive over possible impact of the TJFF's arrival on conditions across the river. He proposed to disarm the force while it was still stationed in Palestine — at a stage where the British army could still handle the situation if any complications arose. His recommendation, however, was rejected and in February the TJFF moved to its depot in Zarqa.⁶⁹

In anticipation of the TJFF's transfer to Transjordan, desertion from its ranks increased although the scope was still below previous forecasts. Nablus' national committee negotiated with Palestinian officers to induce

mass defections. The committee offered tempting terms for those who would join the gangs, but to no avail. Old soldiers whose redundancy payments coming due with the expected disbandment of the unit exceeded the market value of their weapons, obediently went to Transjordan. Many wished to enlist in the Arab Legion and stay within their profession. Only novice recruits were candidates for desertion, but even these were few and of little military value.⁷⁰

Already before the war, the AHC and the committees for defending *Filastin* contemplated employing European mercenaries. Potential recruits included German POWs who had escaped and found shelter in the Middle East; Polish veterans of General Anders' army who had refused to return to communist Poland; Bosnians who had served in the Nazi Muslim legion; Croat *Ustasha* and Serb *Chetniks* who had fled from Yugoslavia to Italy; and British defectors from the army and the Palestine police.

In November 1947, the first mercenaries arrived in Syria from Italy to be employed as instructors at the Qatana training centre. A small number joined the Palestinians' war effort. Others enlisted in the Syrian army or joined the ALA. Many stories — for the most part, baseless — about the presence of European "experts" in the Arab towns spread as soon as hostilities began.⁷¹

Suspecting these rumours to be Jewish propaganda, the British were nevertheless cautious not to dismiss them forthwith.⁷² Undoubtedly, the tales had a nucleus of truth but initially the numbers and identity of the Europeans that arrived in Palestine could not be ascertained. Apparently, the foreign experts had not come directly from Europe to Palestine. Probably they had gone to Syria, where most served in Qatana, and only a fraction moved into Palestine. In January, the American embassy at Damascus reported the arrival of 40 Yugoslavs from DP camps in Italy. The source — an official Syrian personality (probably the Minister of Defence) — declared Syria's intention to enrol 200 more. The government promised the recruits Syrian citizenship, and Damascus newspapers confirmed that the Yugoslavs were instructing Palestinian youth.⁷³

Stories of Europeans fighting alongside the Arabs in Palestine were widespread in Egypt. The British embassy reported escaped German POWs had clandestinely infiltrated Palestine to join Palestinian gangs. An official *Haganah* announcement claiming the killing of two Germans seemed to corroborate this information.⁷⁴

By mid-February, several hundred Bosnian mercenaries were in Qatana. A few arrived in Jaffa to organize its defence and train local saboteurs, and others joined Salameh's gang.⁷⁵ At his headquarters at Bir Zeit, Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni hosted 36 Germans and 10 Britons who had defected with a police car, and were probably involved in outrages in Jerusalem in February 1948 (see p. 24). The FSS also identified ten

Yugoslavs in Abd al-Qadir's camp and a few Germans with Salameh, as well as a still unknown number of British deserters. Other British defectors escaped from Acre military prison to Syria. Eventually they went to Bir Zeit to join al-Hussayni's "British squad".⁷⁶

When the ALA completed its deployment in Palestine and most of the foreign mercenaries arrived in the country, it was possible to assess the phenomenon's true proportions. According to a British report, 500 Yugoslavs served on the Arab side in Palestine. British deserters numbered 53 soldiers — of whom six were arrested or surrendered themselves, and 16 policemen.⁷⁷ Several Britons were killed in action or captured by the *Haganah* in various battles in and around Jerusalem. Other defectors joined Qawuqji in Samaria. They retreated with the ALA to Syria in the wake of the regular armies' invasion, and reappeared in the Galilee in June 1948.⁷⁸

Although the mercenaries were a source of much alarm, their actual contribution to the Arab war effort was minor. From the beginning, Sasson belittled their military value and potential impact on the campaign. Danin compared them to Qawuqji's band in 1936 recalling that "the foreigners' performance was several times worse than the Palestinians". Sasson considered volunteers from the Arab countries to be more dangerous and likely to extend hatred of Jews into their native lands. If they were defeated in Palestine, their relatives would seek revenge and might turn their fury against Jews living in their home countries.⁷⁹

Danin and Sasson referred to a few hundred combatants who had enlisted under the Mufti's banner before the war and infiltrated into Palestine late in December 1947. They did not constitute, however, the Arab League's promised assistance that required more time to materialize.

The Palestinian leadership failed to consolidate its power in time for the forthcoming struggle. Hajj Amin's belated efforts to create an independent force under his authority met only partial success; he lacked the necessary infrastructure both inside Palestine and in neighbouring countries. Despite the AHC's attempts to organize formations, establish a training school for officers and provide its followers in Palestine with arms and munitions, the Palestinians were incapable of autonomous action. In the final analysis, they remained totally subordinated to the Arab League and later to the Arab armies along the various fronts.

The Arab League's Intervention

From the time the Anglo-American committee's report on Palestine was published in May 1946 onward, the Arab League began its step-by-step journey down a path leading to war with the *Yishuv*. In June, the League's council convened in Bludan (Syria) to discuss its response. The delegates devised various measures to back the Palestinian struggle and did not exclude military intervention as an option, under certain circumstances. After this conference, voluntary committees for defending *Filastin* sprang spontaneously in the Arab countries to implement the League's resolutions and prepare for a possible clash. The AHC and the Muslim Brethren sponsored these bodies. By contrast, Arab governments were slow in carrying out the Bludan provisions. Their public statements were often bellicose and threatening, but until the summer of 1947 neither open nor covert preparations were made for the approaching confrontation.

Concurrently, with the debate on Palestine at the UN General Assembly scheduled for September 1947, the League held another summit meeting at Sufar (Lebanon). The proceedings served only to expose the conflicting interests and contradicting policies among member states and the conference dispersed without any tangible results. Speaking at the General Assembly on 26 September 1947, Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones announced Britain's determination to withdraw from Palestine regardless of the UN resolution. His statement provoked the *Yishuv*, the Palestinians and the League to accelerate their preparations. The League's council convened again at Alia (Lebanon) and designated a "technical committee" chaired by the retired Iraqi general Isma'il Safwat. The committee was charged with studying the military aspects of the situation in Palestine. On the eve of the vote on partition, Safwat submitted his findings to the Iraqi General Staff and the League's secretary, Azzam Pasha.

In view of the balance of power between the *Yishuv* and the Palestinians, he concluded that gangs of irregulars could by no means

triumph over the Jews. Trained and equipped regular troops should take the field, assisted by Palestinian bands. Since the Arab armies were incapable of waging a prolonged war, Safwat emphasized that a swift campaign was imperative.¹

The League, however, was one step behind the march of events. In the wake of the UN resolution a wave of agitated protests swept the Arab world. The committees for defending *Filastin* went into action. They registered volunteers and collected donations for the looming war. Syrian and Lebanese newspapers published news of military preparations and echoed Fauzi al-Qawuqji's belligerent statements.²

Qawuqji, an adventurer of Lebanese origin, had been the hero of the Syrian revolt in 1925–6 and the previous Palestinian rebellion of 1936–9. Since his return from exile in Nazi Germany early in 1947, Qawuqji endeavoured in vain to embark on a political career by obtaining the post of defence minister in Syria or in Lebanon. Leading another pan-Arab campaign stood to advance his ambitions, either in Palestine or elsewhere in the Arab world. Syria's President Shukri al-Kuwatli backed Qawuqji in order to counter-balance the Mufti and Abdullah's influence in Palestine. Probably, he also wished to see Qawuqji absorbed in an enterprise outside Syria and therefore, involved his protégé in the League's plans for the Palestine campaign.

Naturally, Palestine stood at the centre of the Arab summit conference at Cairo in December 1947. The premiers broached the Arab states' response to the new state of affairs created by the UN partition decision merely a week earlier. Watching the deliberations, Brigadier Clayton of the British Middle East Office repeated their unanimous stance against the partition plan in his report: The participants judged that fighting and bloodshed was inevitable, but it was by no means certain that there was unanimity about the steps that the Arab side should take.

The ten-day conference that closed on 17 December revealed profound disagreements among League members concerning the desirable course of action and its timing. Each state interpreted the "Bludan Resolutions" in accordance with its own interests. Iraq's proposition to suspend all oil concessions that had been granted to western companies in Arab countries was dropped owing to Saudi Arabia's objection.³

The League's military (formerly: technical) committee under Safwat settled in Damascus and Kuwatli chaired its meetings. He nominated another Iraqi retired general — Taha al-Hashimi — as Inspector General of the "Arab Liberation Army" (ALA) and concurrently appointed Qawuqji to command the liberating forces in the field. These two nominations by Kuwatli on the eve of the Cairo summit presented the League with a *fait accompli*. He and Hashimi wanted to incorporate the volunteers that the committees for defending *Filastin* had registered under the

Mufti's auspices, into the ALA. Hajj Amin vehemently opposed this idea. In view of his poor relations with Qawuqji in the past, the Mufti insisted on building up an autonomous Palestinian force loyal to him and did not intend to place such a force at his rival's disposal.

Ultimately, the League's premiers dismissed Safwat's advice to prepare the regular armies for a campaign in Palestine. Instead, they decided to create an all-Arab army and charged the Iraqi officer with implementing this decision. They conceived the ALA as an army under the auspices of the League, comprised of Palestinian and other volunteers — to be equipped by member states and at their expense.⁴ The premiers also confirmed Hashimi and Qawuqji's respective nominations by Kuwatli. Azzam designated Safwat as supreme commander to offset an excessive Syrian influence on the ALA and to secure its subordination to the secretariat of the League. Endorsing the idea of a League army with enthusiasm, some Arab politicians hoped in this manner to rid themselves of radical elements that might have threatened their own domestic position.⁵

Formation of the ALA was a compromise. On the one hand, Transjordan and Iraq advocated intervention in Palestine by regular armies, but only after the British departure. Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, opposed such intervention. Iraq and Transjordan while in favour, disagreed on the extent of their armies' prospective advance. Transjordan contemplated the Legion taking over Palestine's Arab part only, while Iraq wanted to proceed to the Mediterranean coast and overrun the future Jewish state.

The resolutions also met halfway the Mufti's concept of the League's role in the encounter; Hajj Amin aspired to preside over the Palestinian struggle — carried out exclusively by the Palestinians themselves, and confining the League's role to extending financial and material aid. Talking to the conference's participants, Clayton learned about their concerted position to deny the Mufti any role in directing Arab policy in Palestine. Nonetheless, they admitted that he could not be dropped completely, for his name and prestige carried tremendous weight among the masses.⁶

Transjordan rejected the summit's decisions. Abdullah demonstrated his disapproval by recalling his delegate from Cairo and withholding Transjordan's participation in the League's military committee that was charged with supervising the ALA and serving as its headquarters.⁷ Hajj Amin pretended to be pleased and informed Khalidi in Jerusalem: "The resolutions are very good. We have reached a complete understanding."⁸

The Cairo conference did not publish its resolutions. Even Clayton was in the dark concerning their military aspects. Most Jewish observers dismissed intervention by regular Arab armies as implausible. Asserting

that the Arabs would embark simultaneously on a military struggle and terrorist outrages, Sasson predicted that Qawuqji would lead the war like operations while the Palestinian gangs would commit terrorist attacks. Piecing together the premiers' decisions from press reports and declarations by Arab statesmen, Sasson deduced that the League had decided to replace mob riots with an organized terrorist campaign to split the *Haganah's* forces. Expecting the Arab armies merely to conduct threatening manoeuvres along Palestine's borders, he dismissed the likelihood of their active participation in combat. Only if the army of the League failed to overcome the Jewish forces — and that international force they believed at the time would be dispatched to implement the UN resolution on partition — Arab army officers and other ranks might quit their posts and join the Palestinians.⁹

Safwat's estimation that volunteers and armaments might enable the Palestinians to hold their own, but only regular armies were capable of averting partition and Jewish statehood, escaped Sasson's attention. For the time being, the Arab premiers avoided Safwat's self-evident conclusions — alluding that things would not stop short of armed intervention by their own regular armies — although this observation was highly significant for understanding future developments on the Arab side.¹⁰

Although the disturbances were untimely and interfered with the League's plans, the Arab states did not prevail on the Mufti to stop them. Hajj Amin successfully incited the neighbouring states, drawing them into stronger actions by igniting Palestine.¹¹ In the longer run, the Cairo conference precipitated a breach between the Mufti and the League. The Arab premiers were determined to handle Palestine affairs as an all-Arab enterprise — at the expense of the AHC and Hajj Amin's ambitions. Despite his outward satisfaction, the Mufti was disappointed with their decision to prefer the ALA to his own partisans. The Mufti was also furious about their refusal to establish a Palestinian administration beforehand, to take charge of Arab regions after the British withdrawal.¹²

Delays in allocation of funds and delivery of arms to Palestinian combatants widened the breach. Moreover, a controversy erupted inside the Hussayni faction between Hajj Amin and his cousin Jimal, the AHC's chairman. The Mufti feared a possible alignment between Abdullah and Qawuqji. Consequently, he strove to undermine the latter's position by attracting ALA's Iraqi officers to his side.¹³

Palestine remained the primary topic on the League's agenda during its next session in February 1948, as well. This time the Arab states avoided any steps that would support Hajj Amin's designs, bluntly rejecting his demands to establish a Palestinian government, in the meanwhile leaving the national committees to administer the areas that the British would

evacuate. Furthermore, the council of the League entrusted its political committee with supervising the defence of *Filastin*. It also empowered Azzam to co-ordinate the member states' efforts and expedite fulfilment of their previous commitments. The League examined the ALA's progress, urging its members to honour their pledges and facilitate crystallization of the force by providing money, arms and volunteers. On the same occasion, the Arab leaders endorsed several of Safwat's suggestions that they had previously refused or ignored, among them his proposal to deploy their own armies on Palestine's borders by the end of the Mandate.¹⁴

Despite delays, the army of the League — the ALA — took shape. Iraqi and Syrian career officers took leave from their posts to join in the Palestine campaign and take command of the ALA's battalions and companies.¹⁵ Personnel were available and the principal problem was arming and equipping the recruits. Emissaries set out from Syria and Iraq to seek weapons and munitions on Europe's arms market, competing with the AHC's agents and sometimes with the *Yishuv*'s purchasing missions.

Originally, the Arab premiers contemplated building up the ALA in preparation for the challenges of the post-mandatory period. The Mufti, however, swiftly moved ahead of their timetable. Striving to secure his domination of Arab Palestine — primarily to counter Abdullah's ambition to merge Palestine with his kingdom, the Mufti forced the League into taking premature action. Although signs of friction between the Mufti and the League, and competition between Qawuqji and Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni, were both evident, the *Haganah* and the British had not yet realized their significance.

The Cairo conference set a timetable for assembling volunteers in Syria; by 15 January 1948 they were to muster in Qatana. Travelling across southern Syria and Lebanon, Qawuqji summoned Druze, Circassians and other minorities to his banner. Syrian officers such as Adib Shishakli or Muhammad Tzafa, and politicians such as Akram Hourani, conducted the recruiting campaign in central and northern Syria. Several thousand Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian recruits showed up at Qatana, registered and drilled. In January–February 1948 they departed for Palestine.¹⁶

For the time being, the *Haganah* made no distinction between the AHC and the enterprises of the League. The former had stemmed from the Bludan conference and relied on the committees for defending *Filastin*; the latter were launched after the Alia congress in October 1947 and followed an unrelated pattern. Doubting the warnings of a large-scale invasion from Syria and Lebanon, the *SHAY* interpreted prevalent rumours among the Palestinians about "foreigners" that initially referred to the AHC's recruits and later to the ALA, in the familiar terms of 1936–9. Experts on Arab affairs held the view that the arrival of the

"Syrians" might eventually lead to a rise in sabotage actions and hit-and-run attacks on frontier settlements, but no more.¹⁷

The ALA's diverse supply sources created a bizarre arsenal that caused serious logistic problems and rendered maintenance an impossible task. Munitions were often of low quality, damaging the barrels and failing to function when necessary.¹⁸ In December 1947 Syria bought a quantity of small arms from the *Skoda* plant in Czechoslovakia for the ALA. Jewish saboteurs blew up the ship that carried the cargo to the Middle East and sank it in the Italian port of Bari. The arms were later salvaged and reshipped in August 1948 to Syria — this time for arming Palestinian combatants — but the Israeli navy intercepted the freight and seized the weapons.¹⁹

Qawuqji contemplated the infiltration of three detachments into Palestine, to be deployed in the northern, central and southern sectors. He planned to join them later and establish his headquarters in the mountainous region near Nablus with which he was familiar since 1936. The Mufti's ambition to form a Palestinian administration, and his declaration of Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni as "Commander in Chief" on his behalf, hastened the decision of the League's military committee to "show the ALA flag" in the country.²⁰

The ALA spearhead — the 2nd Yarmuk regiment under Shishakli — penetrated from Lebanon into Galilee on the night of 10–11 January 1948, stayed overnight in Safed, ultimately setting up camp in the village of Sasa.²¹ Ten days later, the 1st Yarmuk regiment under Muhammad Tzafa entered Palestine, crossing the Jordan River at the Damia Bridge. A few hundred troops proceeded to Tubase, and Tzafa sent forward units to Nablus and Tulkarm. His soldiers dispersed in the villages, ostensibly to strengthen their defences against the nearby Jewish settlements.²² A larger contingent departed from Damascus on the night of 28 January for Transjordan on its way to Palestine. During the following days, it split into small groups that crossed the Jordan River despite the High Commissioner's protests, subsequently scattering to establish themselves in Samaria's villages.²³

This invasion violated Britain's sovereignty as the mandatory power in Palestine. However, in the absence of a British military presence in the Jordan valley, the authorities could do very little to stop it. Cunningham ordered mandatory police to block Damia Bridge to passage of vehicles, but the Legion's sentries at the bridge promptly drove out the policemen and dismantled the barricades.

The High Commissioner prevailed upon Britain's ambassadors in the adjacent countries to take strong diplomatic measures against this infringement of international law. They evaded his appeals and referred Cunningham to the Foreign Office. At the same time, the diplomats

stoutly argued that protest would be futile and might cause considerable damage to Britain's position in the Arab world. In terms of British interests, they asserted, the price was far higher than preserving a fictitious and decaying sovereignty in Palestine justified. After the abortive attempt to block the ALA's passage across the Damia Bridge, Cunningham angrily reprimanded Transjordan and threatened to dismantle all the bridges across the Jordan River. In response, Kirkbride protested to Bevin against the High Commissioner's hostile tone and threats.²⁴

Cunningham's stance derived from practical considerations no less than principles of sovereignty. He feared that major engagements between the ALA and the British army could not be avoided unless Britain was ready to passively watch the extermination of Jewish settlements. The High Commissioner warned that the ALA's presence in the country might delay the withdrawal and harm Anglo-Arab relations in Palestine and in the Middle East as a whole.²⁵ In a further message to the Colonial Office, the High Commissioner argued against the Foreign Office's predilection to maintain good day-to-day relations with the Arab governments above all. This excessive concern, he asserted, came at the expense of suppressing a process that eventually might lead to disastrous results for Britain's status in the entire Arab world. Prevention, he asserted, was better, easier and less detrimental to Britain's position than the future cure.²⁶

Apart from Cunningham, no British official thought seriously of halting the ALA penetration of Palestine. Except for protesting, the High Commissioner, too, made no serious effort to obstruct the incursion. During February, many hundreds of additional warriors entered Palestine through Transjordan and reinforced the principal towns: Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa.²⁷

Cunningham estimated the total number of foreign combatants in Palestine to be 5,750 — mostly in Samaria and Galilee.²⁸ However, about a third of the two Yarmuk regiments' soldiers were Palestinians, not "foreigners". A quarter were Syrians and the rest came from Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan and Egypt. Tzafa's troops were mainly Iraqis and Palestinians. Most of the Syrians and Lebanese served under Shishakli in Galilee.²⁹ The rest of the ALA, including Qawuqji's headquarters, support arms and several hundred Bosnians, entered the country at the end of February and the beginning of March. These personnel raised the total number of combatants on the Arab side, Palestinians and others to 10,000.³⁰

Conceiving the disturbances in local terms, the *Haganah* was unaware as yet of the significance of the League's military committee, and speculated whether Qawuqji would align with Hajj Amin or with Abdullah. Cunningham pointed out the ALA's abstention from attacking the Jewish settlements bordering on Samaria. The Palestinians underscored the

foreigners' indifference to Palestine's domestic politics. Furthermore, to avoid dependence on the population for supplies, and preclude possible intimidation of locals to donate provisions, the League's military committee had arranged to furnish the troops' rations through special contractors.

This semblance of logistics apparently marked significant progress in comparison with the 1936–9 rebellion. Introducing medical services for the combatants and the population made an impression on both the British and the Jews. Another innovation was wireless communications between the ALA units in Palestine and the military committee in Damascus. The committee provided a number of Arab cities with similar devices, thus enabling them to communicate with the outside world.³¹ The ALA imposed its jurisdiction on the villages by mobilizing the youth for military training, registering private weapons and instituting law courts, prisons and military police. This apparent intrusion into the life of the population was generally welcomed, although it caused occasional friction with local dignitaries.³²

At first, the ALA seemed to differ from its predecessors — Qawuqji's gangs of 1936 — by trying hard to behave and appear like an army. British officers described the ALA as exhibiting "a surprising degree of discipline" and defined its cohesion "far superior to anything hitherto seen among the Arabs". They noted the favourable impact of the reinforcements' arrival on Palestinian morale and expected a new phase of the struggle to commence shortly, probably in mid-February.³³

The *Yishuv's* understanding of the ALA goals was still vague. On the one hand, Palestinian agents emphasized Qawuqji's reluctance to act before the British withdrawal. In the meantime, the agents' spoke of the ALA expanding its ranks by recruiting local youngsters. British sources, on the other hand, warned of Qawuqji's alleged scheme to drive a wedge in the midst of the Jewish territory by marching the short distance from Tulkarm to the sea.³⁴

Gad Machnes, taking exception from prevailing opinion in Jewish circles, maintained that Qawuqji was more concerned about the Palestinians than with the Jews. He considered the ALA's appearance in the country "an attempt by the Mufti's opponents — in harmony with Abdullah, to resist the Mufti's domination".³⁵ Back from an errand to Damascus — where he had met with Qawuqji, Judge Ahmad al-Khalil of Haifa corroborated Machnes' arguments. He reported that for the time being the ALA would restrict its actions to the Arab sector only. Qawuqji, he added, was ready to conclude local truce agreements in the mixed cities.³⁶

Khalil's account of intentions was compatible with the League's policy concerning the role of the ALA until the end of the mandate. Wishing to

avoid encounters between its army and the British, the military committee of the League contemplated deferring offensive actions pending completion of the withdrawal. Safwat instructed ALA commanders accordingly, but the committee could hardly exercise control in Palestine where the local population's own schemes were frustrating its original intention.

The ALA's arrival reassured the Palestinians and inspired extravagant stories about the number of troops who had already arrived and those who would follow suit.³⁷ By contrast, the newcomers' attitude towards their hosts was reserved. In the absence of barracks, they set up quarters in village schools, the only available public buildings. ALA forces remained aloof, treating the villagers with suspicion, blocking entrance to their billets and driving out peddlers. In keeping with the conduct of an organized army, they introduced a night curfew, roadblocks and passwords to deny the *fallahin* access to their bases. At most, the officers received delegations of notables who came to greet them.³⁸

Qawuqji's personal whereabouts were still uncertain, while the nature of his affiliation with the League and his relationship with the Mufti and Abdullah remained equally unclear. The *Haganah* and the British sought in vain to decipher a systematic chain of command on the Arab side. The assumption that such a hierarchy existed emanated from various errors in judgement. Recalling 1936–9, the British stressed the Opposition's allegiance to Qawuqji and concluded that it represented a growing Syrian influence in Samaria. They also took note of frictions inside the Hussayni camp between the national committees and Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni. Sasson and his colleagues did not consider the rivalry between Qawuqji and Abd al-Qadir's as irrevocable. A tapped telephone conversation between AHC members alluded to an agreement over distribution of command: "That one [probably Qawuqji] should lead the general assault, while this one [probably Abd al-Qadir] would be in charge of the Jerusalem district. The latter appears dissatisfied with this arrangement."³⁹

Early in February the military committee convened in Damascus to resolve the issue of chain of command. For the first time, a Transjordanian observer joined the discussions to strengthen liaison between the Legion and the ALA in Palestine and Transjordan. Hajj Amin also attended, and Abd al-Qadir and Hassan Salameh arrived to look after their own interests and status. Under the shadow of fierce competition, and in the wake of stormy argument, the committee divided the country into four independent territorial commands under Safwat's supreme authority: Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni in Jerusalem area; Salameh along the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem road, Qawuqji in Samaria and an Egyptian officer, Colonel Tariq Bey, in the Negev.⁴⁰

In practice, this compromise failed to work out. There was no co-ordi-

nation between Abd al-Qadir and the ALA, and the Hussaynis continuously undermined the ALA position in Samaria by trying to attract its Palestinian soldiers to their own camp.⁴¹ Lacking the capability to exercise its control, the military committee was not "headquarters" in the full sense of the word. Even had the competing Arab commanders been willing to co-operate, the committee was incapable of co-ordinating their actions.

On 4 March 1948 Qawuqji arrived in Samaria and established himself at the village Jab'a on the Nablus-Jenin road. His staff consisted of several departments that dealt with propaganda, judicial matters, and medical services; liaison (with the authorities and the population); transport; and ordnance.⁴² The SHAY interpreted his appearance on the scene as an attempt to check the Mufti's subversion of the Nablus district and to strengthen the bond with Hajj Amin's opponents in the area.⁴³ Monitoring telephone conversations between AHC members and their comrades abroad revealed ongoing feuds among factions inside the Hussayni party, between them and Abd al-Qadir and particularly tense relations with the ALA. At the same time, the Opposition's clans in Nablus, headed by the families of Tuqan and al-Masri, rallied around Qawuqji, seeking to turn their city into an alternative political centre to Hussayni-dominated Jerusalem.⁴⁴

The question "who commanded whom — and where" was not only personal, but concerned the Arab forces' structure. Several months of speculation did not lead the *Haganah* to any satisfactory conclusions in this regard. The ties between the League's military and Palestine committees, the AHC, the emergency committee, Qawuqji's headquarters, Shishakli, the *Jihad al-Mukadas*, city commanders, the ALA detachments in the cities, the Arab Legion units in the Arab towns, the national committees and the municipalities were a puzzle that the Arabs themselves could not solve, let alone the Jews — even retrospectively.⁴⁵

Most of the ALA's soldiers lacked military experience or professional training. Their equipment was frequently obsolete, and logistic facilities such as medical services were poor despite the initial favourable impression and the military committee's efforts to improve them. All in all, the ALA represented a substantial advancement compared with the gangs of 1936-9 or with the Hussaynis' contemporary *Jihad al-Muqadas*, but it was still far from being an "army".⁴⁶

The ALA garrisoned villages in Samaria and Galilee, reinforced the local Arab militias in mixed cities, and isolated towns such as Jaffa and Acre. The military committee also appointed retired career officers to command the towns. These appointments contributed to the confusion in most cities as local leaders refused to accept the nominees' supremacy. The city commanders' authority should have encompassed the local militia, the ALA detachments and other reinforcements. Their subordination and

obligations were laid out by the military committee. Pending institution of an overall chain of command, these appointed commanders should have communicated directly with the military committee's headquarters in Damascus.⁴⁷

After the first wave of fervour passed, volunteering in the Arab countries for service in the ALA dwindled, and its future growth depended primarily on enlistment among Palestinians. The military committee offered the Palestinian recruits conditions similar to those of other troops and arranged for the opening of a basic training centre in Samaria and an officer training course in Damascus.⁴⁸

By mid-February, the *Haganah* had a fair picture of the ALA's deployment in Samaria. Tzafa's 1st Yarmuk regiment stayed in northern Samaria with its headquarters in Tubas. The Hittin regiment under Madlul Abbas held the western sector, with its headquarters at Tulkarm. The Hussayn Ibn Ali regiment reinforced Jaffa, Haifa, Jerusalem and several smaller towns, while the Qadassia regiment and a Cirkassian unit remained in reserve at Jab'a. Another contingent comprised of 800 Saudi tribesmen had assembled near Aqaba, apparently heading for Negev. Abdullah emphatically denied them access through Transjordanian territory. Ultimately, they moved to Egypt and joined the Egyptian expeditionary force.⁴⁹

The ALA's arrival in the country nourished expectations for a wholesale Arab offensive. All sorts of rumours spread, citing various dates as the likely D-day for the general assault on Jewish settlements. They ranged from 15 January to 15 February — after the Arab forces would have completed their organization, but D-day for a wholesale Arab assault was still remote. The troops in Samaria needed time to study the terrain and organize. Usually units passed through Tubas, which served as a transit camp and then split into smaller groups that scattered in the hamlets. Almost no Arab village was absent from the list of localities hosting "foreign warriors".⁵⁰

Circulating rumours spoke of a general uprising that allegedly had been planned by the AHC. The *Haganah* and the British anticipated an Arab assault to begin on 15 February, and British intelligence forecast a series of night raids on Jewish targets.⁵¹ The warnings probably related to the futile attack on Tirat Zvi on the night of 15–16 February that once more ended in a fiasco. Arriving on the scene, British troops counted 38 dead and about as many wounded. Arab newspapers portrayed the abortive assault as a triumph, but within the ALA's rank-and-file, the outcome generated anger and frustration, spurring defections by volunteers who chose to return to their own countries.⁵²

Later, the British substantiated the fact that the Palestinians had indeed meant to launch a wholesale assault on 15 February, but subsequently

postponed it. They had realized that in many places preparations were unfinished; the Mufti's authority was incomplete and he lacked resources. Therefore, they maintained, the Arabs had decided to wait for more reinforcements and initiate sweeping military actions only after the British departure.⁵³

Viewing Hajj Amin as having a core role in the campaign was outdated by this time. Replacing the AHC, the Arab League's role as the leading factor and motivating power on the Arab side was evident. The *Haganah* postulated that the next meeting of the League's council in Cairo scheduled for early April 1948 would set the D-day.⁵⁴

The ALA's status, strength, intentions and relations with the other Arab forces were still vague.⁵⁵ Contrary to the *Haganah*'s perception of the situation, Qawuqji's influence was not paramount. He received his orders from the military committee in Damascus and had no goals of his own. According to Aref Abd al-Razeq, a *SHAY* agent in Qawuqji's own entourage, Qawuqji's motivation emanated from a hatred of the Mufti and a strong drive to frustrate Hajj Amin's schemes. Moreover, Qawuqji had a pathological appetite for fame, honour and power. The agent reported that his leader was dissatisfied with the financial and logistic arrangements made by the League and complained of his troops' poor training and low morale, as well as the second-rate quality of their weapons and munitions. Abd al-Razeq added that Qawuqji's plans were shaky. Qawuqji did not overrule the possibility of negotiating some compromise with the Jews provided it would not risk his prestige.⁵⁶

While Qawuqji settled in Samaria, and Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni transferred his headquarters and depot to Bir Zeit, a third Arab force assembled under Hassan Salameh in the Lydda-Ramle region. British intelligence and the *SHAY* identified his headquarters in a deserted orphanage near Sarafand. Early in March, a detachment of ALA Iraqi troops joined Salameh's Palestinian gang. At first, he dispersed them in the villages south of Ramle to train local youth and organize their defences. Later in that month, they reassembled in the abandoned military camp at Wadi Sarar.⁵⁷

Upon the arrival of the ALA in the country, the Arab section of the Jewish Agency explored the prospects of reaching an understanding with Qawuqji. Through the mediation of Palestinian go-betweens, Qawuqji agreed to parley personally with Danin; Abd al-Razeq, one of the mediators, said that his chief did not regard the war as inevitable. Answering a query about Qawuqji's political status, Abd al-Razeq explained that he was loyal to al-Kuwatli. Besides, he divulged, Qawuqji was on good terms with Abdullah who "had given him a tank for his private use." The "tank" was nothing but a jeep and the story testified to the agent's mastery of military matters and familiarity with vehicles.

Abd al-Razeq maintained that Qawuqji did not intend to act, believing that the UN would renege on the partition plan and devise a compromise to avoid war. So far, he claimed, the ALA's attacks had been local initiatives. The locals had misled Qawuqji's lieutenants with pretences of Jewish plots against them, but "Fauzi knows the Palestinians and would not have been dragged-in by their grumbling and lies." Summarizing his report on the meeting with al-Razeq, Danin remarked: "There was a lengthy discussion of possible co-operation against Abd al-Qadir and Salameh's gangs."⁵⁸

Danin typically reflected the outdated perception of the war in terms of a repeat of 1936–9, when the Palestinians directed their struggle primarily against the British and bribes could still attract them to the authorities' side. Similar to his Palestinian antagonists, Danin was slow to grasp the differences between an anti-colonial guerrilla uprising and a national war.

Parallel to the ALA's build-up in Syria and its move into Palestine, intensive activity on behalf of the Palestinians was also afoot in Egypt. The Muslim Brethren and the Young Egypt party collected donations, registered volunteers, recruiting 500 of the volunteers by the end of January and establishing training camps. Originally, the recruits meant to join the ALA in Qatana, but the government objected to their departure and insisted on their training in Egypt.⁵⁹

Unable to go to Syria, the Egyptian, Libyan and North African volunteers prepared to open a second front in southern Palestine. A party of officers went to Gaza to prepare the ground for their arrival and conduct some reconnaissance of terrain in the western Negev. Returning to Egypt to collect their forces, early in March the first Egyptian contingent arrived in Gaza.⁶⁰ A convoy of the Egyptian Red Crescent, allegedly bringing medical aid to the Palestinians smuggled the unit's equipment across the border. Sixty of the convoy's "doctors and medical orderlies" continued as far as Ramle where they joined the local militia and took part in combat. Their passports were found in the town after its downfall in July 1948.⁶¹

The war's escalation impacted on the Negev's Arab population as well, and the inhabitants of Han Yunis and Dir al-Balah schemed to attack nearby Kfar Darom. Egyptian officers tried in vain to discourage them, foreboding that an assault by an untrained mob would end in a massacre. The kibbutz repelled the attack and the invaders withdrew, leaving behind a heavy toll of dead and injured, Egyptians and Palestinians.⁶² Egypt's newspapers sharply criticized the untimely onslaught and urged the government to halt the dispatch of volunteers to Palestine, at least until they were properly trained in Egypt. This abortive escapade probably delayed the invasion of the Muslim Brethren force's main body that

ultimately preceded the Egyptian regular army by only a few days.⁶³

The Egyptian volunteers' arrival in the Negev did not cause alarm on the Jewish side. The SHAY belittled their impact on the fighting and the Arab section of the Jewish Agency judged that Egypt's government opposed their involvement. Sasson was more apprehensive of the Arab Legion's possible expansion into southern towns than he feared the Egyptians' penetration.⁶⁴ Yet, press reports of an imminent invasion of the Negev and forthcoming attacks on the Jewish settlements in the region alarmed Cunningham, and he appealed to Campbell: "I must ask that strongest possible representations be made to call off the attack."⁶⁵

The Arab forces' diversity notwithstanding, until the invasion on 15 May 1948 the *Haganah* pictured a concerted war effort in which the AHC, the Arab League and several states were partners. According to this perception, the League's Palestine committee — allegedly headed by Azzam Pasha, the Mufti and Taha al-Hashimi — stood at the head of this apparently well-orchestrated campaign. Under them on the second level operated the League's military committee under the command of Safwat.⁶⁶ By that time, however, both committees were insignificant *vis-à-vis* developments in Palestine — which at this stage were dictated by other forces. The AHC had become immaterial and the Arab League was rapidly losing control, discovering that its own intervention on behalf of the Palestinians had been grossly inadequate.

Shaping the Yishuv's War Policy

The *Yishuv*'s leadership, captive in thinking conceptually in terms of the 1936–9 rebellion, speculated as to the identity of the riots' instigators. At first, no decisive evidence implicated the AHC in planning and control of the disturbances on a country-wide scale. A common assumption ascribed the outbursts partly to local Hussaynis — assisted by the mob and agitated by *Shibab* (youth), and partly to spontaneous turmoil.¹

Secretly, the Mufti's Palestinian opponents blamed the AHC for the violence. They brainwashed their Jewish contacts that a vigorous response was imperative. Otherwise, the *Yishuv* might lose the deterrence effect. The unavoidable outcome would be the spread of disorder.² Expecting a trap, the Jewish Agency's experts on Arab affairs were not easily convinced. Their long experience with Hajj Amin's rivals had taught them to be circumspect. A sharp response might escalate the situation and spur turmoil rather than containing it. They made a distinction between the AHC's official stance — seemingly disapproving of the violence — and the personal role of a few Hussayni members of this body. In their view, Emil Ghuri in Jerusalem and Rafiq al-Tmimi in Jaffa covertly backed the mob. The Arab section maintained that they were acting on Hajj Amin's behalf to convince the Arab League of the gravity of the situation and accelerate its response. Initially, Sasson and his colleagues belittled prospects that the disturbances would spread and underestimated the stormy reaction to partition in the Arab countries. Despite the calls for a *Jihad*, registration of volunteers and other measures, they speculated "whether deeds may come in the wake of the enthusiastic volunteering or will it end solely with signing up".³

The slow escalation of rebellion, contrary to previous anticipations of an abrupt eruption of violence, was confusing. The *Yishuv*'s leaders and their top advisers pondered whether the struggle had begun in earnest and the *Haganah* should activate its contingency plans, or whether it was still possible to contain the blaze. This question had no simple answer, and

various individuals involved in military affairs and Arab politics disputed each other's evaluations and conclusions.

Shiloah, who was in charge of intelligence and liaison with the British security forces, objected to a sharp retribution. In his opinion, reprisals might play right into the Mufti's hands by further inciting the Arab masses. Advocating restraint, Shiloah preferred limiting retaliation in time and place to response to previous Arab onslaughts. To avoid unnecessary incidents, he also suggested issuing a suitably worded call for restraint targeted for persons of influence such as the *mukhtars* of Jewish villages who usually dealt with neighbourly relations between their settlements and adjacent Arab hamlets, and others who were in touch with Arabs.⁴

Most Jewish experts on Arab affairs did not tie the few isolated skirmishes in the first week of December 1947 with Hajj Amin's schemes. They argued that the Mufti was still interested in maintaining quiet. In their view, due to divided opinion from within, the AHC was unable to take a decision whether to initiate violent actions forthwith, or wait until the next session of the Arab League in February 1948. On 7 December, while the Arab premiers in Cairo were discussing their future steps, the SHAY gave an "all clear" signal, citing alleged orders by the AHC to defer action pending the League's decisions. British intelligence assessments were in a similar vein, and the SHAY might have relied upon them.⁵

The *Haganah* was perplexed. On the one hand, previous warnings of impending attacks on settlements in Galilee did not materialize and for the time being this region was quiet. On the other hand, the fighting in the towns took the *Haganah* by surprise. Since 1939 the *Haganah* had belittled the Arab townsmen and regarded the rural *fallahin* as the principal menace. Consequently, preparedness in the cities was inadequate, as the mob's successful assault on the new commercial centre in Jerusalem had demonstrated at the beginning of the Arab strike.⁶

Unlike most of his colleagues, Sasson — the Jewish Agency's leading authority on Arabs — argued that the disturbances were already in full swing. Quoting the Palestinian press, he argued that the Hussaynis had won over the public's support. In his view, they were well-organized and awaited more arms and money prior to extending their activities.⁷ Adopting this view, Galili briefed the *Yishuv's* defence committee:

Everything refutes the theory that the disturbances may fade away. They flare up and spread. Furthermore, the Mufti has won over the Arab public and neutralized the opposition. We must expect the growth of terrorism.⁸

Danin and Palmon, two other leading "Arabists", did not share Sasson's pessimism. Describing the Palestinians' flight, they told Ben-Gurion that all their Arab contacts had advised a hard-line policy. Since this was the

opinion of several different sources, the pair considered conspiracy unlikely. Danin recommended attacking lines of communications with neighbouring countries and Arab traffic within the country, sinking boats in Jaffa's port and strangling Arab factories by denying them raw materials. These actions, he asserted, would serve to multiply chaos among the Arabs. Dismissing Sasson's view of the Opposition and Abdullah's impotence, Danin envisaged that upon Qawuqji's arrival, the Opposition would recover and might co-operate with Abdullah.⁹

Danin's observations derived from a meeting with Nimr al-Hauari. The *Najada's* chief told him that the AHC had not intended to instigate riots on the scale that the disturbances had taken. The Arabs were not yet prepared, militarily or otherwise, and had good economic motivations for avoiding a premature outburst.¹⁰ Contacts in Tulkarm conveyed to Danin a gloomy state of affairs in their area:

The Bedouin encampments have disappeared. All the labourers fled . . . The refugees are burdensome, disquiet prevails, the youth and shepherds dominate the public . . . The training in Syria is worthless and the defectors are more numerous than those who stay put.

The similarity between Danin's accounts of these meetings and his report to Ben-Gurion clearly shows the basis for his evaluation.¹¹

Shiloah took a middle stance between Sasson and Danin. The outburst in the cities surprised him. Yet, he believed that this was only the beginning, and the situation was liable to deteriorate. Recommending a soft line, Shiloah still believed that restraint might serve to inhibit spread of the riots. Having consulted with Danin, he informed Shertok in New York that the disturbances resembled those of 1936–9, but as yet no signs of external intervention were evident.¹²

Ben-Gurion integrated elements of all his advisers' theories — holding that although the AHC controlled the Palestinians through the national committees, the Opposition still existed. He noted that the villages were staying aloof and the riots were concentrated in the towns and in the Negev. In Jaffa and in Haifa, the Jews had the upper hand and the Arabs were fleeing, he wrote — closing a summary of the situation in a telegram to Shertok: "So far, the Arabs have not displayed efficient organization, although they have been more courageous than before."¹³

Assessing the situation differently, the "Arabists" and the *Haganah* commanders disagreed as to a suitable response. Danin and his disciples still thought in terms of neighbourly relations — not a national struggle — and did not regard war as inevitable. They strove to achieve agreements on a local level with *mukhtars* and other dignitaries, believing that bribing police officers was an efficient way to prevent attacks on Jewish traffic as it had been in 1936–9.¹⁴

Contrary to 1936–9, the *Yishuv* could not count on the British to enforce law and order. Recognizing Britain's ebbing authority, *Yishuv* leaders gradually abandoned their policy of restraint. In three weeks, the *Haganah* carried out 13 acts of reprisal against Arab objectives. Some aimed at blowing up houses and others were targeted to hit Arab traffic. During the same period, the *IZL* and *LHI* made five bloody assaults — throwing hand grenades into coffee shops in Jaffa, Jerusalem and several villages. Danin and his colleagues complained that these retaliatory acts obstructed their efforts to contain spread of the riots.¹⁵

Before the war, the *Haganah's* high command in Tel Aviv was accustomed to selecting targets for retaliations all over the country in consultation with the *SHAY*. Under the new circumstances, this procedure changed in response to the scattered nature of Arab actions and the desire of Jewish strategy to clearly link retaliations in time and place to their causes. Field commanders acted independently, relying on local and often unreliable hearsay that they considered "intelligence". Sometimes erroneous objectives were chosen, thus missing the point of deterring the Arabs or, even worse, escalating the situation instead of stabilizing it.¹⁶

In late December, the scope of the retaliatory raids grew in terms of the size of forces engaged and the ensuing death toll and damage inflicted on the Arabs. On 1 January 1948, an attack on two villages near Haifa killed approximately 20 Arabs and wounded 90.¹⁷ This and similar actions provoked controversies. The *PALMAH's* foray on the hamlet Hissass in Upper Galilee, contrary to the opinion of the *SHAY* and the Arab section, particularly annoyed Danin. He protested to Sasson: "The army [i.e. *Haganah*] does what it pleases despite our advice."¹⁸

Disregarding Danin and Shiloah's demands for restraint, Yadin advocated a hard-line policy. He blamed indecision on the part of the Jews to take the initiative as responsible for expansion of the disturbances, and proposed assassinating prominent Arab personalities as well as attacking the headquarters of Arab organizations. In his opinion, the *Haganah's* mobilized force was sufficient for a short offensive action, but was incapable of a lengthy defensive deployment.¹⁹

Sasson fluctuated. Contrary to his initial pessimism, he asserted that the riots had lulled and might be fading out. Overruling the possibility that this hiatus might merely be a temporary measure — designed to complete organization of the *AHC* — Sasson attributed the impetus for the apparent stalemate to other factors. In his estimation, several prerequisites for continuance of serious fighting were lacking at the time: Essential supplies were inadequate; several towns were economically hard pressed; the central arsenal (as opposed to weapons in private hands) was tiny; money was scarce and organization lagged behind.

According to Sasson's postulations, the *AHC* had concluded that the

turmoil had achieved its original goal — provoking the Arab League to action — and further incitement of unrest was unnecessary. British intelligence held similar notions as to the underlying motivations for Arab inactivity; however, it soon became clear that tranquillity was transitory and had been illusory.²⁰

After a month of violence the situation called for a comprehensive re-examination. Shiloah summoned Sasson and Danin to Tel Aviv for consultations. Their opinions differed substantially. Sasson supported a radical response in retaliatory action: striking at the entire system of communications or bringing Arab commerce totally to a halt, instead of launching isolated actions. Danin objected to his colleague's militancy, claiming that a full-scale war was still avoidable. Danin favoured limiting the *Haganah's* retaliation in scope and range. In such a case, he argued, other districts might remain quiet; thus he opposed Sasson's aggressive approach.²¹ Conscious of his advisers' conflicting estimates, and aware of the tension between the *Haganah* and the "Arabists", Ben-Gurion summoned both parties to discuss the *Yishuv's* policy in face of the escalating situation. First, they had to determine whether the riots had already assumed the scale of "disturbances" or not. A possible criterion was the number of victims. Fatal casualties among the Jews in December 1947 alone amounted to 204, as compared to 500 during the entire period of the 1936–9 Arab rebellion. The Palestinians' casualties in the first month were of a similar magnitude: 208 dead.²²

At the opening of the debate, the "Arabists", led by Sasson, advocated restraint and stressed the Palestinians' reluctance to take up arms. They ascribed the disorders' expansion to British indifference, Jewish preparations for statehood — viewed as a provocative acts, and response to retaliatory acts. Danin believed that subduing the enemy by force was impossible as long as the British were present and the essential issue at hand was — What was liable to happen after the mandate ended? Dissatisfied with this ambivalent reasoning, Yadin demanded a plain, unequivocal, answer whether the *Yishuv* was facing serious disturbances or not, before deciding on appropriate actions. Moshe Dayan, responsible for good neighbourly relations with the Arabs in the *Haganah's* general staff, also asked for an explicit directive: "Should we recognize the immunity of certain areas and types of Arabs, or should we make no distinction and the Arab people is one and the same everywhere?"

Replying for the "Arabists", Palmon explained that the answer was by no means categorical. Some localities were unruly, while others were tranquil. The alternatives were either uniting all the Arabs against the *Yishuv* by provocative acts, or exploiting their internal divisions, he argued. In selecting targets and timings for retaliation acts, the *Haganah* should weigh every case on its own merits.

Apart from the semantic argument over correct definition of the situation, the main controversy concerned formulation of a "fitting" response to Arab acts of violence. Several participants, civil and military, dismissed selective reprisals as inadequate. The punishment, Machnes claimed, should have a dissuasive effect. Under the circumstances, one should overcome humanitarian scruples: "It is impossible to avoid harming women and children, otherwise the blow would be ineffective." Yigal Alon — the *PALMAH*'s commanding officer — concurred and did not rule out assassinating certain Arab leaders.

Sasson called for a firm response to deter foreign volunteers from joining the Palestinians, expecting that a failure to respond might encourage enlistment on their behalf. Yet, he doubted the *Haganah*'s capability for executing large-scale acts of retaliation in the British army's presence. Summing up the issue, Ben-Gurion issued directives to undermine and sow disarray among the rioters — clans, neighbourhoods and villages — but by no means should the *Haganah* aim at all the Arabs "who sit idle". Yadin was frustrated. Claiming that it was a question of policy, not contradictory intelligence estimates, he demanded an explicit decision in favour of taking prompt action against Arab traffic to stop attacks on Jewish vehicles. He also proposed to besiege Jaffa. Palmon, speaking on behalf of most "Arabists", objected to what he perceived to be a premature and indiscriminate aggressive policy. As a compromise, Alon suggested taking the initiative only in regions where hostilities were taking place.

Galili sought to reconcile those who claimed that full-scale disturbances were already underway, with those who would deny their existence. He proposed to adjourn the discussion until a small committee formulated agreed-upon guidelines for a policy of active retribution and its objectives. This policy should serve as a basis for the *Haganah*'s planning.²³

Having debated the issue for seven hours, the committee unanimously adopted Yadin's view in opposition to restricting reprisals. Its members differentiated between retaliatory assaults on Arab traffic and deliberate attacks to weaken the Palestinians' infrastructure — recommending both forms of action. They cited various objectives in the Negev and elsewhere, and formulated a list of 23 persons who henceforth should be likely targets for assassination. They also approved striking at any village hosting a gang, if the information proved reliable.²⁴

On the next morning, the forum approved these guidelines despite Shertok's scepticism about the reprisals' effect on the rioters. Galili admitted that it was impossible to judge the value of each action but claimed that the cumulative effect of retaliations had disheartened the Arabs, causing flight and panic.²⁵

The principal outcome of the consultation was appointment of advisers on Arab affairs to the general staff and regional commands. These commissars were supposed to enlighten the military (i.e. *Haganah*) commanders on Arab matters and assist them in selecting appropriate targets, while avoiding unnecessary alienation of friendly Palestinians. Their role, however, became rapidly irrelevant to realities, as the fighting intensified and expanded.

The *Haganah's* raid on hotel Semiramis in Jerusalem sharpened the dispute over retaliation policy. The death of the Spanish acting consul among tens of other casualties in the aftermath of the foray caused unnecessary complications. On his way back to New York, Shertok asked with irony, whether this incursion was the fruit of the gathering's decisions or "a remnant of the old regime".²⁶

Cunningham summoned Ben-Gurion and warned him that if the *Haganah* continued this policy, British troops would confront the *Haganah* directly as a hostile element. Ben-Gurion assured him that the central Jewish authorities had not sanctioned the assault. The High Commissioner inclined to accept his apology. He concluded that the Jewish Agency was unable to restrain local commanders and "they are rent by internal dissension on this very question of reprisals".²⁷

Back in Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion summoned the *Haganah's* high command to discuss preparations for war. He opened discussion by stating his own appraisal of the situation, based on recent experience that indicated the Arabs would try to weaken the *Yishuv* by means of attrition. In his view, the Jews were particularly vulnerable in Jerusalem and along the roads. Ben-Gurion asked what was preferable: erecting defences against Arab harassment or strengthening the mobile forces to take reprisals. His own preference was self-evident, but he feared that the Arabs' mass flight might frustrate counter-intimidation moves recommended by the *Haganah*.

Yadin insisted on brutal and massive actions. He demanded abandonment of the "linked retaliation" concept that sought to punish Arabs directly responsible for anti-Jewish acts. As a substitute, he suggested paralyzing Palestinians' transportation, harassing their economy and generally rendering their life unbearable.

According to Galili, as long as hostile neutrality by the British might obstruct *Haganah* initiatives, reprisals should be limited in scope and linked in time and place to prior Arab assaults. A sole exception could be demonstrative attacks on traffic deep inside Arab territory to impress upon the Palestinians the principle of reciprocity. Fritz Eshet, Ben-Gurion's military adviser, asserted that organizing the *Haganah* and preparing the force for war were prerequisites for inflicting a decisive blow to the Palestinians. The suitable time for launching the strike could

not precede March or April 1948 when the British would be unable to interfere. Yadin objected to all these proposals:

So far, we have been floating without a sail and a rudder. Delaying our blows may enable the Arabs by March–April to cause us heavier damages than they do now.

Ben-Gurion, however, still hesitated how far the *Yishuv* could go along this path at that moment and the meeting ended inconclusively.²⁸

Economic as well as military measures were still subject to political considerations. Besides holding frequent consultations in Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion was in the habit of conferring with Sasson whenever he went to Jerusalem. In these meetings, they discussed Sasson's assessment of developments in the Arab world and particularly among the Palestinians. Sasson expected a serious confrontation imminently and associated intensification of Arab activity with rumours of organizational progress among the Palestinians. He shared his anxieties with Shiloah, who reported them in his name to the supreme command.²⁹

Following the attack on kibbutz Kfar Szold in Upper Galilee on 9 January, Sasson told Ben-Gurion that the Arabs had modified their tactics. He attributed the change to the arrival of two AHC members who brought instructions "to calm down the towns, to stir up the roads and villages and to force the evacuation of several Jewish settlements, primarily *Gush Etzion*".

This directive allegedly emanated from pressures exerted by upper- and middle-class refugees who had fled to neighbouring countries. Sasson explained the merchants' objections to urban terrorism as the principal reason for the gangs' dispersal over the country. Furthermore, relieving the pressure on the wealthier townspersons (cf. above) was essential, for they were the AHC's primary source of financial support until the Arab League contributed to its budget.³⁰

Ben-Gurion asked Sasson how the *Haganah* should respond to this new strategy, but did not receive a clear answer. Calming down the towns might play right into the Mufti's hands. Increasing pressure on the towns risked provoking the British. Sasson explained that the second course of action had better chances of expediting an end to the riots: "Dead *fallahin* impress no one. The death of dignitaries may create an atmosphere of opposition to disturbances."³¹

British intelligence appraisal contradicted Sasson's view. Following the abortive attack on *Gush Etzion* in January, they expected the Arabs to avoid large-scale frontal attacks on Jewish rural settlements and concentrate on hit-and-run actions in the cities.³²

Almost two months elapsed before the *Haganah* abandoned its strategy of retaliation and attempted to take the initiative. Yadin ordered district

commanders to urgently devise offensive actions against several types of Arab objectives. He attached several restrictions, however: (1) preventing spread of the riots to tranquil areas; (2) hurting down only those guilty of outrages against Jews; (3) discriminating between friendly and hostile villages.

Hamlets used by gangs as operational bases and for training were highly recommended targets. Attacks on economic objectives such as mills, warehouses or water installations required prior approval of the General Staff. Brigade commanders were free to take action against Arab traffic and raid villages that had harassed Jewish transportation, without prior approval of the General Staff. Yadin stressed that by no means should holy places, schools and hospitals be damaged.³³

This directive focused on the *Haganah's* strategy against the Palestinians, but did not address the problems posed by the arrival of foreign volunteers. After the ALA appeared on the scene, the General Staff contemplated striking at the new enemy. Yadin's assistants planned to demolish access routes linking Palestine with adjacent countries and attack the invaders' encampments. Galili asked for Ben-Gurion's approval of these actions, given the code name "Operation *LAMED HE (35)*", after the 35 *Haganah* and *PALMAH* members who had been killed on their way to *Gush Etzion* in mid-January.³⁴

Ben-Gurion was in no hurry to approve the raids. For two weeks, he pondered whether the time had come for a change of strategy and taking the initiative. Once again, Yadin demanded to strike at the enemy's lines of communications with the Arab countries, mine the roads and sever the Tyre-Acre railway. His objective was to hamper ALA movements to and from the country; however, Ben-Gurion still hesitated to sanction operations impinging on a neighbouring state.³⁵

Ben-Gurion queried Yadin on the lessons of previous encounters, focusing on the balance of power between Jews and Arabs in personnel, weapons, planning, discipline, morale, efficiency and casualties.³⁶ In response, Yadin drew up an interim summary of the civil war's situation. On the one hand, the Arabs had failed to achieve several goals: They had not overrun any Jewish settlement, had not conquered any town and had not paralyzed any important communication lines. On the other hand, they had fomented the country, and possessed a freedom of movement and a capacity to concentrate forces as they wished.³⁷

Finally, Ben-Gurion endorsed several incursions on Arab villages known to host gangs. Following these assaults, the High Commissioner commented indignantly that the *Haganah* had intensified its reprisals and scarcely concealed its indifference to the casualties thereby caused among non-combatants.³⁸

Since the outbreak of hostilities, the *Yishuv's* leadership contemplated

not only military and economic means of waging the war but also statesman-like avenues for ending hostilities. At the conference in early January that debated the Yishuv's war policy, Sasson referred to three alternatives for ending the war: military triumph, UN intervention and a direct dialogue with the Arabs. Dismissing the feasibility of a decision by force, he reminded his audience: "We have an affair with the Arab world and not only with the Palestinian Arabs." He welcomed a Security Council's intervention to stop the fighting, but above all, he favoured candid talks with the Arabs.³⁹

Shertok was in favour of UN intercession to ensure implementation of partition. He warned, however, that presenting such as a precondition was tantamount to acknowledgement of the Jews' impotence and might jeopardize the entire plan.⁴⁰ According to Shertok's line of strategy, in the absence of Arab partners for a dialogue, the Jewish Agency's diplomacy should concentrate on the UN centre at New York.

Apart from diplomatic efforts in the United States, various individuals tried their hand at mediating between Jews and Arabs. Feivel Polkes, a mysterious businessman who had played an obscure role as an intermediary between the *Haganah* and the Nazi SD (*Sicherheitsdienst* or Security Service) in the 1930s, offered his services to Ben-Gurion at the beginning of the war.⁴¹ He had business connections with Bishop Hakim, and upon the Bishop's return from an errand to Cairo on behalf of Haifa's Arabs he approached Polkes. Hakim asked if the Jews were ready to discuss their incorporation in an Arab federation. Polkes delivered the message to an old acquaintance, the orientalist Michael Assaf, who reported it to Ben-Gurion.⁴²

Emphasizing the need for secrecy, Ben-Gurion instructed Assaf to reply that if Hakim spoke for the Arab League, or if the League appointed another delegate, authorized Jewish representatives would meet him. The mediator should stress his lack of authority to express an opinion, but he might mention an accord based on a Jewish sovereign state as a member of a Middle Eastern federation. An Arab veto of Jewish sovereignty, however, would impede any chance for successful negotiations.⁴³

According to Polkes, Christian Lebanese leaders who favoured another non-Muslim element within the Arab League probably stood behind the Bishop's initiative. He defined Hakim as "devious as a snake and far from sincerity as the truth is far from a lie". Ben-Gurion reiterated that this was his true stance. Assaf might explain the Jewish position to Polkes but Ben-Gurion prohibited mentioning his, or any other name, to Hakim.⁴⁴

The Bishop's feelers soon dissipated with his departure for Lebanon. During the first truce, Hakim resumed his efforts and arrived in Haifa under a UN escort to meet with the Minister of Minorities' Affairs, Behor Shitrit, and with several officials of the Foreign Ministry. This time he

proposed negotiations based on a bi-national demographic and political parity within a unified Palestinian state. The Israelis insisted on Arab recognition of Israel prior to any arrangement, and also on unfettered immigration under exclusive Jewish supervision. The Bishop responded: "By no means would the Arab states recognize Israel, even on the basis of a revised partition."⁴⁵

Hakim's virtue as an intermediary appeared doubtful, particularly after an Egyptian newspaper cited him as vilifying Israel. Upon his arrival in Cairo, the Bishop denounced the treatment he claimed he had been accorded while visiting Haifa. He also accused Israel of desecrating holy places and repressing the town's remaining Arab residents.⁴⁶ Because he still worked on behalf of the Palestinian refugees and required the good will of Israeli authorities, Hakim denied the allegations assigned to him, claiming Azzam — the Arab League's Secretary — had concocted them to obstruct his efforts.⁴⁷ This gambit was the only one that came from the Arab side during the war. Israel sponsored all other attempts at reaching a political accord, Sasson being the principal driving force behind such initiatives.

The tremendous gaps between the Jewish and Arab positions notwithstanding, Sasson tirelessly sought ways to terminate the war. Every now and then, he produced fresh arguments to convince his superiors of the need to talk with the Arabs. His basic premise was to provide the Arabs with an outlet from the war and maintain channels of communications that might be utilized at the appropriate moment.

Sasson proposed partition and creation of a Palestinian state alongside the Jewish one as a workable basis for compromise. Both prospective states should sign long-range treaties of economic, political and military co-operation.⁴⁸ This was a substantial deviation from his previous preference — an agreement with Abdullah. The proposition reflected Sasson's disappointment with the king at that time, including his mistaken estimation that Abdullah was insignificant and it was useless to cherish any hopes in him.⁴⁹

Sasson's ideas were a source of division among his colleagues at the Political Department. Walter Eitan endorsed his proposals. Others took issue with them, particularly Shimoni who charged: "Today there is nothing we can discuss with Arabs . . . We shall not give up partition and they will not acquiesce to it." A dialogue, maintained Shimoni, could emerge only from a decisive change of the military situation. Contesting Sasson's despair in Abdullah, he dismissed as unfounded Sasson's belief that the king had modified his traditional position and joined the *Yishuv's* enemies.⁵⁰

At the beginning of March 1948, the number of attacks on isolated settlements and on Jewish traffic rose. This upsurge in hostilities coloured

British assessments that the Arabs had become "increasingly confident and more aggressive".⁵¹ Nonetheless, the *Haganah* still estimated that large-scale attacks would not take place before the British completed their evacuation. Prevailing explanations ascribed the onslaughts to the Mufti's initiative. In this way, Hajj Amin hoped to hasten the struggle and to prove the uselessness of the foreign commanders that the military committee of the League had dispatched to the country. The SHAY stressed the ALA's abstention from involvement in skirmishes and remarked that occasionally its officers restrained the Palestinian extremists.⁵²

Several Jewish politicians and officials suspected a British conspiracy against the future Jewish state. Zalman Aran, one of MAPAI's leaders, sent a panicked telegram to Shertok in New York claiming that the British were actively helping the ALA. He predicted that Britain would annul the mandate at the beginning of April, when the wholesale Arab onslaught would commence. Under the new regime and free of the mandate's commitments, the British would destroy the *Haganah* and leave the *Yishuv* at the mercy of the Arabs. Aran urged Shertok to mobilize American support to obstruct this alleged scheme. Several members of the Political Department informed Shertok that they shared Aran's fears. However, they concealed his telegram from Ben-Gurion.⁵³

The SHAY believed that the meeting of the League's military committee at Damascus in February that had divided the country into separate command zones had also planned "the spring campaign in Palestine".⁵⁴ Soon, however, the build-up of the Arab forces impacted on conditions on the main roads. Already in February, the number of warnings of a general attack on Jewish transportation had grown. The number of ambushes rose and more alerts followed. Particularly active were Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni in the vicinity of Jerusalem and Salameh in Ramle area.⁵⁵ Yadin strove to forestall the Arabs and gain the initiative. Overcoming protracted hesitation, he permitted field commanders freedom of action in striking at Arab traffic.⁵⁶ This was, however, too late. The initiative in the campaign of the roads was already in the Arabs' hands and they exploited their advantage to inflict several heavy blows on the *Yishuv's* lines of communications.

Despite numerous intelligence reports of growing Arab activity along the roads, the *Haganah* failed to adapt its operational concepts and tactical methods to the new circumstances. The outcome was a chain of successive fiascos at the end of March known as "the convoys' crisis". The list of setbacks included several successful attacks by the Arabs on Jewish convoys to Jerusalem and to isolated settlements around the town, and one attack on a convoy to Yechi'am in western Galilee. All took place during the last ten days of March 1948. The Palestinian press celebrated these victories and indulged in far-reaching exaggerations.⁵⁷

The performance of his partisans enhanced Hajj Amin's prestige among the Palestinians. The Arab section and the *SHAY* expected him to appear in the country promptly with the close of the mandate. Yet, parallel to the strengthening of the Mufti's political position, they discerned growing decay of the Palestinians' organization inside the country.⁵⁸

Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni's 400 *Mujahidin* generated panic in the *Yishuv*, particularly in Jerusalem. On 27 March, Ben-Gurion opened his letter to Shertok: "This is the most horrible day since the war has begun."⁵⁹ From New York, Shertok instructed Shiloah to make clear to foreign correspondents that the fiascos had taken place outside the Jewish state's prospective borders. He feared that the UN might conclude that the Jews were incapable of holding the territory allocated for their state.⁶⁰

The damages that they inflicted and the panic that they provoked notwithstanding, Arab accomplishments in late March did not reflect the true balance of power. The forces that they employed in these battles were small. In a few cases, victory was a matter of mere luck. In other instances, lack of discipline, inexperience, ineffective tactics and command failures on the Jewish side assisted the Arabs' good fortune.⁶¹

A serious political defeat accompanied the *Yishuv*'s military débâcles. Instead of sponsoring the dispatch of an international force to Palestine to secure implementation of partition, the United States withdrew from its support of the UN plan. As a substitute to partition, the Americans advocated a trusteeship regime in Palestine, combined with an effort to stop the fighting between Arabs and Jews. The public announcement of this new policy astonished Zionist leadership. For a moment, the new situation appeared to stack the cards against the Jews.⁶²

In Sasson's eyes, this juncture seemed the right moment to reach an honourable arrangement with the Arabs. He and his colleagues Eitan and Herzog were shaken by the prospect that in the wake of British withdrawal the *Yishuv* would be left to confront the Arabs without American support. In alarmed telegrams, they exhorted Shertok that Jewish Jerusalem was doomed unless an international force would arrive to restore order in the city.⁶³

Officials in the Political Department in Jerusalem recommended coming to terms with the Arabs in accordance with Sasson's proposals. They objected to any endeavour to resist the trusteeship plan by force even if it meant delaying declaration of statehood. One of them, Chayim Berman (Radai), suggested accepting the trusteeship idea on condition that immigration continues during the interim period. Their isolation from Tel Aviv, deteriorating conditions in Jerusalem and the town's uncertain political future all contributed to the depressing spirit — verging on defeatism — that emanated from the proposals of Sasson and his

colleagues.⁶⁴ Anticipating a UN decision, Sasson persisted in trying to persuade Ben-Gurion and Golda Meyerson to take the political initiative and begin talks with the Arabs beforehand. Striving for a long time to depart from Jerusalem, where he felt paralyzed, Sasson proposed to go on a mission to the United States to promote the talks.⁶⁵ By contrast, his colleagues in Tel Aviv preferred to contact Arabs in the country so that the dialogue might have a direct impact on the military situation. Contemplating a supreme military effort to open the road to Jerusalem and seeking to avoid simultaneous escalation in other sectors, Ben-Gurion favoured the second approach and endorsed a dialogue with Qawuqji.

Early ties with ALA's officers had been established through Palestinian middlemen at the end of February 1948. Following Qawuqji's arrival in the country, contacts continued through various channels.⁶⁶ Finally, Qawuqji delivered a message that he would like to meet in person with Jewish delegates. The Jewish Agency's "Arabists" recommended a positive response. Asking for Ben-Gurion's approval, Galili explained the purpose of this ostensibly private meeting as: "Listening, pondering the intentions and schemes, gaining impressions, perhaps confusing and delaying."⁶⁷

Ben-Gurion sanctioned the meeting and personally conveyed his guidelines to the envoys Palmon and Machnes. He vetoed any commitment that might restrict the *Haganah's* freedom of action, but authorized them to say that the Jews were ready for a truce. Ben-Gurion was particularly keen to ascertain "for whom he [Qawuqji] speaks and what he proposes".⁶⁸ On the eve of a major operation in the Jerusalem sector (see p. 87), Ben-Gurion sought to delay Qawuqji joining in the fighting — even by a few days — by holding non-committal talks.

Having met with Qawuqji, Palmon concluded that he was loyal to the Arab League and would obey its orders to fight the Jews or to reach an understanding with them. Qawuqji impressed him as preferring the second option, and Palmon concluded that the ALA's primary mission was to ensure the Hussaynis' submission to the decisions of the League concerning Palestine.⁶⁹

In his memoirs, Qawuqji portrayed the interview as an advance by oriental Jews asking for his protection. They had allegedly agreed to meet once more, but the Jewish Agency intervened, preventing his Jewish partners from coming. He also claimed that he had reported the interview to the military committee in Damascus who had sanctioned the contact. These talks might have delayed the ALA assault of Mishmar Ha'emek by a few days.⁷⁰

At the beginning of April, the Arabs assembled in Palestine about 7,600 combatants who had arrived from the neighbouring countries. They joined the *Jihad al-Muqadas* and a few thousands local militiamen.⁷¹ The

Haganah had by that time 18,000 fully mobilized troops in addition to roughly the same number of part-time recruits in the towns and the rural settlements. However, the turn of the war's tide, which was on the verge, did not emanate from the *Haganah*'s numerical superiority. The essential change that would turn the tide was tied to alteration of its strategy. Under pressure from Ben-Gurion, and in the midst of the "convoys' crisis", the *Haganah* overcame its misgivings and the General Staff began concentrating efforts on the campaign's crucial points. Concurrently, the Arab forces remained dispersed and their commanders faltered in co-ordinating their responses to *Haganah* initiatives. In the absence of a unified and authoritative chain of command, the rivalries among the Mufti, his Palestinian opponents, Qawuqji, the League's military committee and the various Arab states — were transferred to the arena of military operations — a shift that was destined to play a decisive role in the course of events as they unfolded.

The Beginnings of the Palestinians' Mass-Flight

From the outset of the civil war, civilians abandoned their homes to escape the danger. While the *Yishuv* soon overcame this flow and in most cases succeeded in checking it, Palestinian leadership lost control of the situation and the escape of Arab civilians assumed huge proportions.

This flight astonished the *Haganah*'s command and the *Yishuv*'s leadership. They did not understand why the civil population ran away. Attempting to explain the phenomenon, they raised several conjectures that would later become pillars of the Israeli argumentation on the issue. These assumptions also had a considerable influence on the early historiographic works on this topic.¹

Refugeeism was a familiar spectacle in Palestine. During the First World War, thousands of Jews and Arabs left the country or were expelled by the Ottoman authorities. Most of them returned after the British occupied the country. Druze rebels escaping from the French authorities in Syria found shelter in Transjordan and amidst their brethren in Palestine. Thousands of Palestinians had fled from the country during the rebellion of 1936–9. The British expelled politicians and agitators. Wanted terrorists crossed the borders to avoid arrest. Others sought to join Hajj Amin al-Hussayni in his exile in Lebanon. The rebels' gangs terrorized many to leave their homes. Others were simply fed up with the anarchy and went abroad. Most escapees and deportees returned overtly or secretly during and after the Second World War. Naturally, at the onset of the desertion in December 1947 all interpreted the phenomenon in the familiar terms of the past and regarded it as a repetition of the conventional response to the hardships of war.

Before the outbreak of the disturbances, several clues indicated that Palestinian Christians and Hajj Amin's opponents were preparing their escape from a new chaotic period. The murder of Sami Taha, an activist

of the Arab workers' movement, and an attempt on the life of Rafiq al-Tmimi, a prominent partisan of the Mufti, intensified fears of domestic Arab terrorism in the manner of 1936–9.² After the hostilities had flared up, it was evident, however, that the Arabs were running away from the Jews and not only from their brethren. At this early stage, the primary causes for departure were the generally deteriorating conditions, the unstable economic situation and growing unemployment.

Dreams of the Arabs eventual vanishing from the future Jewish state under the circumstances of war had emerged from the outset of fighting, before the stream developed into mass-flight. Yet, talk at the time about exchanging populaces probably meant the removal of Arabs from the Jewish state to its Palestinian twin and not their expulsion to adjacent Arab countries.³

Early in the morning of 3 December 1947, the second day of the Arabs' strike, *Haganah* lookouts in Jerusalem spotted civilians leaving the small hamlet Sheikh Badir (the site of the present Israeli Knesset and government buildings). They left by lorries, pickups and donkeys, heading for the larger nearby village Malkha. On the next day, the villagers of Lifta at the western approaches to the city extricated their wives and children and admitted a *Najada* group that henceforth garrisoned the village. A few days later Arabs moved from the Armenian quarter inside the city walls and from other houses bordering on the Old City's Jewish quarter. The Arabs also evacuated children from the vicinity of Government's House.⁴

This early current also gripped Jaffa. Notables dispatched their kin to safer havens: Egypt, Gaza and Nazareth. Many families left for Nablus.⁵ People moved from neighbourhoods bordering on Tel Aviv to inner quarters. At first, the national committee absorbed them in improvised assembly points. When the burden became too heavy, it prevailed upon them to return to their homes, threatening to halt supplies to the refugee centres, but in vain.⁶

Abd al-Ghani al-Karmi, a Palestinian journalist well acquainted with events and moods in Jaffa, described the city as a bedlam, suffering from want and unemployment. The streets were full of aimlessly roving people and the effect of the dynamics of loose talk on the mood of the street was rampant: "Every day there is a new scare and a new tale of gallantry."⁷

Similarly, an escape began from Haifa. Haifa's Arab population amounted to 71,000 persons of whom 41,000 were Muslims and 30,000 Christians. They constituted a little less than half the town's total population, numbering 145,000 inhabitants.⁸ Upon the outbreak of disturbances, Arab residents evacuated streets adjoining Jewish quarters and panic spread to the inner neighbourhoods. By mid-December, judge Ahmad al-Khalil conveyed that 20,000 Arabs had already left the town.

Although the number seemed exaggerated, other sources later endorsed it. In the first month of hostilities, the Syrian and Lebanese consulates had issued 8,000 visas to residents who planned their departure or actually left the city. Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, Chairman of Haifa's national council, doubted his community's ability to endure under conditions of civil war. He journeyed to Lebanon to report to the Mufti on the desertion and urged him to devise means of checking the escape.⁹

The *Haganah*, *IZL* and *LHI*'s retaliations terrified the Arabs and hastened their flight.¹⁰ Fear of Jewish reprisals drove *fallahin* out of several villages after Arab ambushes had assaulted Jewish vehicles in their vicinity. Palestinian newspapers amplified the panic by publicizing preparations for evacuation across the country and reporting on the arrival of refugees in the heart of Arab regions.¹¹

Already at this early phase, Ben-Gurion was aware of the Palestinians' running away and informed Shertok in New York: "Arabs are fleeing from Jaffa and Haifa. The Bedouins in Sharon are migrating to the exclusive Arab areas." Early in January 1948, he noted in his diary information from British sources that about 15,000 to 20,000 Arabs — mostly foreigners or well-to-do — had left Haifa.¹²

These figures were excessive for foreign Arabs and wealthy Palestinians only. Many deserters from the cities were *fallahin* who had recently immigrated to the towns and were not yet fully settled in their new places of residence. Unemployment and the deteriorating situation drove these day labourers who lived mostly on the outskirts of the towns, back to their home villages where they felt safer and could at least give a hand in tilling their family's land.¹³

The Arab section ascribed the desertion to a shortage of supplies and a dread of spreading lawlessness. Rumours spread that the Hussaynis were planning to bring in bands of *fallahin* to take over the towns. These stories were reminiscent of the domestic terrorism in 1936–9, and non-Palestinian Arabs returned to their native countries to avoid being caught up in a purely Palestinian conflict.¹⁴

Late in December 1947, the flight fanned out from the towns to the countryside. Yadin inaccurately observed that "many regions have been abandoned, especially those having a predominantly Jewish population."¹⁵ Inhabitants fled also from places having an overwhelmingly Arab majority. Palestinians moved from the border zone between the Jewish and Arab quarters in Safed, although they outnumbered the Jews and enjoyed topographical advantages over their neighbours. A local source relayed that wealthy citizens had sent their families to Lebanon. The frenzied lower classes intended to bar the departure of these women and children, claiming that "no discrimination should be made between the rich and the poor". Safed's district officer, the Druze Abdullah al-

Khair, set a bad model by sending his own wife and children to Beirut.¹⁶

Apparently fearing vengeance, the inhabitants of Dir Mukhayzin temporarily abandoned their village following the assassination of two senior *Haganah* officers in separate incidents in the vicinity of the village. Early in January 1948, the villagers evacuated Qalandia, north of Jerusalem and adjacent to the Jewish settlement of Atarot. A handful of village youth stayed behind to keep an eye on the property. In the wake of Qalandia, the remaining residents of Lifta moved to Ramallah. The last *fallahin* left Sheikh Badir in mid-January and a group of militiamen replaced them. As in the cities, the leading families in the villages were often the first to leave, setting a model to others.¹⁷

Following the raid on Hissass in Upper Galilee on 18 December, the tenants abandoned the site. Soon, the Bedouin of Hula valley copied their example. An incursion on Balad al-Sheikh and Hauwasa to retaliate the massacre of 39 Jewish employees on the premises of the Haifa refineries drove away many of the inhabitants. Bedouin who had encamped in Jewish areas departed and non-combatants moved out of villages in battle zones, thus turning them into exclusively military strongholds.¹⁸ After the ALA's abortive attack on Tirat Zvi in Jordan valley on 16 February, the Bedouin neighbours of the kibbutz withdrew to the small town Bisan or crossed the river to Transjordan.¹⁹ While common people wandered from village to village or at times, went over to Lebanon, Syria and Transjordan, the rich departed abroad through Lydda's airport or Haifa and Jaffa's harbours.²⁰

By late December 1947, the flight became a matter of public knowledge in Palestine and in the Arab countries. Jewish newspapers described the emigration of Arabs from the cities and analysed the composition and numbers of emigrants.²¹ According to the Lebanese press, the Arab governments demanded the AHC halt the escape and encourage Palestinians to stay put and fight.²² Several newspapers called for banning the entrance of refugees, quoting Palestinian spokesmen who had denounced "the rats abandoning the sinking ship". On 8 January 1948, the AHC denied allegations that it had ordered the evacuation of certain areas. Hajj Amin and his associates claimed that they had only allowed the removal of children and aged people to safety from villages under extreme danger. This proclamation established that women should stick to their homes and help the combatants.²³

National committees tried on their own initiative, or at the AHC's urging, to discourage the departure and to reassure the population. Several committees publicly reprimanded the escape and took firm measures against deserters, such as burning their left-behind belongings and confiscating their abandoned houses.²⁴ Their efforts were, however, futile. Condemnations or punishments could not placate the population's

growing panic. Although the Palestinians' morale rose steeply following the arrival of ALA units, this upsurge was confined solely to the *fallahin* and the urban proletariat. Panic among the middle classes persisted and a steady exodus of those who could afford to leave the country continued.²⁵

Naturally, in this Jewish-Palestinian civil war under a British umbrella, the civilian population was the main victim. The antagonists still lacked organized armies and could hardly direct their blows at any specific military targets. Their assaults were, therefore, directed against economic objectives and other civilian installations, traffic and lodgings. While several Jewish settlements successfully repelled Arab assaults, *Haganah* raids as well as isolated outrages by the *IZL* and *LHI* had a tremendous effect on the Palestinians. After the demolition of the Semiramis hotel in Jerusalem, a senior *Haganah* officer told Ben-Gurion: "The Arabs have started to run away. We encourage this desertion."²⁶

A resident of Qatamon, Khalil al-Sakakini, sketched in his diary the citizens' eagerness to defend their neighbourhood, but completely ignored the flight.²⁷ Tapped telephone calls from the AHC's office portrayed a different picture, corroborating the information that had been reported to Ben-Gurion. In one of these conversations Hussayn Khalidi muttered: "Jerusalem is lost. No one has remained in Qatamon. Sheikh Jarah has been vacated. People abandon even the Old City. He who has some money — *Yaalla* to Egypt, *Yaalla* to Lebanon, *Yaalla* to Damascus."²⁸ Although at face value as a true portrayal of prevailing conditions, Khalidi's desperate discourse should not be taken with more than a grain of salt, it does reflect the current mood among the Palestinian elite. Mere hearsay of an act said to be contemplated by the *Haganah* against an Arab quarter was sufficient to provoke its residents to run away.²⁹

At this preliminary phase, the flight from the cities resulted primarily from economic hardships. Describing the situation in Jaffa, an Arab journalist reported: "There is no labour, no commerce. Those who could afford to leave have already left."³⁰ Another reason for the middle classes' escape, according to an official of Lebanon's consulate in Jerusalem, was apprehension lest the Arab governments might stop issuing visas to Palestinians.³¹

At the end of January 1948, the Jewish Agency's deputy in Haifa, Tuvia Arazi, told Ben-Gurion that according to his Arab sources 25,000 people had left the town. Arazi's own estimate was 20,000: "Merchants, intellectuals and foreign labourers . . . the rich have gone to Lebanon and the others to Nazareth and to Jenin."³² The flow abated when a local delegation went to Egypt to confer with the Mufti, but resumed its previous rate after the delegates returned without permission to conclude a truce. Rumours spread in the city that the AHC was planning an all-out evacu-

ation of women and children from Haifa to Syria and Lebanon.³³

Wealthy Christian Arabs, fearing the Muslims no less than they feared the Jews, departed also from Jerusalem. An AHC employee residing in Baq'a quarter indicated that the rich inclined "not only to quit the neighbourhood, but to leave Jerusalem and even to depart from the country. Many want to go to the United States."³⁴ In February, citizens began to vacate another prosperous quarter of Jerusalem — Talbiya — after *Haganah* loudspeakers urged them to clear out from their homes. The last Arabs left the spot late in April, after Haifa's fall. Only mixed Arab-Jewish families, foreign consuls and British officials remained.³⁵

The *Haganah*'s retaliations against Arab villages encouraged their inhabitants to run away. Raiding parties often found their targets empty since the populace had expected revenge and hastened to flee.³⁶ Following an *IZL* attack on Feja near Petah Tiqva early in February, the national committee of the larger nearby village Kafr Qassim ordered the tenants to abandon several small hamlets around the Jewish settlement.³⁷ This was an opening for evacuating isolated Arab hamlets in predominantly Jewish areas. Their inhabitants moved to the predominantly Arab parts of the country, or moved to nearby larger villages where they felt safer and could also remain close to their homes and fields, while waiting for the storm to pass.

Thus, for example, the *fallahin* of Caesaria went to nearby Tantura. Since a Jewish company (PICA) owned Caesaria's lands, the *Haganah* decided to occupy the spot permanently, thereby establishing a precedent. Galili explained that if the villagers wished to return, they might do so, but it was essential to deny the gangs any access to the site.³⁸

Following a raid on Bet Zafafa, south of Jerusalem, on 13 February, many inhabitants moved to Hebron, in the centre of an exclusively Arab area, leaving behind mercenary guards to watch their homes. Hebron's relative safety attracted refugees from Jerusalem and even from Jaffa. Ramallah was another asylum for runaways who flocked from Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem. Many escapees were Muslims and their arrival in the hitherto overwhelmingly Christian town provoked tension, amplifying apprehension among Christians of eventual domination by Moslems.³⁹

Parallel to meandering within the country, departures abroad continued and were intensified. Buses went daily to Transjordan, carrying women and children from Bethlehem, Bet Jala and elsewhere.⁴⁰ Now and then word spread that another clan of Palestinian upper class was preparing to depart with the withdrawing British. Other notables left, or prepared to leave for Lebanon or Egypt.⁴¹

The ALA embarked on a systematic evacuation of non-combatants from several frontier villages in order to turn them into military strongholds. In areas close to the borders, women and children crossed to the

opposite side. Thus, for instance, the ALA removed non-combatants from hamlets in Galilee to Shi'ite villages in southern Lebanon.⁴² So far, the wanderers still strayed in both directions. In several localities, the inhabitants refused to obey the instructions of Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni or the ALA to vacate their homes. In other places the evacuees returned, fearing that the Jews would seize the hamlets in their absence.⁴³

By February 1948, estimates of the scope of escape from Jaffa ranged between 15,000 to 25,000. The national committee struggled to stop the stream by imposing a special tax on departures. Muslim Brethren's guards were deployed at the port to collect the levy. The municipal militia threatened defectors with expropriation and even with capital punishment.⁴⁴ According to a British intelligence summary, the AHC also attempted to check the flight by threatening deserters with confiscating their houses.⁴⁵

A conflict between the town council under the Mayor, Yussuf Haikal, and the national committee under Rafiq al-Tmimi, increased anarchy in Jaffa. To bring an end to their feuding, the Mufti removed Tmimi from the town and posted him to the AHC office in Beirut. Nonetheless, quarrels between the Hussaynis and Abdullah's partisans in the city persisted. Obeying no authority, hooligans of all kinds ransacked the streets and terrorized the citizenry. The Muslim Brethren ventured to enforce their own strict code of behaviour and purge the city of whores and alcoholic beverages in the process, looting merchandise in the port under the pretext that it was bound for Jewish hands. The citizenry was furious, but could do little to resist. Under such circumstances, families who could afford to do so, left town and moved elsewhere.⁴⁶

Aware of the escape, the *Haganah's* high command pondered underlying motivations for the phenomena. Israel Amir, Jerusalem district's commanding officer, explained to Ben-Gurion that the flight had already spread to several Arab neighbourhoods.⁴⁷ Ben-Gurion suspected the departure to be nothing but a conspiracy concocted to frustrate retaliatory raids by the Jews and diminish their effect by removing Arab women and children from the country. Until April 1948, he regarded the escape as a calculated withdrawal of non-combatant population upon the orders of Arab commanders and out of military considerations.⁴⁸ This perception of the process as a premeditated and organized exodus was erroneous. Although there were a few such instances, these cases were not characteristic of the general situation.

At first, the Arab section underestimated the significance of flight and doubted stories of its scope. While admitting the fact of the Arabs' escape, Sasson maintained that it embraced thousands, not tens of thousands. News from the field, however, contradicted his estimate. Agents in Lydda airport reported a substantial rise in the number of Arab families departing by air to Beirut and to Cairo. Izhak Navon composed lists of

Arab dignitaries who had left Jerusalem for Arab countries. Despite attempts at checking the desertion, the AHC and the national committees were unable to examine the pretexts for travelling abroad and lost control of this movement.⁴⁹

British observers confirmed meandering within Palestine and the escape of the middle classes to adjacent countries. In London, Glubb Pasha explained the situation in familiar terms, warning of the likelihood of "another Bengal": Jews and Arabs would flee to their respective areas in a manner reminiscent of events in the wake of Britain's recent withdrawal from India.⁵⁰

Concurrent with the departure of the towns' indigenous inhabitants, refugees from the surrounding countryside flocked into the cities and multiplied the chaos. Women and children from quarters and villages outside the walls of Jerusalem gathered in the Old City.⁵¹ After the United States suspended its support of the partition plan, the panic diminished temporarily. Nonetheless, many families were still making their way out of the country. In Jerusalem, the AHC permitted 25 households of notables to depart for Transjordan, but delayed distribution of permits to avoid alarm. The Arab League had allegedly instructed the national committees to make escape as difficult as possible: "Businessmen must get the approval of the Chamber of Commerce. The women must appear in person if they want an exit permit."⁵²

Concurrent to trying to hold back the unmanageable flight, the AHC inspired an orderly evacuation of women and children from battle-ridden regions. In mid-March it had sanctioned the departure of women, children and elderly men from Jerusalem.⁵³ At the end of the month, it ordered evacuation of women and children from Qastel. A few days later the *PALMAH* occupied the village, finding it empty of men as well. By contrast, the villagers of nearby Bet Naquba refused an order to move out their families and appealed to 'Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni to overrule the directive.⁵⁴

In Haifa, Bishop Hakim sponsored the transfer of Christian children to Lebanon. Two thousand children registered, and a first group departed on 11 March. The national council sent a special team to Syria and Lebanon to attend to the necessary arrangements for admitting Haifa's children.⁵⁵ The Mufti intervened and demanded Hajj Ibrahim evacuate the non-combatants to safer areas inside Palestine and not abroad. Haifa's national committee preferred to disobey his instruction and undertook to complete the extrication of 3,000 children by the end of April.⁵⁶

This organized withdrawal of children was an exception. As a rule, the escape from Haifa emanated from trepidation and was very disorderly. One day, on 30 March, 800 fugitives from the city arrived without any previous notice in Shafa'amr, a large village 10 miles northeast of Haifa.

Apparently, they sought the protection of the ALA's Druze regiment that arrived at the site on the same day.⁵⁷

Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim and four other members of the national committee left in late March and early April for the neighbouring countries and did not return — bolstering the tempo of the departure. More groups of children left for Lebanon and the daily desertion rate from Haifa rose to 150.⁵⁸ Apart from abandoning the town for Syria, Lebanon and Samaria, people moved from insecure neighbourhoods close to the front-line, into the heart of the city's Arab area where they occupied the escapees' houses.⁵⁹

Excluding a few attempts — mostly ineffectual — at organizing an evacuation of the non-combatant population, the flight during this phase of the civil war still resembled previous reactions to anarchy in Palestine, and in the Middle East in general. No one expelled the escapees or occupied their homes and lands, except for their own quasi-administrations. No massacres or deliberate intimidation of any kind took place yet. The people that had abandoned their homes in the towns and villages were confident that they would be back shortly.

Throughout that period, no enemy territory could have been occupied by either side, even temporarily. First signs that this situation was about to change were visible by early March. ALA's officers from Samaria visited Arab hamlets near Jaffa to plan their defence and ordered the inhabitants to evacuate their wives and children. Only men of service age should have stayed in these front-line positions. Abandonment of these hamlets sparked for the first time the dangerous prospect of the ALA deploying in such proximity to the *Yishuv's* centre in Tel Aviv, provoking suggestions within the Jewish camp of occupying Arab villages to preempt their seizure by the ALA. Subsequently, the *Haganah* occupied two small hamlets on the city's northern outskirts, Sumeil and Sheikh Munis (now the site of the Tel Aviv University campus).⁶⁰

Anticipating the conquest of more Arab hamlets, Galili instructed *Haganah* field commanders about treatment of residents who had not escaped. He established a principle that behaviour *vis-à-vis* these Arabs should be compatible with the Zionist movement's basic program of fully recognizing their personal rights. Deviation from this directive might be justified only on grounds of security and military exigencies.⁶¹

Galili's guidelines were the first expression since the outset of hostilities of Israel's future disposition towards its prospective Arab minority. This policy derived from the status of Jews as a minority and ensuing problems in Europe between the two world wars. Israel's leaders, however, soon realized that several principles were inapplicable under Middle Eastern conditions. In contrast with the Jewish communities in Europe, Israel's Arab minority in 1948 did not seek integration and assim-

ilation, but was hostile and affiliated to an antagonistic surrounding majority.

The significance of the issue of the civilian population grew during April when the fighting entered a new stage. The war took on a different essence with which the Palestinians had no previous experience. They responded to escalation in hostilities in their traditional manner, unaware of the unavoidable consequences.

From a Civil War to Regular Warfare

In April 1948, the British evacuation was in full swing. The fighting entered a new phase and assumed a different character. Since the outbreak of hostilities, the belligerents had built up their forces and improved their tactics. By launching its first major offensive, operation *NAHSHON*, to open the road to Jerusalem, the *Haganah* made a significant step in maturing from a militia to a regular army.

Before embarking on offensive operations, the *Yishuv* introduced a system of conscription based on age, marital status, previous military experience and professional skills. Only a few age groups actually enlisted, but the entire potential reservoir of Jewish personnel was registered in anticipation of the war's next stages. By absorbing the conscripts and organizing them in battalions and brigades, the *Haganah* was rapidly transforming from a paramilitary territorial organization into a mobile military force.

Veterans of the Second World War, officers and NCOs from the British army's Jewish Brigade introduced a system of mass training to prepare the conscripts for combat. Hundreds of *Haganah* members attended hastily improvised courses for platoon and section commanders. Thousands were trained in handling support arms, sniping, sabotage, medical first aid and wireless communications. This nucleus of junior field commanders and instructors in various military professions returned to the newly organized companies, battalions and brigades to absorb, train and lead the fresh recruits.

The *Haganah* General Staff re-formed on the British GAQ model, with several supplementary functions. First steps were taken to build an air force and a navy. The logistic infrastructure expanded to address demands required by emergency conditions and meet the requirements of sustaining a mobilized army. In April 1948, the reorganized *Haganah* emerged from

the underground into the open field. From the Jewish viewpoint, henceforth until the end of the mandate, the campaign increasingly resembled regular warfare against an irregular enemy.¹

Parallel to operation *NAHSHON*, the Zionist Action Committee convened in Tel Aviv. This body was the movement's source of authority between Zionist Congresses. During this special session, the delegates approved a series of constitutional changes that manifested the move towards a new regime. The primary goal of the reform was centralizing the national effort under a quasi-government in anticipation of the next, and crucial, phase of the war. They laid foundations for creating a central authority recognized by the overwhelming majority of the *Yishuv*. The establishment of the People's Executive in April (renamed The Provisional Government on 15 May 1948) marked the *Yishuv*'s transition from a pioneering and voluntary society into a sovereign and hierarchical state.

Throughout this period, the Palestinians lagged behind, missing the opportunity to develop a similar organizational and military effort. On the one hand, the Arabs reinforced their power by bringing into the country a few thousand troops and substantial quantities of arms. On the other hand, they failed to establish a unified system of military command or a central political authority to lead the total national effort — the first necessity of conducting war.²

The British withdrawal left the country's Arab areas without any administration capable of replacing the mandatory government. The local commanders in these regions became the principal and, in some places, the sole authority. A variety of civil problems demanded their attention and hindered the handling of urgent military requirements. Appeals to Arab government officials to remain at their administrative posts, and the AHC promises to secure their rights, met no response.³

In April, as the British withdrawal entered high gear, the army's willingness to intervene in the fighting and demonstrate Britain's sovereignty diminished. The British were contented with securing roads and installations essential for executing their evacuation plan. In the vacuum they left behind the *Yishuv* overwhelmed the ALA and the Palestinians, from late March until the invasion of the Arab armies in mid-May.

By this juncture in time more than 2,000 people had died in the war. According to the CID statistics, fatal casualties included 895 Jews, 991 Arabs, 123 British soldiers and policemen and 38 others or unidentified. The number of injured persons on all sides rose to 4,275.⁴

Diplomatic endeavours to conclude a truce and prevent spread of the fighting accompanied the military confrontation from the beginning. These efforts intensified at the end of March 1948 and persisted until termination of the mandate. Britain, the United States, the UN, the International Red Cross, foreign consuls and, of course, the belligerents

themselves were all involved in these futile ventures. Having ended in a fiasco, they vanished into oblivion. Nonetheless, diplomacy had a significant impact on the stances and steps of all parties concerned. The later mission of Count Folke Bernadotte, the mediator on behalf of the Security Council, was to a large extent a follow-up of these earlier attempts. His mission cannot be properly appreciated without understanding its pre-invasion roots.⁵

The outset of this new era did not forecast its outcomes. The principal innovation of the *Haganah* was replacing its militia-like mindset with a military one, striving to combine and concentrate efforts to achieve a decisive outcome militarily. Ben-Gurion identified the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road as the campaign's centre of gravity. Having done so, he prevailed upon the *Haganah* High Command to relinquish routine principles and traditional methods and focus its endeavours on this sector at the expense of other regions.

An intensification of the *Yishuv's* economic warfare against the Palestinians accompanied the spread of fighting. On 12 April, the "Centre for Economic Warfare" commenced its regular activity. Its terms of reference included managing relations with Arabs in Jewish-controlled territories, dealing with treatment of absentees' property and waging war by economic means. Several members held that the time had come to abandon scruples and embark upon a total struggle against the Palestinians, employing all means at the *Yishuv's* disposal.⁶

Parallel to the Jews' difficulties, particularly in maintaining supply lines to Jerusalem and isolated settlements, the immense effects of the campaign upon the Palestinians soon became apparent.⁷ Land communications between Jaffa and Gaza ceased completely. A service of yachts and motor-boats between the two ports was only a partial substitute. By the second half of April, Jaffa was economically paralyzed. Banks and post offices closed, and the city suffered from a shortage of fuel and medicines. Supplies of flour that had been brought from Haifa via Nablus and Lydda were sufficient for one month only. In other regions, conditions were even more arduous.⁸

Growing economic hardships combined with military setbacks to accelerate the Palestinians' disintegration. Prices soared. Efforts to organize rationing failed. The national committees went bankrupt and had to delay payments to the combatants, their dependants and next-of-kin of the fallen. Despite growing economic plight, the Arabs still managed to survive owing to help from vestiges of the mandatory administration and assistance of the Legion in transporting petrol and other essential commodities from one place to another and supervising their distribution.⁹

Economic warfare had an especially significant role in Jerusalem.

Destined by the terms of the partition plan to be a part of the international enclave and excluded from the Jewish state, the city's Jewish population felt itself besieged. The *Yishuv* invested an enormous military, economic and organizational effort in attempts to break the siege. The goal was to stockpile sufficient supplies in the city for any contingency, including continuous isolation. Similarly, the city's Arab residents were also under a partial siege as long as *Gush Etzion* and Neve Ya'acov controlled the southern and northern approaches to the town respectively. Suffering from a shortage of fuel and food, the Arabs of Jerusalem had to employ long detours to bring in provisions. Petrol from Haifa refineries had to be delivered via Transjordan and Allenby Bridge. The Legion's unauthorized attack on Neve Ya'acov on 18 April endeavoured to open the road for passage of a tanker convoy.¹⁰

Two successful tactical strikes preceded operation *NAHSHON*. The *PALMAH* occupied Qastel, controlling the western approach to Jerusalem, and Giv'ati raided Hassan Salameh's headquarters near Sarafand. After the foray, Salameh's Iraqi gang defected, complaining that it had not received munitions and rations, and joined Qawuqji's troops in Samaria. Subsequent skirmishes during *NAHSHON* and operation *HAMETZ* later in April totally destroyed this Palestinian force.¹¹

The occupation of Qastel had significant consequences. The *Haganah's* first conquest of an Arab village injured Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni's prestige. An enflamed mob in Jerusalem demanded a counter-attack to liberate the hamlet. British officers apparently offered to remove the Jews from the site and replace them with a military garrison. The army indeed did so in another village that the *Haganah* had occupied at the opening of operation *NAHSHON* — Dir Mukhayzin. Seeking to obliterate the impact of the defeat by reoccupying the spot, the AHC office in Jerusalem rejected the British proposal. Abd al-Qadir, who had been in Beirut when Qastel had fallen, hastened to return. National Guards from Ramallah and Jerusalem joined the *Mujahidin* from Bir Zeit in the assault and messengers went to nearby villages, urging their youth to assist in recapturing the village.¹²

On 8 April the Arabs successfully stormed Qastel, but Abd al-Qadir was killed in the battle and several of his lieutenants were wounded. Subsequently, the *Mujahidin* abandoned their positions to attend their chief's funeral and the *Haganah* recaptured the village. Qastel's second fall sparked dispute and generated mutual criticism among the Arabs. The Hussaynis blamed Qawuqji for ignoring their requests and denying them assistance. He retorted that they had instigated this battle contrary to his plans.¹³

Operation *NAHSHON's* objective was to seize key posts along the road to Jerusalem and hold them permanently to secure the movement of

convoys. On 6 April, *Haganah* troops occupied several villages south west of Latrun. In the following days they extended their control over most of the road, except for the Latrun sector proper, which was still held by British troops. For the first time, the *Haganah* employed the equivalent of a brigade in a single action. It was also the first experiment in taking control of territory and holding it against counter-attacks. The logistic effort in supplying a population of 100,000 Jerusalem inhabitants with large quantities of essential commodities within a very short time span (i.e. the duration of the operation) was unprecedented. During the campaign's ten days, several convoys — each consisting of hundreds of lorries loaded with food, petrol and other essential commodities — arrived in Jerusalem. Last but not least, for most soldiers — veteran *Haganah* members as well as new conscripts — this was the first opportunity to experience life in the field under combat conditions and practice military routine over a relatively extended period.¹⁴

The defeat of the two Hussayni military leaders — Salameh and Abd al-Qadir — put the Arab forces' co-ordination and their ability to co-operate to the test. The AHC office in Jerusalem prevailed upon Qawuqji to dispatch reinforcements to the city, particularly artillery.¹⁵ Qawuqji was in deep trouble himself following his defeat at Mishmar Ha'emek. Only after he gave up any hope of a successful military feat in this area, and under orders from the military committee at Damascus, did Qawuqji send his guns to the Jerusalem front. In his memoirs however, Qawuqji claimed that in the midst of the battle at Mishmar Ha'emek he had dispatched his artillery to Nabi Samuwil — north of Qastel — to support Abd al-Qadir's attack and brought the guns back to Samaria only after the Arabs had reoccupied the village.¹⁶

Qawuqji's claim was no more credible than his other excuses for his débâcles. Although rumours of the arrival of artillery to rescue Qastel were widespread after the hamlet's first occupation, *Haganah* ground and air reconnaissance failed to identify any cannon in the nearby villages and probably there were not any.¹⁷

Operation *NAHSHON* exposed the Arabs' poor organization for war. The Palestinians and the ALA did not adapt themselves to the changing nature of the fighting. Their logistics were clearly inadequate. There was no system of supplying frontline soldiers with ammunition, food, water or medical aid. Under such conditions, they could not sustain combat beyond their permanent bases for more than a few hours. In his memoirs, Glubb described how in the midst of the battle at Qastel he had witnessed a taxi arriving in Ramallah. The passengers bought rifle bullets on the streets to supply fighters at the battlefield who had exhausted their ammunition.¹⁸ Another lesson — underscored by the difficulties encountered in moving reinforcements from Samaria to Jerusalem — was the Arabs'

inability to wage several battles simultaneously.¹⁹ The death of Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni raised the question of his successor as the Palestinians' military leader. Ultimately, the Mufti appointed Emil Ghuri, a politician lacking any military competence or experience. His nomination reflected the shortage of suitable candidates for key positions among the Palestinians. It also amplified and exacerbated internal discord since Ghuri insisted on receiving his orders from Hajj Amin and ignored the AHC branch in Jerusalem.²⁰

Shocked by their defeat, the Palestinians awaited the Mufti's imminent arrival to reverse the situation. The British, too, expected him to appear in the country at the latest on termination of the mandate.²¹ The AHC asked the High Commissioner to allow Hajj Amin's return as the only means of checking the Palestinians' collapse. Cunningham's refusal notwithstanding, the Mufti contemplated his return — either independently and prior to the Arab armies' invasion, or in the invaders' wake. When the time came, however, he found that he had nowhere to go and no one waiting to welcome him.²²

Hajj Amin's disintegrating prestige opened the way for extending the ALA's influence to the Jerusalem area.²³ Qawuqji, however, was barely in a position to take advantage of this window of opportunity. Ignoring the military committee's directive to confine himself to harassing Jewish traffic, Qawuqji attempted to conquer a Jewish settlement, Mishmar Ha'emek. Probably, his aim was to join forces with the Druze regiment in Shafa'amr to encircle Haifa. The kibbutz, however, repelled the assault and the *Haganah's* subsequent counter-attack inflicted a serious blow to Qawuqji's troops and his reputation.²⁴ Premature reports in the Arab newspapers announced the settlement's conquest. Qawuqji could not, however, conceal the defeat for long. Parallel to the *Haganah's* advance, his tone changed. He amplified the strength of Jewish forces opposing the ALA and complained of his own exhausted munitions. Although Qawuqji did not dare speak of a disaster, the meaning was clear enough, and his superiors drew the self-evident conclusions.²⁵

While the battle of Mishmar Ha'emek was raging, the Arab Prime Ministers convened in Cairo for a gathering of the League Council. Qawuqji's reports bewildered them, and they dispatched Egypt's Foreign Minister, Hashaba Pasha, to Sir Ronald Campbell, the British ambassador. Admitting defeat, Hashaba requested British intervention to rescue the League's army from total ruin. He mentioned the army's previous interventions to relieve Jewish troops in distress. Campbell urged Cunningham to respond favourably for the sake of Britain's future relations with the Arab League. The High Commissioner replied that the situation was not that serious and arbitration by the army was unnecessary.²⁶

Rumours in Palestine exonerated the Arabs' defeats by alleging the presence of Russian soldiers on the Jewish side. Qawuqji disseminated such stories to excuse his own undoing. The Jews, he reported to Damascus, had twin-engine bombers flown by Russian pilots and non-Jewish Russians were helping the *Haganah*.²⁷ Learning of this imaginary scoop, Syria's Minister of Defence, Ahmad Sharabati, rushed to the British legation. He complained to the military attaché that a Soviet brigade was operating in Tulkarm area where the ALA had allegedly intercepted wireless communications in Russian and had found two bodies of Russian combatants. Moreover, he asserted, a Russian officer had led the Jewish troops in the battle of Haifa.²⁸

Some Foreign Office's officials readily swallowed these fabrications. Long ago, they had warned of the forthcoming Jewish state becoming a channel for Soviet penetration of the Middle East.²⁹ The news from Damascus apparently corroborated their premonitions. They hastened to ask for War Office confirmation; however, military intelligence disappointed them. Dismissing the information forthwith, MI officers assured that arrival of Russians in Palestine without British awareness was inconceivable. Convinced that the Arabs had spread these tales to drag the British into assisting the Palestinians, the War Office refused to approach Palestine HQ for verification. and informed the Foreign Office that if there had been any foundation to these fantasies, the GSI Palestine, Colonel Norman, would surely have reported them. A disillusioned official notified Broadmead in Damascus: "Inquiries here revealed the rumours to be baseless. Qawuqji had propagated them to excuse his defeats and mobilize help."³⁰

Owing to Abd al-Qadir's death and Salameh's disappearance, Qawuqji remained the prominent Arab commander in the field despite his failure at Mishmar Ha'emek. He prepared to shift ALA endeavours to the Jerusalem road, with the goal of cutting the city off from the *Yishuv*'s centre. Galili and *Haganah* General Staff wanted to tie the ALA down in western Samaria and asked Ben-Gurion to sanction kindling military activity in this area — a sector that had been relatively quiet so far.³¹

Ben-Gurion preferred to take advantage of the momentum of operation *NAHSHON*'s accomplishments. He contemplated besieging Arab Jerusalem and launching a secondary effort to clear Izra'el valley and the Mount Gilbo'a sector of remaining Arab pockets. The only hindrance to the *Haganah*'s capability of attaining these objectives was interference by the British or the Legion.³²

Unexpectedly, in mid-April 1948 the campaign's focus switched from the hills overlooking the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road, to the city itself. Ben-Gurion's directive remained in force for only two days. Instead of seizing key positions around the city, *Haganah* General Staff suddenly halted

actions along the road and dispatched the *PALMAH* Harel brigade that should have executed them, to Jerusalem. Erroneous intelligence of an imminent British withdrawal from the city, and alarming news on the concentration of Arab forces ready to occupy vacated positions, prompted this change in deployment.³³ A few days later, the rumours about an early British retreat and handing over the security zones to the Arabs proved bogus.³⁴

Based on alarming telegrams from Jerusalem, this decision had a crucial impact on future fighting in the city and along the road. The gains from *NAHSHON* were partly wasted. Certain sectors of the road returned to Arab control and Jewish Jerusalem remained under siege. Furthermore, the achievements of the new operation *YEVUSSI* inside the city were meagre. Due to the continued presence of British forces in Jerusalem, the *Haganah* lacked the freedom of action that it already enjoyed in the open ground around the town. British intervention blocked occupation of Sheikh Jarah — a neighbourhood on the planned route of the British army's withdrawal from the city, and forced the *PALMAH* to retreat. Harel's second accomplishment — the occupation of Qatamon — left the Arabs powerless to resist further attacks but the Jewish force, too, by that time suffering from fatigue, was unable to exploit their success.

Most Arab combatants in Jerusalem took part in the battle of Qatamon. The surrounding villages, however, stood aloof and did not respond to summons from the city, claiming that they had first of all to address their own defence.³⁵ The fighting took place mainly in and around San Simon monastery. After many hours of fierce skirmishing, the contenders were close to exhaustion. Realizing that no aid was coming from the ALA or from the Legion, the Arabs lost hope of recapturing the monastery and withdrew to reorganize the remnants of their forces.³⁶

Arab Jerusalem would have been helpless had a major Jewish offensive followed suit. The expected attack, however, did not materialize. The *PALMAH* units were weary and the *Haganah* High Command assumed that by no means would the British allow the war to reach a decisive stage in Jerusalem until the mandate's end. This conviction, reinforced by the Sheikh Jarah precedent, was apparently mistaken. Before the battle of Qatamon, Cunningham's appraisal was that "the Jews have every prospect of securing domination of Jerusalem".³⁷ After the Arabs' defeat, he admitted the impossibility of preventing a Jewish offensive, should it develop. In his view, the British garrison in the city sufficed only for securing evacuation routes. Moreover, he had reservations about using artillery or aircraft in the holy city as the British army had done in Jaffa under similar circumstances. In a last minute endeavour to stop the fighting by diplomatic means, Cunningham asked the foreign consuls to mediate a cease-fire between the antagonists.³⁸

Believing a victory in Jerusalem was impossible, the *Haganah* shifted its efforts back to the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road. Harel assaulted and occupied the last villages on the southern flank of the route. In Jerusalem, fighting reverted to routine exchange of fire and sporadic shelling. Several warnings of impending Arab attacks, particularly to recapture Qatamon, did not materialize.³⁹

To restore Palestinian confidence, Arab newspapers publicized the imminent arrival of ALA reinforcements that were allegedly preparing in Qatana and in Sinai to invade the country. Cunningham prevailed upon the Colonial Office and British ambassadors in Arab capitals to find out if there was any truth to this tale. Campbell in Cairo, denied any knowledge of an organized invasion but confirmed the presence of Sudanese volunteers at Al-Arish, in north-east Sinai, on their way to Palestine.⁴⁰ Kirkbride retorted that such hearsay of an invasion was mere propaganda. There was no evidence that “a second Arab army” existed and segments of the first were withdrawing to Syria.⁴¹

Since Qawuqji’s departure for Palestine, Qatana barracks had been empty. Late in March the camp temporarily reopened to absorb volunteers from northern Syria and Muslim Brethren from Egypt. They were mobilized into a new regiment — “Qadassia” — and departed for Palestine together with the Druze detachment. The Egyptians went to Gaza and the others reinforced mixed towns such as Haifa and Jaffa. This was probably the source of rumours about a “second invasion”. The press, however, cited highly inflated numbers, and Qawuqji had to deny such extravagant figures.⁴²

Ignoring the Mufti and his nominee, Emil Ghuri, the military committee of the League extended Qawuqji’s command to the central front — including Jerusalem. Subsequently, he transferred most of his troops from Samaria to Latrun and nearby hamlets. Under the nose of the British army, they seized the ground in proximity to the police fortress dominating the road to Jerusalem, blocking the route.⁴³

In the absence of reinforcements from the Arab countries, Qawuqji should have replaced the ALA in Samaria with Palestinian recruits. He ordered the national committees to enlist half a percent of the population, equip the recruits with rifles and pay for their maintenance. Moreover, he wanted to incorporate the Arab segment of the Palestine police into the ALA.⁴⁴ As in other instances, this was easier said than done. The defeated ALA did not attract local youth. No resources were available for equipping and training the villagers. Former policemen sometimes joined its ranks on an individual basis, but there was no country-wide or regional collective transition from the police to the ALA. The only exception was Jerusalem, where the Arab policemen remained an organized body after termination of the mandate.

While fierce battles were taking place in and around Jerusalem, the ALA and the Palestinians were losing ground elsewhere, particularly in the country's northern sector. Recognizing his fiasco at Mishmar Ha'emek, Qawuqji appealed for assistance to Shakib Wahab, leader of the Druze regiment in Shafa'amr. Preliminary negotiations between Jewish liaison officers and Wahab's lieutenants about the Druzes' ultimate defection had not yet been concluded. In mid-April, Wahab responded to Qawuqji's call and assaulted two settlements north-east of Haifa. *Haganah* troops and the settlers repelled all the assaults. Having exhausted their ammunition, the Druze retreated to Shafa'amr, carrying with them approximately one hundred casualties, and resumed contacts with their Jewish liaisons.

Behind Wahab's back, a number of Druze officers met with Moshe Dayan and other *Haganah* envoys and offered to desert with their men and join the *Haganah* ranks. This proposition seemed far-fetched and after consulting with Yadin, Dayan turned down the offer. The Jews preferred that their Druze partners perform sabotage operations in the Arabs' rear and encourage desertion among their comrades. The Druze acquiesced and by the beginning of May, 212 soldiers in Wahab's regiment had deserted and returned to Jabal Druze.

Cognizant of his soldiers' mood, Wahab himself met with Jewish liaisons on 9 May 1948. He agreed to co-operate with the *Haganah*, providing that "his name and honour would not be degraded thereby". The parties pledged to avoid attacking each other, and Wahab undertook to create a neutral Druze enclave in western Galilee. Faithful to this understanding, Wahab ignored Acre's appeals for help and was careful to be absent when the *Haganah* occupied Shafa'amr's police fortress after the British evacuated the site.⁴⁵

Qawuqji's defeat and the Druzes' intrigue determined Haifa's fate. Adhering to his principal task of defending the evacuation, the Northern Sector's Commanding Officer, General Hugh Stockwell, decided on 21 April to confine his troops' positions to securing routes to and from the future Haifa enclave — the last bridgehead to be kept by British troops after termination of the mandate. Emphasizing his determination to keep the military and the police out of clashes between Arabs and Jews, he informed the city's Jewish and Arab notables of his decision.⁴⁶

On the following day, the battle of Haifa commenced. The Arabs disintegrated rapidly and a mass flight began, concurrent with efforts to achieve a cease-fire through British mediation. The Arabs rejected Stockwell's stipulations for a truce and decided to evacuate the city under protection of the British army (see p. 103).⁴⁷

Haifa's downfall had an immediate impact on the state of Palestinians elsewhere, since all their petrol supplies had to be brought from the

refineries through routes now under Jewish control. British soldiers still escorted tankers from Haifa to Jenin, but the number of convoys diminished and this source of supply was likely to cease after termination of the mandate.⁴⁸

The *Haganah*'s success in Haifa prompted the *IZL* to seek a similar triumph by occupying an Arab town, as well. Its target was Jaffa, which appeared on the verge of collapsing. This strike forestalled the *Haganah*'s operation *HAMETZ* for encircling the city, and for a few days placed Jaffa in the spotlight of hostilities. At first, ALA combatants in Jaffa and the local militia fought back. The population, however, panicked and a mass flight ensued by land and by sea. Qawuqji sent reinforcements from Samaria. Their impact on the fighting, however, was marginal. Half did not even reach the town and dispersed in villages on the eastern approaches to the city.⁴⁹

Contrary to other occupied towns, Jaffa was within the boundaries of the Palestinian state according to the partition resolution. This fact made it easier for the Arab governments to demand the British army's prompt intervention. Following the *IZL* assault, the British army threatened to retaliate against the organization's bases in Tel Aviv. Troops moved out from Sarafand and took up positions along the front line facing Tel Aviv and in key posts inside Jaffa.⁵⁰

The *IZL* was forced to halt its advance, but the *Haganah* persisted in putting indirect pressure on Jaffa. Rumours of ALA reinforcements on their way to the city and stories of imminent intervention by the Legion motivated Yadin's decision to launch operation *HAMETZ*, designed to take the villages east of the town. The British army reacted to the *Haganah*'s attack by shelling and bombing *IZL* positions.⁵¹

Jaffa's probable downfall alarmed the Arab League. The military committee ordered Qawuqji to dispatch a battalion to the city. As in Mishmar Ha'emek three weeks earlier, Qawuqji had no clear grasp of the situation. He reported to Damascus on measures that he allegedly had taken to extend help, including the shelling of Tel Aviv. None of these steps actually took place although all were cited in instructions and telegrams. Qawuqji himself concocted several false reports while others were based on falsified accounts by his subordinates.⁵² Distrusting him, some of Qawuqji's lieutenants corresponded behind their commander's back with the committee in Damascus. Qawuqji's relations with the committee deteriorated due to Safwat and Hashimi's suspicions regarding the accuracy of his reports and Qawuqji's criticism of the committee's impotence.⁵³

On 30 April, the outcome of the battle for Jaffa was practically decided. The town's commander on behalf of the ALA escaped to Beirut by sea. After the *Haganah* occupied the surrounding villages, the siege became

more effective. Reinforcements and supplies could not reach the town and were halted at Ramle. The number of fatalities and injured grew steadily. The wounded received no medical care since most doctors, nurses and other employees of government hospitals had fled. Although the British insisted on maintaining the cease-fire, it was obvious that the besieged city would collapse immediately upon their withdrawal, which took place on 13 May.⁵⁴

Fighting also intensified in Galilee. On 16–18 April, the British evacuated Safed and Tiberias ahead of schedule. Immediately, the Jews and the Arabs rushed to take possession of former British strongholds and dispatched reinforcements to the region.⁵⁵ The last British soldier left the area on 28 April. The British withdrawal enabled the *PALMAH* commander, Yigal Alon, to direct his efforts towards Safed, and after some initial setbacks the town was taken on 10 May.⁵⁶

Pending expiration of the mandate, the *Haganah* endeavoured to subjugate isolated Arab villages inside the boundaries of the future Jewish state and hamlets dominating possible invasion's routes. On the opposing side, the ALA bolstered its efforts to block the road to Jerusalem near Latrun but failed to defend Safed and Acre. The bulk of ALA troops moved from Samaria to Ramallah and Latrun. Smaller detachments arrived in Lydda and Ramle.⁵⁷

Fresh Arab forces joined the fighting and in certain places took the initiative. These efforts were at the same time a belated contribution to the League's disintegrating enterprise and forerunners of the regular armies' invasion. Muslim Brethren from Egypt attacked kibbutz Kfar Darom in the Negev, while a Legion unit attacked *Gush Etzion* on its way out of the country.⁵⁸

According to Glubb, the immediate reason for the Legion's assault was his determination to open the road for passage of a convoy that brought supplies from British depots in the Suez Canal zone. This delivery was likely to be the last before the probable enforcement of an embargo in response to the invasion. Another reason was *Gush Etzion's* capability of thwarting deployment of the Legion in Hebron — a core goal in Abdullah's scheme. Jewish Jerusalem's commanding officer, David Shealtiel, arrived in Tel Aviv for consultations. He demanded a "green light" to take the initiative on the heels of the British evacuation, launching an offensive in Jerusalem. Ben-Gurion still hesitated, fearing reactions in the Christian world. Golda Meyerson reinforced his doubts and Eliezer Caplan, the Jewish Agency's treasurer, suggested accepting a truce in Jerusalem to free troops for deployment elsewhere. Shealtiel insisted on exploiting the Arabs' weakness in the town. The foreign combatants, he claimed, numbered only 800. Their morale was low and they were disintegrating. Ben-Gurion refrained from taking a decision, but

ordered that Jerusalem be assigned priority in personnel and arms, even if a cease-fire was achieved in the city.

After the Legion's attack on *Gush Etzion*, Ben-Gurion changed his mind. Now he sought to engage the Legion on its way to Jerusalem. The *Haganah* General Staff's leading officers were split between those who favoured challenging the Legion in Jerusalem and those who opposed such a move, fearing that a confrontation with the Legion might harm the Jews in the city. Ben-Gurion decided to take the initiative but left the final decision in the hands of Shealtiel.⁵⁹

The depressing report of *Gush Etzion*'s downfall on 13 May dampened Shealtiel's aggressive spirit. Dr Rudolf Wert, Jerusalem's chief medical officer, had accompanied IRC delegates who had handled the settlements' capitulation. Upon his return, he gave an account of the massacre that had taken place in Kfar Etzion following the surrender.⁶⁰ Having listened to his report, Shealtiel concluded: "The enemy is not a disciplined and civilized army. Hence it is dangerous to negotiate with it, particularly in case of a surrender." Another lesson learned was that authorization of a retreat in time might have saved some of the besieged defenders from death or captivity.⁶¹

The fate of *Gush Etzion* was a first hint that the policy forbidding evacuation of settlements that had been appropriate for circumstances of civil war should be revised in face of the new threats. Isolated Jewish settlements were capable of repelling assaults by armed gangs, but could hardly withstand the firepower of a regular army equipped with armour and artillery.

The British army's departure from Jerusalem caught the Arabs unprepared. Many combatants left the town to loot the occupied settlements of *Gush Etzion*. Those who remained in the city had no plans for the contingency of the British army's pullout. The *Haganah* launched operation *KILSHON* to occupy the new city and took over the former British security zones. This assault increased the Arabs' confusion. Unable to withstand fighting alone for long, they pinned their hopes on the early arrival of the Legion.⁶²

By the end of the mandate, both the Palestinian economy and Palestinian society were on the verge of breaking down. The fall of Haifa and Jaffa caused the collapse of the import and distribution system and a serious shortage of flour, bread and fuel. Petrol prices rose dramatically. In several places electric power failed and subsequently the water supply, as well. The departing British administration made thousands of Arab employees redundant. Those who stayed at their jobs — mainly in the Haifa enclave — could not come to work because of blocked roads. Paralysis of financial services such as transfer of funds between banks in Palestine and with neighbouring countries hastened economic ruin.⁶³

Summing up the civil war and focusing on the Palestinians' ordeal, the *SHAY* commented:

They have sustained many hundreds of casualties, lost arms and munitions as well as important bases. They were pushed from the offensive to the defensive . . . In large parts of the country, the Arab population has been ravaged . . . Economic life has been paralyzed and enormous property has gone down the drain. Tens of thousands have fled . . . Their military forces have disintegrated. Anarchy and chaos prevail because of masses of refugees. There is deprivation and starvation as well as disease, a danger of epidemics.⁶⁴

Settling an old account with the Foreign Office for ignoring his admonitions at the beginning of the war, Cunningham blamed the Palestinians for their disaster:

For months past they . . . have clamored for the entry of foreign Arab guerilla bands, which having successfully stirred up the Jews, are now proving quite unable to protect local Arabs from Jewish reactions. In their hearts, the Arabs realize that their much vaunted Liberation Army is poorly equipped and badly led; they feel that their monetary subscriptions have been squandered and they themselves misled; they must pin the blame on someone and who are more deserving than the British! It was to preclude such a state of affairs that the Palestine administration incessantly requested that armed Arab bands should at all costs be kept out of Palestine.⁶⁵

Palestinian Society's Collapse

The mass flight of the Arab population was the principal manifestation of the Palestinians' collapse. Following the change of the *Haganah's* strategy and tactics in April 1948, the exodus entered a new phase and assumed an even broader scope. Hitherto, the departure had been motivated mainly by a general deterioration in conditions. Henceforth, as hostilities spread rapidly across the country, the escapees fled as the fighting neared their own doorsteps.

In March 1948, the *Haganah* completed its planning for the post-evacuation period. The purpose of this blueprint — code named "D" — was to secure the territorial continuity of the future Jewish state and take hold of all geographical areas within it, including Arab enclaves in the towns and in the countryside. The planners also anticipated an invasion from across the border, but the incursion envisioned hardly resembled the onslaught that would take place two months later.

Plan "D" drew guidelines for management of occupied areas and safeguarding of the troops' rear. One of these procedures was demolishing villages that could not be held permanently. The instructions explained how to take over an Arab village and an Arab quarter of a mixed town. In case of resistance, the occupying forces should expel the population beyond the border. If no resistance was met, residents could stay put, under military rule.¹

Plan "D" was executed systematically only in Upper Galilee and was not the principal reason for intensification of the mass flight of Palestinians. Earlier, a few *IZL* and *LHI* actions prompted many Palestinians to panic and run away. The most marked among these catalysts was the attack on Dir Yassin, a hamlet west of Jerusalem. This onslaught led to more than a hundred fatalities among the village's population. Ever since, Dir Yassin has been a subject of contention on the Jewish side and a symbol of the Jews' brutality in Arab eyes.

Contrary to most other villages that the *Haganah* occupied in April and

May 1948, the inhabitants of Dir Yassin had not fled prior to the assault. This was the primary reason for the exceedingly high number of victims. The Arabs of Jerusalem, occupied with the funeral of Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni, who had been killed in Qastel the day before, were slow to take notice of the village's fate. Dir Yassin was "notorious" for its friendly relations with the adjacent Jewish neighbourhoods, and nearby Arab hamlets refrained from extending any assistance during the attack. After the conquest of the village, Jewish trucks brought the survivors to Jerusalem, depositing them on the Street of the Prophets and showing them the way to Jaffa gate. For the first time, Jerusalem's Arab citizens encountered post-battle refugees. They were thunderstruck by the sight of weeping women and children in the streets of the Old City, and gathered about them:

A man conveyed their calamitous situation to the audience . . . Sheikh Yassin al-Bakri [one of Jerusalem's Hussayni activists] . . . inquired about the pact that the village had allegedly signed with the Jews. Another survivor replied that an accord had indeed been in force . . . but probably the Jews had found out about the village youth's complicity in the battle at Qastel and decided to take revenge. The people of Dir Yassin begged for help, at least in burying their dead. Sheikh al-Bakri retorted that this was outside his jurisdiction.²

The "dissident" Jewish organizations boasted of having killed 250 Arabs. Of course, no one conducted a body count on the spot. However, this exaggeration served well domestic anti-*IZL* polemics in the *Yishuv* and was consequently transformed into a truism on the war's historiography among the Jews. The actual number of Arab victims was probably between 100 and 110. On the next day, Arab agents said that Dir Yassin's survivors left behind more than a hundred bodies that should be buried. This figure has been accepted by most Arab accounts of the slaughter.

Unaware of the event's significance, British reports initially ignored the event or treated it casually as but one more routine incident, citing that "Arab casualties are believed to be heavy".³ A week later, they adopted the *IZL* propagandist figures and the Arab press' atrocity testimonies. In the face of growing criticism, Cunningham unconvincingly exonerated the authorities' inaction.⁴

Whatever the actual number of casualties, this outrage generated panic among the Palestinians. Panic spread immediately to other hamlets in the vicinity of Jerusalem and a few days later the *SHAY* announced: "Dir Yassin has become the first and foremost topic among the Arabs of the Old City. Fantastic exaggerations are widespread." Stories about the massacre fanned rapidly across the country, reaching as far as Gaza and Galilee.⁵

Repercussions of the Dir Yassin massacre soon became evident. Fearing for their own villages' fate, the elders of Abu Ghosh and Bet

Naquba, two villages on the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road, promised their Jewish neighbours to stay detached from the disturbances. The residents of Qalandia, who had withdrawn and later returned to their village, once more abandoned their homes and the village turned into an ALA's stronghold. Women and children moved from hamlets south-west of the city to Bet Jala and Bethlehem.⁶ In Jerusalem proper, anticipating the British army's withdrawal from the town and an eventual battle to seize its positions, many families in Jerusalem abandoned their homes in the new city and gathered inside the walls of the Old City or prepared to leave the country because of the situation.⁷

As the war strategy changed, and the *Haganah* occupied more terrain, the flight intensified: "Whenever a battle breaks out, the inhabitants flee. The fear ...has expanded to remote regions."⁸ PALMAH troops that occupied Qastel on the night of 3–4 April found the site completely deserted but for one old woman who could not run away. In Dir Mukhayzin, one of the first hamlets to be captured by the *Haganah*, the villagers had moved out before the battle, to nearby Bet Makhsir. Prior to the evacuation of Sarafand barracks by the British, the residents of adjacent hamlets fled to Ramle. Several villages in Sharon were also abandoned, although no serious fighting broke out in this area at all.⁹

In some early cases, those who had fled returned to their villages when the danger of a *Haganah* raid passed or the situation in the area relaxed. Since April 1948, however, most refugees did not try to come back after battles had ended. In two villages near Mishmar Ha'emek, Rikhaniya and Butimat, the tenant farmers moved to close-by Um al-Zinat and continued to till their land, but did not return to their homes. Residents of other hamlets in this district fled to Jenin and sent alarmed telegrams to the AHC describing their dire circumstances and demanding revenge.¹⁰

Soon, the growing flow of refugees attracted the attention of foreign observers. Colonel Lund of the UN delegation in Jerusalem reported it to New York. Until the first truce in June 1948, however, the international community did not address this particular feature of the Palestine conflict.¹¹

Panic among the Palestinians spread like an epidemic. Following the flight of Arabs in the vicinity of Mishmar Ha'emek, villagers on the southern end of the Carmel ridge contemplated a similar move, and late in April fled to Samaria. During the NAHSHON operation, the inhabitants of hamlets near kibbutz Hulda — the operational headquarters for the campaign — drifted southward, ultimately finding refuge in Bet Jubrin, Ajur and Tel al-Safi. The population of Bet Dajan on the Jaffa–Jerusalem road withdrew to Ramle under police escort. Families that had fled from Haifa to nearby Shafa'amr, expecting a swift return to their homes, lost hope after the defeat of Shakib Wahab's Druze at Ramat

Yohanan and proceeded to Arab strongholds in Galilee's interior. On 20 April, the Palestine government summed up the situation in the countryside: In ten days, 15,000 inhabitants had abandoned 31 villages.¹²

In the second half of April 1948, abandonment of mixed cities was the main characteristic of wholesale flight. Tiberias was the first town to be completely deserted. A week before this town's fall, the *Haganah* had raided an adjacent hamlet. This strike increased tension among Tiberian Arabs and word spread in Galilee that "Nasr al-Din was a second Dir Yassin." Tiberias' national committee had appealed to Nazareth for help, and after having received a blunt refusal, a mass desertion commenced.¹³

Before evacuating Galilee, the British army offered its good services to the Jewish minority of Safed and the Arab minority of Tiberias, proposing to evacuate each community safely from their respective cities. The Jews of Safed politely refused and stayed put. The remaining Arabs of Tiberias, by contrast, accepted the proposition and on 18 April 1948 left the town in a convoy under military escort.

Tiberias' Arabs did not yet grasp the full significance of abandoning their city. In the following days, many who had left approached the army and the police in Nazareth, asking permission to go back and collect personal belongings from their deserted homes. The British promptly turned down their requests. Soon after Tiberias' evacuation, the Arabs began to seek a scapegoat for the town's collapse, indulging in mutual accusations. Tapped telephone calls revealed: "the Arabs regard Tiberias' abandonment . . . as a very serious blow . . . They fear that Samakh's fate would be similar."¹⁴

Indeed, Tiberias' refugees who had dispersed from Nazareth to Irbid in Transjordan set a model for others. Samakh, on the Sea of Galilee's southern edge, and the *fallahin* of Jordan valley, followed suit: "For three days, long convoys escorted by our people proceeded to the Transjordanian border."¹⁵

At the time, Sayf al-Din al-Zu'abi, leader of the influential Zu'abiya clan and a future member of the Knesset, conveyed the impact of Tiberias' fall in Lower Galilee: "Fear of the Jews befell the people of Nazareth. They believe that they are encircled . . . and discourage [potential] refugees from coming to their city." No menace threatened Nazareth at that time. Al-Zu'abi's wording implies that the Nazarenes were afraid of refugees overrunning their town more than they feared the Jews. Therefore, they spread rumours about the dangers that allegedly threatened Nazareth.¹⁶

A few days after the fall of Tiberias, Haifa manifested the most conspicuous example of a pre-battle flight. After the war, the *Haganah*'s principal liaison with the Arabs and with British military authorities, Ya'acov Salomon, summarized the chronicle of events in the town from the outset of hostilities to the end of the British presence in the enclave on 16 June

1948. He summed up desertion statistics thus: 25,000 Arabs out of a total population of 70,000 had left Haifa between December 1947 and the end of March 1948. Twenty thousand more departed during the first 18 days of April, before the *Haganah* launched its offensive. While Salomon's figures for that period might have been inflated, most of the remaining population indeed opted to leave the city after the first day of the *Haganah*'s assault — 22 April 1948.

The escapees spread various stories to exonerate their desertion. A common excuse claimed that the objective of flight had been to let "the Arab air force" bomb the town, without injury to the local Palestinian population. Others claimed defensively that their departure was merely temporary — to make the combatants' task easier. Local leaders in Haifa did nothing to check the flight and sometimes encouraged it. As an illustration, Salomon cites the organized evacuation of mothers and children in February and March 1948.¹⁷

Signs of Arab Haifa's imminent collapse preceded the *Haganah*'s offensive. Two or three days earlier, residents began to flee from quarters along the front line, heading for the inner city and the adjacent village Balad al-Sheikh.¹⁸ On the night of 20–21 April 1948, the British army withdrew from most of its positions in the city. The troops assembled at the German Colony, Bat Galim and the gates to the harbour in the western part of town, and at the airport and the railroad workshop complex in the eastern sector. *Haganah* observation posts shadowed this redeployment, and the *Haganah*'s Carmeli brigade rushed to capture vacated positions.¹⁹

On the next morning, General Stockwell summoned the Jewish liaisons and the chiefs of the Arab militia. He informed them of his determination to focus henceforth on defending the port and its approaches. The meaning of this announcement was clear enough. The Iraqi ALA commander promptly set out for Beirut "to report on the situation" and his Palestinian deputy followed suit a few hours later. In the face of an imminent Jewish attack, Arab Haifa was left with no military command. A few notables approached Salomon, and through his efforts the *Haganah* provided them with safe conduct passes that enabled the recipients to go to Acre, and further — to Beirut.²⁰ Among the fleeing dignitaries was Ahmad al-Khalil, the national committee's contact with the Jews and the SHAY's principal agent in Haifa. He probably wished to evade his fellow Palestinians more than the Jews, since his clandestine role had just been uncovered by the local Arab security service.²¹

On the night of 21–22 April 1948, the *Haganah* launched its offensive and the fighting flared up. In most places, Arab resistance was feeble. A delegation on behalf of the national committee headed by Victor Khaiat asked Stockwell to protect the Arab population. The General stressed his reluctance and incapability to fight the Jews. He also refused to let Arab

reinforcements enter the town for that purpose. Both contingencies, he told them, interfered with his first and foremost mission: protecting the withdrawal as its rear guard. Stockwell agreed, however, to arrange a cease-fire if he were asked to mediate.²²

In exchange for holding its fire, the *Haganah* demanded that the Arabs hand over all their weapons to the British army. The arms should be kept in British custody until 15 May, when they should be turned over to the Jews. In addition, the *Haganah* stipulated removal of all roadblocks and opening the city for free movement. It insisted on expulsion of all foreigners (mostly ALA soldiers) from Palestine within 24 hours and handing over of all European mercenaries who allegedly had fought on the Arab side. A curfew should be imposed on the Arab quarters to secure their disarmament, and any who tried to conceal their weapons should be punished.²³

Khaiat and his colleagues protested that this ultimatum was tantamount to an unconditional surrender. Moreover, it had political significance: an implied recognition of the *Haganah's* authority in the city. Consequently, Stockwell modified the wording of the stipulations to demonstrate that the British army was still in control of Haifa. Accepting all the Jews' claims, he insisted that they should be executed by his troops. Nonetheless, he consented to the presence of *Haganah* officers alongside the army, in the process of enforcing the cease-fire provisions.²⁴

In the afternoon hours of 22 April, Stockwell summoned the parties to discuss the conditions. Meanwhile the Arabs had tried in vain to communicate with Damascus in order to obtain the military committee's approval of their capitulation. During the meeting at army headquarters, a controversy broke out over the Arab delegates' demand that the cease-fire agreement would not imply recognition of the town's new political status. They asked for a 24-hour break before giving a final reply, but Stockwell promptly dismissed the request.

Subsequently, the Arab delegates retired to Khaiat's house, where they broached their next moves with other members of the national committee. Ultimately, the participants empowered the deputies "to act according to their best judgement". An argument had apparently broken out between the Muslim and Christian deputies, since the delegation's Muslim members did not return to headquarters. Sheikh Murad, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim's deputy, had left the town during the break. The Christian notables refused to sign the surrender pact and requested assistance of the British army and the *Haganah* in evacuating the Arab population from the town.

After the meeting dispersed, Salomon drove several Christian delegates to their homes. They told him that explicit orders from Damascus forbade them to consent. Had they signed the pact, the Muslims would have killed

them. No Christian, they maintained, could do anything that might infuriate the Muslims.²⁵

According to Stockwell's account, the Arab leaders asserted that they had no authority to sign the agreement. Even if they did so, they could not guarantee its execution because they had no control over the foreign combatants. Meanwhile, the mass flight from Haifa began, after only one day of fighting. By the time the leadership decided on its line of action, thousands of Arabs had already flocked to the harbour where all available watercraft were mobilised to ferry them across the bay to Acre.²⁶

On the next day, five Arab dignitaries wrote to Stockwell confirming the previous day's arrangements. They admitted that the Arab exodus from the town was voluntary, at their own request, but added: "yet the request was to the greatest extent prompted by your refusal to take any action to protect the lives and properties of those residents."²⁷

Most remaining Arabs wished to leave the city. On the basis of General Stockwell's promise to protect the convoys, the Arab delegates established local boards to organize them. However, panic among the masses drove many to the port. More than 10,000 entered the harbour's perimeter.²⁸ Complaining to Stockwell about delays in supply of transport contrary to his promise on 23 April, the Arab leaders claimed that meanwhile infants had died of exposure and malnutrition at the harbour's gates, epidemics had spread and desperate people had tried to commit suicide.²⁹

After the war, Eliass Kossa accused the British of bringing about the Arabs' flight from Palestine — first through various incentives following the evacuation of Tiberias, then by force. The above-mentioned contemporary Arab report — written by Kossa himself — put things in their true context and also serves to demonstrate the merit of retrospective apologies, excuses and polemics.³⁰

Stockwell conducted affairs in Haifa almost independently. His superiors in Palestine, Egypt and London were barely familiar with developments in the city. On 23 April, newspaper reports described the situation far more accurately than the reports at the disposal of the Chiefs of Staff in London. Bevin demanded explanations, complaining that the army had let him down. Minister of defence Alexander took to task the generals — Field Marshal Montgomery and his deputy, General Templer — who backed Stockwell even before they had full knowledge of his actions and all the more so in the aftermath.³¹

SHAY officers repeated rumours to the effect that "the Arabs of Haifa . . . depart after having received an order [to do so]". A common justification among the escapees charged their military commanders with treason and desertion. Another excuse asserted that they were fleeing "to clear the city and bomb it afterwards". Similar tales had been widespread

before the fighting intensified. Consequently, the *SHAY* regarded them with reservation.

The flight of Christian Arab astonished the *Haganah*. Hundreds found shelter in Stela Maris monastery on Mount Carmel, while many others abandoned the city entirely. Only a few decided to stay, and the *SHAY* recommended pacifying them by announcing "a clear policy towards the remnants who await our orders".³²

As the masters of Haifa, the Jews had to reorganize the town's administration and address many new problems that the occupation posed. The remaining Arab dignitaries appealed to Mayor Shabtai Levy to guarantee the safety and status of those Arabs who chose to stay put. They also requested him to protect abandoned property and safeguard religious institutions.³³

On the same day, 23 April, a delegation led by Khaiat met with chiefs of the Jewish community to broach restoration of normal life: release of detainees, distribution of food and resumption of the operation of bakeries. They also discussed several complaints concerning desecration of churches and other instances of wrongdoing.³⁴ The Arabs urged putting a stop to looting; receiving no satisfactory response, they again appealed to Stockwell for protection. They claimed that after the expulsion of foreign combatants and disarming of the Arab militia, there was nothing preventing the British army from enforcing law and order in the town without being involved in combat.³⁵

Levy summoned the Arab delegates to meet with Jewish Agency and *Haganah* representatives. Once more, they protested against the Jews' behaviour, complaining: "Now our people look on us as traitors, because we have not fulfilled the promises to which we pledged [ourselves] on the basis of your assurances." The Jewish participants apologized and after explaining various difficulties that had been encountered, took upon themselves to restore normal life as soon as possible.³⁶ Salomon warned Carmeli brigade's Commanding Officer, Moshe Zalitzky (Carmel), and the town's newly appointed military governor, Ya'acov Lublini, of the likelihood of a crisis. Taking harsh measures against the Arabs might provoke the British to reassess their position.³⁷

Kossa's aforementioned complaints notwithstanding, the British helped in the population's evacuation from the city. Most refugees sailed for Acre from the British-controlled harbour. The *Haganah* probably encouraged the departure, and the *SHAY* reported: "Following the steps taken by our people in Haifa, our propaganda and admonitions, many Arabs fled by boats and other crafts to Acre."³⁸ Parallel to this, the army provided land transport to bring evacuees directly to the Lebanese border at Ras al-Naqura. According to British sources, 20,000 Arabs left the town between 22–28 April. Thousands more waited in the harbour to be

transported, and their representatives prevailed upon Stockwell to speed up their departure. They asked him to direct the movement towards Lebanon, with Nazareth and Jenin as second choices since Acre was already overcrowded and suffered from a shortage of food.³⁹

Sayf al-Din al-Zu'abi reported that Nazareth had absorbed 15,000 people, mostly from Haifa and also from Tiberias, Acre and Balad al-Sheikh. A flow of refugees lined the Acre–Nazareth road. Some continued to Lebanon by land, taking the route via 'Ilabun to Bint al-Jbail on the other side of the border.⁴⁰ Stockwell designated a special staff officer to co-ordinate the army's actions in connection with the transfer. On 3 May, British soldiers escorted a long convoy of vehicles loaded with refugees to Ras al-Naqura.⁴¹ On 5 May, 12 buses left Haifa for Shafa'amr. Four thousand Arabs only — mostly Christians, remained in the city.⁴²

Although flight had accompanied hostilities ever since their outbreak in December 1947, the proportions of the mass exodus in April 1948 seemed incredible. Ben-Gurion took note of the occupation's broader consequences when he paid a first visit to Haifa on 1 May. The *Haganah* was still inexperienced in handling an occupied large town. *Haganah* officers and Jewish Agency officials told him about the events that had preceded and accompanied the flight. Ben-Gurion listened to accounts of looting and mistreatment, and reports on measures taken by the Carmeli brigade's headquarters to stop them.

Moshe Dayan, in charge of the abandoned property, reported on expropriating wholesale warehouses and delivering their contents to neighbouring Jewish settlements. The *Haganah* regarded stocks and public assets as legitimate spoils, but the policy concerning private property was inconsistent. Ben-Gurion asked where the escapees had gone, and noted Arazi's answer: "Tuvia assures that evidently there has been an order from above to leave."

Arazi did not mention any authority for his assurance. It had no firm foundation, except for unrestrained hearsay and the difficulty of suggesting any other logical explanation for the amazing spectacle. According to Salomon, the only leaders who had encouraged flight were those who stayed put but rejected his advice to stop their people from running away. Ben-Gurion inspected deserted Arab quarters. The sight bewildered him, and he asked himself several questions: "How tens of thousands of people left their town, homes and wealth in such a panic? What caused this flight? Was it only an order from above? . . . Was it fear?"

After a long day — mostly devoted to studying the problems of the town's remaining Arab population — Ben-Gurion formulated several guiding principles:

We have no interest in the escapees' return. (2) The remaining Arabs should be treated on the basis of human and civil equality, except those who carry arms. (3) The army [*Haganah*] may expropriate essential goods such as food, clothing, medical equipment and building material. (4) Private Arab assets should be protected against theft and confiscation. (5) The municipality should be the sole channel of extending help to the Arabs.⁴³

Golda Meyerson visited Haifa on 10–11 May, before and after her famous interview with king Abdullah. Upon her return to Tel Aviv she reported on the policy that had been adopted in Haifa: "We shall not go to Acre or to Nazareth to bring them back . . . [but] one should not mistreat the remaining Arabs in order to prevent the others' return."⁴⁴

A disgraceful looting by Jews followed the Arabs' abrupt exodus from the occupied towns. Ben-Gurion's orders notwithstanding, organized and private larceny continued, causing deep indignation to many in the *Yishuv* who denounced such conduct, employing Biblical admonishments such as: "Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord."⁴⁵

British reports stressed the *Haganah*'s measures to prevent *IZL* members from looting the sector that the *IZL* had occupied in Haifa. *Haganah* patrols went so far as to shoot looters.⁴⁶ However, the *Haganah* was not unadulterated in the matter of looting and itself served as a poor model for the general public. Extensive theft of Arab property also took place in Tiberias after the army had evacuated the Arab population. Looting persisted despite the stationing of guards that warned the perpetrators, and even shot at them — killing one and wounding others. A *SHAY* officer pointed out that "the first to loot were *Haganah* members, not the general public".⁴⁷

In several places, Jews tried to halt the Arabs' exodus on their own initiative. Such efforts were particularly conspicuous in Haifa, where the British, too, noted endeavours to stop the flight and their eventual failure.⁴⁸ Similar attempts on a smaller scale were made elsewhere — either out of friendship or out of interest. In other instances, however, Jewish settlers pressed their Arab neighbours to leave.⁴⁹

The *Jewish Agency*'s Arab section radio, broadcasting in Arabic in the name of the *Haganah*, also tried to check the flight. On 23 April, a broadcast in Haifa stressed endeavours to conclude a cease-fire and blamed the Arab leaders and the *ALA* combatants in the city for the inhabitants' calamity. The broadcast pledged that the Jews had no intention of driving their neighbours out of town. On the contrary, the message was that the Jews have believed and are still confident that the true interest of the city requires that residents of all Haifa's communities continue their work as before and restore life to a normal course. Thus, people who had not fled would remain and those who had fled would soon come back.

Everywhere, the broadcasts reiterated the *Haganah's* commitment to protect the remaining Arabs. They described arrangements for helping them in matters of health and supplies and safeguarding property of absentees. They also reported on negotiations with *mukhtars* of villages who had asked to stay, explained their provisions and stressed their fairness. Early in May, when the mass flight reached its peak, *Haganah* radio told the Arabs:

Don't panic and don't run away. Don't bring upon yourselves toil, humiliation and pains. Unlike your fanatic leaders, we shall not cast you into the sea as they have intended to throw us.⁵⁰

It is questionable, of course, how many frightened Palestinians listened to these announcements and acted accordingly. Broadcasts could not stop the flight and other means of psychological warfare might have encouraged the panic.

The fall of Tiberias and Haifa into Jewish hands generated a chain reaction in smaller towns like Samakh. The panic in larger villages in turn effected dependent hamlets. Late in April, Samakh collapsed under the combined pressure of a Jewish assault and a delay in the arrival of Arab reinforcements. When the promised assistance was slow to materialize, the inhabitants evacuated non-combatants and joined them shortly afterwards. During the attack on the adjacent police fortress, ALA combatants at the site appealed to Samakh for help, but by that time the village was empty. As a result, stories spread about the "leaders' betrayal" — accusing them of accepting bribes from the Jews before the assault.⁵¹

Attempting to comprehend the phenomenon, the *Haganah* supreme command asked the *SHAY* to investigate the causes and analyse the background preceding the mass flight. The continuing exodus made this task all the more complex and amplified the scope of the research. The *SHAY* completed its findings only in the midst of the first truce (see p. 153).

On the day of the fall of Haifa, Ya'acov Shimoni arrived in besieged Jerusalem to relieve Sasson. Shimoni updated his colleagues in the Jewish Agency's Arab section on developments in other parts of the country, reporting: "Today, Jaffa is half empty. Two-thirds of Haifa's population have left." Sasson asked himself and his companions: "Has plain defeatism caused them to flee, or is it a way of bringing in the regular [Arab] armies?"⁵² Later, he dropped the question mark and this postulate became the common Israeli explanation for the Arabs' flight.

Sasson linked the exodus to an alleged British plot about which he had warned for several months. The purpose of the flight, he asserted, was to prepare the ground for the Legion's intervention, under the pretext of stepping in to protect the weak and persecuted Palestinians. His conviction deepened when he learned of events in Haifa:

The mass flight that we have recently been witnessing . . . does not emanate from panic and weakness only. It has been organized by the Hussaynis in cooperation with the warriors [the ALA] for three purposes: (a) defaming the Jews as usurpers who contemplate the Arabs' expulsion from their country. (b) Forcing the Arab states to march in with their regular armies. (c) Preparing the ground . . . for the armies' invasion, seemingly for the rescue of the oppressed Palestinians. The ALA commanders' disappearance whenever a tough battle starts . . . proves that there is an order from above to instigate fear and lawlessness among the Arabs, thus making their flight imperative.⁵³

Various intelligence sources seemed to corroborate Sasson's unsubstantiated speculations. A spy ranked as "serious" quoted "higher Arab echelons" that confirmed the alleged existence of explicit orders for evacuating the Arab populace from Haifa. The Legion's assistance in transferring women and children from the nearby village Tira seemed to bear witness to its complicity in such a plot. Shertok, in New York, suggested frustrating the scheme by warning the escapees that they might not be allowed to return.⁵⁴

Late in April 1948, intense fighting in Jerusalem hastened the exodus from the city and the vicinity. Based on the AHC's directive of 8 March, the emergency committee endorsed evacuation of women, children and elderly people from dangerous zones to expedite military activity. This pullout appeared in Jewish eyes to be a precaution preceding a major Arab offensive, supported by the Legion and the British.⁵⁵

Following the *PALMAH* assault of Sheikh Jarrah on 25 April, the flight from the new city's Arab quarters snowballed. The Arabs completely vacated the neighbourhoods of Baq'a, Qatamon, the German and Greek Colonies in southern Jerusalem. Most dignitaries left the town in the wake of their families.⁵⁶ The Egyptian government instructed its subjects to leave the city and their departure accelerated the flight. Travel fares rose sky-high owing to the need to take longer detours, shortage of petrol and pressures of ever increasing demand. An eyewitness related: "In Jerusalem the prices are 50 pounds to Amman and 100 pounds to Damascus." Apparently, these were the prices for a bus or a lorry, not a single ticket. Another eyewitness cited a five pound fare per person to Amman, with an extra pound for each piece of luggage.

Travellers who could afford this expense were former government employees who had lost their jobs, but received their redundancy payments, and wealthier residents of the new city. They went primarily to Transjordan, but also to Hebron, Nablus and Jericho, which were still considered safe areas. Hundreds of refugees arrived in Bethlehem — putting their faith in the immunity of this holy town, while other jammed into monasteries and churches in the Old City spurred by the same logic.

Having sanctioned the evacuation of non-combatants, the emergency

committee then lost control and sought in vain to stem the flood. Its failure was all but surprising; the chairman of the committee, Ghalib al-Khalidi, departed secretly for Egypt without nominating a deputy.⁵⁷ King Abdullah ordered his consul at Jerusalem to encourage the evacuation of women and children. The Legion opened fords over the Jordan River to refugees who wished to cross. Concurrently, in Amman congestion grew, prices rose and the local inhabitants displayed growing dislike of the Palestinians who overflowed their city.⁵⁸

The flight spread from Jerusalem to the surrounding countryside. Late in April and early in May, non-combatants departed from the villages Malkha, 'Izariya, Abu Dis, 'Issawiya, A-Tur and Nabi Samuwil. Malkha's militia pulled back from the village, leaving it in the hands of irregular tribesmen from Transjordan.⁵⁹ Bethlehem's population multiplied from 10,000 to 25,000. Unlike other cities, Bethlehem did not suffer from shortage of food, but employment was insufficient for so many people and the escapees gradually exhausted their own means.⁶⁰

The flow of refugees grew in the wake of the *IZL* attack on Jaffa. Anticipating an imminent British withdrawal, the town had been in an agitated state already prior to the assault. In mid-April, following intensive exchanges of fire across the front line facing Tel-Aviv, panic broke out and merchants transferred their stocks to towns deep inside Arab territory.⁶¹ The worsening economic conditions had long been a principal incentive for deserting Jaffa. Most of the unemployed had left the city, but those who stayed engaged in theft and harassment of the rest of the population. Defeats among the Palestinians elsewhere, horror stories about Dir Yassin and shelling by home-made mortars, speeded up the desertion.

On the eve of the *IZL* attack, half of Jaffa's original population had already left for Samaria, Hebron, Gaza and neighbouring countries. Some prominent clans, such as Dujani and Nabulsi, went to Egypt. Mayor Yussuf Haikal sent his wife and children to Gaza. The desertion also encompassed local militiamen and foreign combatants who left the city with their arms.⁶²

Rumours of a forthcoming Jewish onslaught generated panic and discontent. When the Arabs learned of *IZL* preparations for the attack, thousands of frightened inhabitants gathered in the harbour to sail for Gaza. About 4,000 persons departed by sea on that single day, 25 April 1948.⁶³

On the morning of the assault, an observation post at Tel Aviv's port reported an armada of boats that had set out from Jaffa in the direction of Gaza. Two ships that arrived in the Jaffa harbour from Cyprus were promptly booked for the evacuation. In the afternoon hours, Qiryati's surveillance posts spotted a long caravan of vehicles leaving the town under British military escort, heading eastward.⁶⁴

A few native notables and ALA officers tried unsuccessfully to control the mob and organize the town's defence. After several hours, however, they dispersed. Many ran away to nearby Lydda, or further — to Amman. Doctors and nurses joined them, leaving behind hospitals full of injured persons.⁶⁵ Egyptian citizens, who had prepared to go to Jerusalem and join a rescue convoy organized by the consulate, were trapped in Jaffa and waited for a vessel to take them back to Egypt. The first craft was damaged in the port and Egyptian authorities had to dispatch a replacement.⁶⁶

A storm temporarily halted the exodus by sea, although stories about a vessel that had allegedly sunk off the Nabi Rubin beach soon proved false. After a short break — thanks to the British army's arrival in the city — the mass flight resumed on 28 April with the launching of operation *HAMETZ*. Because of rough seas, the escapees took mainly land routes leading southwards and eastwards.⁶⁷

Left without supplies, the remaining combatants went wild and looted whatever there was to plunder. Quoting his spies in Jaffa, and tapped telephone calls from the city, Iser Harel, head of Tel Aviv branch of the *SHAY*, remarked that the principal factor driving the flight was "the prevailing anarchy and the gangsters' control of the streets . . . and the principal fear is not of the Jews".⁶⁸

Amos Ben-Gurion, responsible for the *Haganah's* liaison with the British army in the central district, inferred from his talks with British officers that no more than 5,000 residents would remain in Jaffa. Arab sources estimated their number at 4,000.⁶⁹ Mayor Haikal fled to Amman. Before his departure, the *SHAY* tapped his conversation with a colleague, the Mayor of Lydda, to whom Haikal described the situation in depressing terms. His partner emphatically responded that in his town, too, conditions were harsh.⁷⁰

Jaffa capitulated on 13 May, when the last British soldiers who had prevented its conquest since late April, departed for Egypt. A few thousand Arabs of all classes stayed put. Despite the nomination of a military governor and the proximity of the People's Executive, or perhaps precisely owing to Jaffa's closeness to the *Yishuv's* centre, anarchy prevailed in the mostly abandoned city.

A military governor was nominated; however, the appointment was a pioneering improvisation. No one defined his authority and to whom he should be responsible. Organized expropriations and larceny by individuals, already known from Haifa, recurred in Jaffa. Although the governor defended the confiscation in face of IRC delegates, he complained about them to Shitrit, the Minister of the Police and Minorities' Affairs, and insisted on discussing them at the highest level.⁷¹

Late in April, the mass flight spread from Jaffa to nearby villages that had lost their support. The conquest of Tel Litwinsky barracks east of

Ramat Gan drove out the inhabitants of adjacent Arab villages and a few days later the sites were occupied by the Jews.⁷² On 1 May, the Arabs completed the evacuation of Bet Dajan. Yazur, too, was abandoned. In Ramle, many local residents fled, and the national committee accommodated refugees from the hamlets in their houses. Guards at the exits from the town prevented young males from leaving and permitted only females, children and the aged to depart. By contrast, the people of Lydda did not run away and many escapees from other places found asylum in their city.⁷³

In various villages north of Lydda, the *fallahin* pulled out because the Jews had seized their fields and they could not till them. The people of Qanir left behind a few guards to protect their property and moved to safer places in Wadi Ara.⁷⁴ Several villages suggested coming to terms with their Jewish neighbours, simultaneously preparing their escape should the venture failed. An agent disclosed that "a serious attack on Yahudiya will lead to an evacuation of the entire surroundings". The assault followed suit and most of the villagers ran away after the preparatory shelling, designed to soften resistance prior to the actual assault.

In Samaria, the ALA endeavoured to check the flight and ordered inhabitants to stay put. In a few instances, its officers forced deserters back to their homes. Reinforcements were dispatched to villages next to Jewish settlements to reassure their occupants. Arab radio stations transmitted an ALA directive that stated: "Every Arab has to defend his home and property . . . deserters will be punished and their houses will be destroyed." The defeated ALA instructions and threats were to no avail. Often the very appearance of foreign combatants in a village served as an omen that a Jewish attack was imminent and everyone tried to save himself and his family. In many places, the notables ignored the orders. They travelled to Amman and to Arab towns in the interior to seek advice whether to evacuate their communities or to surrender.⁷⁵

Early in May 1948, the flight spread to western Galilee. After a fruitless IZL attack on 26 April, residents began running away from Acre. Trepidation embraced neighbouring villages. Fearing revenge for their role in a bloody ambush on a Jewish convoy late in March, the villagers of Kabri abandoned their village.⁷⁶ In Galilee's eastern end, the PALMAH launched an operation to occupy the area between Jordan River and Tiberias-Rosh Pinah road. The local Bedouin and *fallahin* crossed the river to Syria.⁷⁷

Safed was the district capital of Galilee. In 1929, Safed's Arab inhabitants had massacred 35 of their Jewish neighbours and wounded dozens of them. Unlike Hebron, where a similar slaughter drove the surviving Jews out of the city, the Jews of Safed cleaved to their native town. Yet, they lived in constant fear of a recurrence of the bloody pogrom. Their

apprehensions increased as the ultimate confrontation between Jews and Arabs approached. Nonetheless, the Jewish minority rejected British advice to leave the town with the retreating army.

A popular wit ascribed Safed's rescue to "an act and a miracle" — the act being the continuous prayers of the famous indigenous elders, and the miracle being the timely arrival of a *PALMAH* unit in the city. Horror stories about Dir Yassin, Tiberias and Haifa had terrified Arab residents and Safed's Arab population lost confidence in the local militia commanders who quarrelled incessantly with each other. The Mayor, Zaki Qadura, had gone to Damascus in April to visit his wounded son and did not return. His disappearance kindled a slow process of abandonment. Fearing the forthcoming fighting, Arab inhabitants began to flee across the Lebanese border. The fall of several nearby hamlets hastened the exodus, which reached its prime after *PALMAH* reinforcement stormed the city's citadel.⁷⁸

The bulk of Safed's populace escaped to Syria and to Lebanon, but some found shelter in adjoining Wadi Lamun, expecting a quick return to their homes. Early in June, the town's military governor suggested to Ben-Gurion that Arabs' houses be demolished to prevent their return. Safed Jews' nightmare was the return of their former neighbours, and they made it clear that if this happened they themselves would leave the town.⁷⁹

An important factor in accelerating the Palestinians' flight was the collapse of public services and disintegration of any form of organized life. The fading of British authority created a vacuum in Arab towns and their dependencies, where no civil or military authority succeeded the mandatory administration. Anarchy prevailed and the refugees' presence increased chaos. Their burden was particularly felt in the Old City of Jerusalem, Nazareth, Acre, Shafa'amr and eventually in Tulkarm and Qalqilia.⁸⁰

Living conditions in these towns deteriorated due to overcrowding which disrupted commerce and confused food distribution. Occasionally, riots broke out because of bread shortages. Sanitary conditions degenerated. Unlike the Jews, the Palestinians were totally dependent upon the government's health services. These facilities, however, disintegrated with the disappearance of government authority and the desertion of many Arab doctors. A typhoid epidemic broke out in Acre and Shafa'amr, and spread into western Galilee. The Old City of Jerusalem, too, was hit by epidemics.⁸¹

Here and there, national committees or municipalities made futile attempts to sustain public services. The real power, however, was in the hands of the towns' military commanders, who failed to function properly in civil matters. Jerusalem was a typical example: Despite the establishment of an Arab municipality and a police force, the ALA Iraqi

troops were the town's true masters. Their rule, however, was disorganized and arbitrary. Furthermore, their incompetence and greed caused many citizens to leave town.⁸²

Pending the mandate's expiration on 15 May, the *Haganah* embarked on pre-empting the likely invasion by taking hold of remaining Arab villages within the boundaries of the Jewish state. The Golani brigade besieged Bisan. The regional *SHAY* officer contacted the Arab headquarters at the town by telephone. On the other end of the line someone spoke Hebrew, and he deduced that the Arabs had expected his call. They promptly rejected a demand for an unconditional surrender. Later, however, local notables called the *SHAY* officer on their initiative and asked for an interview the next morning. In the aftermath of that meeting, they sent a delegation to Nablus for consultations with the leaders of Samaria, who subsequently approved of the town's capitulation. Upon the emissaries' return, the majority of Bisan's inhabitants departed. Because of Bisan's proximity to the most likely invasion route through Sheikh Hussayn Bridge, the *Haganah* regarded 700 Christian Arabs who had opted to stay put as a security risk. Consequently, they were moved either across the river to Transjordan or to Nazareth.⁸³

In the southern region, Giv'ati and Negev brigades captured several hamlets to establish territorial continuity between their respective sectors. On 11 May, Giv'ati raided Bet Daras and the inhabitants fled to Isdud. An adjoining hamlet offered no resistance. The raiders demolished 30 houses in both villages and ignited the threshing floors to prevent the inhabitants' return. A patrol, passing through the hamlets after the raiders had retreated, found both villages totally lifeless.

Following the assault on Bet Daras, the residents of nearby Batany al-Sharqi fled. Giv'ati's soldiers found the place deserted "but for a few old women and men who were unable to flee". The after-action report went on to state: "The *mukhtar's* house . . . was blown up. Upon the orders of the battalion commander, before our people left the site, they executed four persons who had stayed behind."⁸⁴

Rumours that spread in the wake of these forays multiplied their impact, frightening tenant farmers in hamlets far away from the battle scenes. The raid on Bet Daras shocked Yibna. Brair's occupation caused the villagers of Huliqat and Qauqaba to flee and hundreds of refugees from these villages herded into the small town of Majdal.⁸⁵

Describing the Palestinians' situation in gloomy terms, the *SHAY* portrayed the mass flight as a collapse in face of the continuing fighting:

The Arabs have concluded that nowhere they are immune from the Jews' attacks and the escape spread into exclusive Arab areas. Previously, the flight involved villages bordering on Jewish regions and members of the wealthy and middle classes. Now it is a mass psychosis and an all-out evac-

uation. Arabs have abandoned hamlets before the Jews took any action against them, only on the basis of rumours that they were about to be attacked.⁸⁶

Contradicting the Arab propagandist use of these conquests to disseminate further atrocity allegations, Cunningham asserted:

The Jews for their part can hardly be blamed if in the face of past Arab irregular action and of continued threats of interference by Arab regular forces, they take time by the forelock and consolidate their position while they can.⁸⁷

On the eve of the invasion, various sources conveyed that refugees were infiltrating back to their abandoned communities. They ascribed the return to the poor conditions in the cities in which they had taken refuge, the unwelcome attitude towards the Palestinians in neighbouring countries, widespread stories about the Jews' fair treatment of Arabs under their rule and the refugees' doubts as to the utility or outcome of forthcoming Arab states' military assistance. It is more likely, however, that these refugees returned under pressures that the Arab governments and the AHC exerted since the beginning of May, to stop the exodus and persuade escapees to go back.⁸⁸

Cunningham portrayed, as a proof of the stable situation in Haifa, a steady stream of refugees returning to Haifa owing to the availability of work with the resumption of normal life, relatively speaking. Yet, in a typical understatement Cunningham admitted: "The refugee problem is causing some concern, especially in Gaza, where influx of homeless Arabs from Jaffa is proving almost impossible to house and feed."

Until the last days of the mandate, the High Commissioner played down the significance of the exodus, portraying it as a class problem rather than a general phenomenon:

Many of [the Palestinians'] so-called leaders are fleeing the country and *Effendi* class generally do not seem to be ashamed of watching the contest from the touchline.⁸⁹

The Palestinians' collapse came about while the British were still the sovereign power in Palestine. Britain had sufficient air and land forces in the country to stop the *Haganah* offensive if it only wanted to employ them. On the contrary, the British rejected Abdullah's plea to deploy the Arab Legion in the Arab hamlets. They also forewarned the Arab states of any premature invasion to check the Jewish advance. Cunningham threatened to launch the RAF against any troops assembling on Palestine's borders or crossing them before the end of the mandate.⁹⁰

From the beginning of hostilities to the end of the mandate, between

250,000 and 300,000 Arabs abandoned their homes in Palestine. Most, but not all of them, were Palestinians. The mass flight also involved an unknown number — probably many thousands — of Egyptians, Syrians and Lebanese who lived or worked in Palestine. Dir Yassin's slaughter notwithstanding, these refugees of the civil war — more than half of the total number of refugees at the end of the war — fled and were not banished. Until April 1948, they ran away primarily from the chaos, the anarchy, the economic deterioration and the miserable living conditions under circumstances of civil war. During April and May they fled because the fighting was approaching their doorsteps, directly hit them or threatened to subordinate them to a Jewish rule.

Contrary to later accusations, the documentary evidence proves that throughout this period the *Yishuv* had no comprehensive strategy of expulsion. Furthermore, its leaders lacked policy on Arab affairs in general. The circumstances of civil war dictated attitudes towards the Palestinians, and developed in response to challenges to the security of Jewish inhabitants. Local initiatives to settle past accounts between Jewish settlements and Arab villages by driving out unwanted neighbours were rare.

Rumours of Dir Yassin's massacre might have terrified Palestinians into fleeing, but its role in provoking the mass flight has been overstated. This slaughter did not represent any policy. Even the perpetrators had not foreseen its outcomes and had not intended them. Using Dir Yassin to prove a premeditated plot for deporting the Palestinians is baseless. This bloodshed was an almost natural consequence of the civil war's methods of warfare. Obviously, it was not the worst of the war's atrocities. The massacre of 240 Jews in *Gush Etzion* after its surrender in 13 May, and the massacre of approximately 250 Arabs in Lydda in July were surely worse, particularly as they took place following capitulation and not in the midst of combat.⁹¹

Similarly, the Israeli traditional argument, blaming the Arab leadership for encouraging the mass flight, has no basis in the documentary evidence. As far as the documents reveal, the AHC, the ALA and the Arab governments made unsuccessful efforts to check the exodus. A few organized attempts at evacuating mothers and children were "an exception proving the rule". The truth is that the Palestinians succumbed under the hardships of civil war. They were unprepared for it, unorganized and unaware of the different, national nature of the war and the significance of mass exodus on their own future.

The Arab Regular Armies' Invasion of Palestine

From the time of the Bludan conference in June 1946, military intervention in Palestine by the Arab states had been a feasible contingency. On the eve of the UN resolution in November 1947, the military committee of the League recommended preparing the armies of member states for a campaign in Palestine. At their conference in Cairo in December, however, the Arab premiers discarded this recommendation, preferring the creation of a special army for this mission. The force was to consist of Palestinian and foreign volunteers and was to be subordinate to the League.

Inter-Arab rivalries and mutual suspicions were the underlying reason for avoiding employment of the regular armies in Palestine. Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia opposed king Abdullah's ambitions and distrusted the Hashemite states' designs in regard to Palestine's future.¹ Queried concerning Egypt's likely reaction to Transjordan's occupation of Arab Palestine, Campbell replied that Egypt would welcome the Legion's conquest of the entire country on behalf of the Arab world, but for dynastic reasons would object to any aggrandizement of the Hashemite kingdom through annexing Palestine's Arab part. During the conference, Noqrashi declared Egypt's determination to abstain from any military venture in Palestine. Nonetheless, Campbell correctly estimated that "If things were to go badly for the Arabs in Palestine, a new situation would arise in which all Arab countries might feel bound to intervene."²

For the time being, the odds of creating a unified Arab coalition were slight. Apart from inter-Arab competition, domestic and military considerations also called for restraint. Except for Transjordan, all Arab states were reluctant to send expeditions to confront the Jews. Even king Abdullah meant to use his Legion only for taking possession of the country's Arab parts, not for combating the *Yishuv*. The Arab armies' primary mission was defending the social and political order in their

homelands. All governments disliked the very idea of risking their troops in a dubious adventure abroad. Dispatching them to fight against the Jews might have exposed the rulers to internal subversion. Furthermore, in case of a débâcle, the defeated soldiers might add to endemic instability by joining the regimes' opponents upon their return from the battlefield.

In 1948, the Arab armies were essentially colonial auxiliaries that had just begun the process of modernisation. They were totally dependent on the former mandatory powers for their doctrines, organization, arsenal, supplies and training. After the departure of the French, the fledgling Syrian army lacked even this support. Egypt had eliminated the British military mission in December 1947 in the midst of conflict over the British army's presence in the Suez Canal Zone. None of the Arab armies had any battle experience beyond repressing tribal insurrections, and all were by no means fit for combat. Their equipment was obsolete — mostly pre- or early Second World War vintage, and their budgets were tight. No wonder, therefore, that the generals were even less eager to fight in Palestine than the political leaders who were ignorant or amateur in military matters. The heads of the Arab armies repeatedly demanded politicians to avoid stretching their roles beyond their capacities.³

In February 1948, the League's council convened at Cairo to discuss the situation in Palestine after two months of hostilities. So far, nothing had changed the Arab leaders' misgivings about invasion. They were still confident of the adequacy of the ALA to hold its own until the end of the mandate, and expected it to move over to the offensive with the British departure. As a precaution, the council recommended advancing the armies towards Palestine's borders before 15 May. This proviso proved to be mere lip service, and neither the League nor the member states took any immediate measures to implement the decision.

Aware of their disunity, military weaknesses and inability to thwart partition of Palestine by force, the Arab states resorted to diplomacy and propaganda to prevent or delay its implementation.⁴ In the diplomatic arena, the Palestine question reverted to the UN assembly. Against the backdrop of growing international tension between opposing global blocs, militant Arab diplomacy and Jewish military setbacks the United States temporarily back pedalled on their support of the UN resolution. Judging that partition could not be imposed on the parties without applying force, the Americans wanted a trusteeship regime in lieu of partition, and initiated the Security Council's call for a cease-fire.⁵

The proposed cease-fire became the subject of intensive diplomatic manoeuvring. Warren Austin, the American delegate to the UN, raised the idea for the first time while announcing United States withdrawal from support of partition. In a special broadcast on Jerusalem radio two days later, Cunningham appealed to the Jews and the Arabs to stop the blood-

shed. Subsequently, his intelligence officer, Colonel Norman, discussed with the Jewish Agency's liaison Chayim (Vivian) Herzog the *Yishuv's* disposition to his master's call.⁶

Ben-Gurion ignored Cunningham's request, but welcomed the Security Council's initiative to end the fighting. He stipulated his conditions: (a) restoring freedom of movement across the country; (b) free access to the holy places in the Old City of Jerusalem; (c) pulling the ALA and the Legion out of the country and (d) international supervision of the cease-fire.⁷

Apparently, Ben-Gurion did not believe that a truce on these conditions was feasible. Absorbed in preparing for foundation of the Jewish state and the total war that was likely to follow, he paid little attention to diplomatic manoeuvres in the UN. To Ben-Gurion, talks of a cease-fire seemed incompatible with growing Arab belligerence.

While Ben-Gurion was preoccupied in Tel Aviv with perfecting preparations for 15 May, in besieged Jerusalem Sasson speculated on the Arabs' response to the American proposals. In face of the city's worsening situation, officials in the Jewish Agency's Political Department urged Shertok to accept the American proposals. In their view, this proposition might have provided the Arab states with a way out of the impending war.⁸

Interpreting the Arab newspapers, Sasson reached the conclusion that Egypt and Saudi Arabia favoured a cease-fire while the Mufti wanted to continue the armed struggle. In Sasson's opinion, the Arabs' only alternative was a truce. Declining the American proposal meant intensified fighting. This would be a worse contingency for the Arabs owing to the ALA weakness and the political and military obstacles hindering an early invasion by the regular armies.⁹

Contrary to Sasson's prediction, the Arab League rejected the American plan. It demanded an Arab trusteeship of Palestine — supervised by the Arab armies until the UN worked out a permanent solution. The League's resolutions also allowed for Palestine's possible occupation by the Arab armies after the mandate's end. This provision reflected the ALA inability to protect the Palestinians and fears of the situation's impact on the domestic stability of the Arab states.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Ben-Gurion changed his mind about a cease-fire. After the tide of the war had turned in the *Yishuv's* favour, he reiterated the risks inherent in agreement to such a move: British supervision of the truce implied prohibition of immigration by service-age Jews. Ben-Gurion judged that the prospects that this respite offered did not offset its disadvantages.¹¹

Military developments in Palestine, not diplomatic ploys in New York, would determine the war's direction. In March 1948, the ALA completed its deployment in Palestine. The League's military committee divided the

country into sectors and established formats for co-operation between its army and the Mufti's combatants under Salameh and Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni. The Palestinians focused on harassing Jewish traffic on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road. Qawuqji attempted to occupy a Jewish settlement.

Both enterprises failed and the *Haganah* gained the initiative. Within a week, the Arabs' inability to capture Jewish positions became clear. Subsequently, the Palestinians and the ALA crumbled under the *Haganah's* concentrated attacks. Determined to end the mandate and complete their withdrawal on time, the British did not allow Arab defeats to distract them from this goal. Lengthy and tiresome debates at the UN in New York did not seem to yield results. In the face of such new circumstances, the Arab states had to re-evaluate the situation in Palestine and their own stance. When the initial setbacks of early April developed by the end of that month into a total collapse, they concluded that dispatching their armies to Palestine was inevitable.

This process of re-assessment began at the League's council, convened in Cairo on 10 April 1948. The proceedings were highly charged, taking place under the shadow of Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni's death, the massacre at Dir Yassin and the ALA fiasco in Mishmar Ha'emek. Once more, Safwat urged immediately positioning the armies on the border with Palestine. He elaborated how the campaign had been transformed from limited guerrilla raids into a full-scale war requiring modern formations, trained and equipped accordingly. Explaining that the Jews' power exceeded previous appraisals, Safwat warned of the consequences should the Arabs persist in their present mode of combat.¹²

Transjordan's refusal to employ the Legion openly to assist the Palestinians vexed Azzam, who accused Abdullah of surrendering to a British dictate. Syria and Lebanon declared their eagerness to intervene immediately and called upon Iraq and Transjordan to clarify their positions. For the first time, Arab leaders discussed in earnest invasion as an option. Abdullah volunteered to rescue Palestine with his Legion but carefully avoided committing himself to any timetable. Evidently, he did not contemplate any major action before the end of the mandate. Under Syria's insistence, the League requested the Egyptian army's participation. Despite Noqrashi's objections, king Faruq responded favourably, not necessarily out of concern for the Palestinians but primarily to forestall a unilateral move by Transjordan.¹³

As the Palestinians' situation worsened, agitation in the Arab countries grew. The rout in Mishmar Ha'emek exposed Qawuqji's true worth as a military leader, and the Arab League lost its confidence in the ALA. Several Palestinian dignitaries rushed to Amman and others sent urgent telegrams from Jerusalem to mobilize the king's help. Syria and the Mufti's objections notwithstanding, Azzam Pasha responded favourably

to the king's proposition and sent Safwat to Amman to co-ordinate the details. The Iraqi general acknowledged the ALA débâcle and the lack of any other alternative except to empower the Legion to save Palestine for the Arabs. Reiterating Azzam's stipulations, he specified that the Legion should occupy the whole country and Transjordan must not acquiesce to partition.¹⁴

Abdullah's interview with Safwat was fruitless. Meeting the Iraqi general for the first time in February, the king told Kirkbride that "he had imagined that the general's type had died with the Ottoman Empire".¹⁵ On their second encounter, Safwat insisted on the Legion's subordination to the League's military committee. Abdullah insisted on the ALA's submission to the Legion and stressed his inability to act before 15 May. In response, Safwat suggested deploying an Iraqi brigade in Transjordan where it could prepare for operations, pending the mandate's end. The king agreed, on condition that the Iraqis would come under his supreme command.¹⁶

Following this parley, Abdullah informed Azzam of his conditions for taking action in Palestine. Since the Legion lacked air power, the king requested that the League provide air support. Moreover, all the member states should bear the international consequences of his action. Abdullah repeated his reluctance to move before 15 May and his determination to abstain from dispersing the Legion in defence of Palestinian villages. Doing so, he claimed, might devoid the Arabs of any striking force when fighting flared up upon termination of the mandate.¹⁷

The Jews noted the rapprochement between the king and the League as well as the willingness of many Palestinians to accept the Legion's domination. In Jewish eyes, Abdullah's public statements and the intensive political activity in Amman indicated that the king might have changed his traditional stance. Anticipating the co-operation between the Legion and the ALA to intensify, the Jewish Agency's Arab section erroneously interpreted this bond as reflecting fraternization between Transjordan and Syria. Sasson maintained that the League had begun to realize the inevitability of intervention by regular Arab armies.¹⁸

As the close of the mandate approached, statements on a forthcoming invasion occupied a prominent spot in the Arab media. Baghdad radio proclaimed Iraq's determination to dispatch its army to Palestine on 16 May, adding that necessary preparations had already begun. Citing that Transjordan was not a member of the UN and no international commitments could prevent invasion by its forces, Palestinian newspapers predicted an early intervention by the Legion. These baseless stories represented no more than wishful thinking among the Palestinians. Overcoming inter-Arab disputes was still a prerequisite for an invasion.¹⁹

Cairo radio announced Azzam's imminent visit to Amman. According

to this broadcast, Abdullah had pledged to abstain from interfering in Arab Palestine's domestic affairs. After occupying the country, the Legion should let the Palestinians decide their own political regime. Upon declaration of a Palestinian state, Transjordan should immediately withdraw from Palestine. Azzam needed this commitment to placate Syria and Saudi Arabia whose consent was an essential precondition for building an Arab coalition to back the Legion's intervention.²⁰

Contrary to other Arab states, Transjordan had barely any domestic opposition. The king had no domestic or external scruples about dispatching his army to Palestine, particularly as he did not contemplate a war but rather a police-like operation on friendly turf. Britain acquiesced to his plans, and he could rely on Iraq's backing. The Regent Abd al-Ilah arrived in Amman to broach the situation and co-ordinate Iraq's moves with those of Abdullah.²¹

Still, an invasion by regular armies other than the Legion appeared impractical. Ernest Bevin asked urgently for a military appraisal of the prevailing situation and future contingencies in Palestine. In light of the Arab forces' poor performance, the Commander in Chief of the Middle East Land Forces (MELF), General Croker, judged that they would fail to achieve their object unless king Abdullah would assume leadership. Three weeks before the Arab coalition invaded Palestine, Croker dismissed this possibility, claiming that "Egypt and Iraq are too preoccupied with internal troubles to contribute more than a few aircraft".²²

Reluctant to join in the fighting, Iraq's Foreign Minister hinted to the British ambassador that the Arabs wanted Britain to retain responsibility for Palestine after 15 May. Mack replied that prolonging the mandate was out of question, and quoted Bevin's speech in Parliament: "The sooner we are out, the better."²³

So far, to the extent that the Arab states' military intervention was a feasible option it related to the post-mandate period. Haifa's downfall changed the Arab governments' declared posture *vis-à-vis* invasion. Now, they threatened Britain with marching their armies into Palestine immediately if the British did not rescue the Palestinians from what they called "the Jews' outrages". General Macmillan, commanding the army in Palestine, argued that the troops at his disposal were insufficient to prevent an invasion. Cunningham estimated that only the Legion was capable of influencing the tide of the war. Events in Haifa notwithstanding, he asserted, Britain should discourage Abdullah from using the Legion hastily.

The High Commissioner demanded that HMG caution the Arab leaders against any untimely incursion. Simultaneously, he requested a directive as to his response, should the Arabs ignore the warning. An action against the Legion seemed absurd, so Whitehall counted on

Kirkbride's ability of restraining the king. The Legion's invasion of Palestine was likely to cause Britain enough trouble after 15 May, when heavy international pressure would be exerted on Britain to stop financial assistance to Transjordan and withdraw British officers from its army. There was no need to provoke these exigencies prematurely.²⁴

Following the fall of Tiberias and Haifa, and with the collapse of Jaffa, Safed and Acre imminent, much hearsay circulated among the battered Palestinians about impending salvation. In Galilee, people spoke of Syrian troops assembling in Qunaitra for an invasion and expecting a British retreat from the region. Jaffa's population waited for the arrival of Iraqi and Transjordanian reinforcements at any moment. In Samaria, word spread from ear to mouth that Abdullah's son, Amir Talal, was marching on Palestine at the head of 5,000 soldiers. Iraqi troops were allegedly assembling in Transjordan for an attack on Jerusalem.

In most cases, the rumours reflected merely wishful thinking.²⁵ Nonetheless, they probably echoed discussions that were concurrently taking place at Amman where the invading Arab coalition was taking shape. On 23 April, king Abdullah, Iraq's Regent Abd al-illah, Lebanon's premier Riad al-Sulh, General Safwat as well as Transjordanian and Iraqi ministers met to assess the Palestine situation. Qawuqji also passed through the city on his way from Damascus to Samaria, but did not attend the conference. Prior to his departure for Amman, the Regent promised Mack that Iraq had no intention of intervening in Palestine before 15 May, but it might forward troops to Transjordan. In Mack's opinion, lack of transport and financial difficulties were likely to limit the Iraqi contribution.²⁶

The conference at Amman exerted heavy pressures on the king and the Regent to dispatch their armies at once to Palestine. The presence of Palestinian refugees in Transjordan's capital and news of a Jewish offensive in Jerusalem (operation *YEVUSI*) increased the tension. Yet, the Arab leaders were afraid of embarking on a campaign against an unknown enemy. Qawuqji bolstered their fears by spreading tales about the Jews' aircraft and tanks, designed to exonerate his own defeats and perhaps justify his eventual retreat from the country.

On 24 April the conference in Amman adjourned. Riad al-Sulh proceeded to Cairo, carrying a letter from the king to Azzam. Abdullah demanded that the League commit itself to back his moves in Palestine with manpower, money and equipment. The Regent, too, went to Cairo to verify the Palace's stance. Before leaving Amman, he told Kirkbride that Iraq might send a token force to Palestine, but Abdullah's request for a complete division was out of question in view of the difficult situation in Kurdistan.

At this point, Kirkbride concluded that Arab morale was shaky.

Having accomplished his goal — freedom of action in Palestine — Abdullah was losing his nerve. Abd al-Ilah impressed the ambassador that he had in mind placating public opinion in Iraq rather than rescuing the Palestinians. Opposing hysterical demands for prompt intervention, Transjordan's premier, Tawfiq Abu al-Huda, counselled moderation. The British ambassador could only join in this advice.²⁷

The SHAY knew vaguely of the conference at Amman. Sasson felt that the general trend was leading up to an eventual invasion by the armies. He did not doubt the king's ambition to become "Palestine's Arab saviour", but questioned the other states' drive for intervention. This scepticism derived from the fact that so far no agreement had been achieved regarding a unified Arab army or command.²⁸

In the wake of the *Haganah* victories, Ben-Gurion anticipated a new phase to the campaign was about to begin.²⁹ Soon, the Amman talks had repercussions in Palestine. On 26–27 April an atmosphere of an approaching invasion prevailed in Jerusalem. Vainly expecting salvation, Abdullah's Palestinian partisans spread rumours about legionnaires being seen everywhere, particularly around Jerusalem. In this way, they sought to refute allegations that Abdullah had refrained from extending immediate help because he was serving British and Jewish interests.³⁰

Travellers coming back from Amman reported that Abdullah had come under growing pressure from Bedouin chieftains and Circassian leaders to rescue Palestine immediately.³¹ Speaking to Transjordan's parliament on 26 April, Abdullah announced his intention to occupy Palestine. He called upon the Jews to accept his rule and promised to safeguard their lives. The *Yishuv* viewed this speech as a declaration of war. The Palestinians' reaction was a mixture of joy and doubts as to the king's seriousness.³²

Transjordan's parliament adopted resolutions calling for prompt intervention and a general mobilization. The Legion's headquarters cancelled all leaves. In Palestine, rumours spread of the king's alleged arrival in Jericho at the head of his army. Concurrently, the Arab News Agency announced that the Egyptian army had crossed the border. In actuality, at this point Egypt had not yet decided to join in the invasion, and those who had penetrated into Palestine were Muslim Brethren volunteers, not regular troops.³³

The Zionist underground cell in Baghdad transmitted information on mass protests and hunger strikes in the city. The mob demanded action to save the Palestinians. Urging the demonstrators to resume normal life, the government promised that Iraq was willing to dispatch its army to Palestine and had already discussed such a move with the Arab League. For the time being, the riffraff turned its fury against local Jews and staged a pogrom in one of their synagogues.³⁴

News from Amman spoke of the bellicose atmosphere in the city. In a tapped telephone conversation between an unidentified person in Amman and the Iraqi consulate at Jerusalem, the speaker in Amman told the consul to encourage the Palestinians and promised that troops were on their way to save the city. Alerting Tel Aviv and New York, Sasson cautioned that an invasion could take place at any moment. He was convinced of Britain's complicity in this plot.³⁵

By the next day, the panic of 27 April seemed empty of substance, and the Legion's intervention no longer appeared imminent. Further examination of the situation via other sources indicated that previous information about the approaching invasion was incorrect. Nonetheless Shertok, in New York, urgently appealed to the State Department to prevent Abdullah's forthcoming offensive.

The Americans promptly responded. Secretary of State Marshall instructed the US ambassador in London, Douglas, to warn Attlee and Bevin of "the great danger to Anglo-United States relations" if this attack materialized. Throughout their interview, Douglas refuted all Bevin's arguments in defence of the king's position. Unaware of the background for American anxiety, Bevin endorsed Abdullah's intention to take over Palestine's Arab parts while the ambassador spoke about attacking the Jews.³⁶ The State Department took similar steps in Washington. Under Secretary of State Lovett told the British ambassador, Lord Inverchapel, that the United States would regard Transjordan's invasion of Palestine as "acquiesced by Great Britain".³⁷ On both occasions, the British claimed that the information about a pending invasion of Palestine by Abdullah's forces had no foundation. Nonetheless, they undertook to deter the king from making any rash move, and help bring about a truce in Palestine.³⁸

In reply to anxious queries from London, Kirkbride explained that no declaration of war on Zionism had been uttered. He also denied rumours that an agreement had been achieved in Amman. Stressing that the conference's outcomes depended on further talks that were taking place in Cairo, Kirkbride observed no intentions for sending the Arab armies to Palestine before 15 May. On the contrary, he argued that the mandate's very existence helped Arab leaders excuse their inaction and fend off public agitation and unrest by turning it against Britain.³⁹ On further instructions from London, Kirkbride warned Abdullah and Abu al-Huda against any premature move. They retorted that the Jews were now on the offensive everywhere and offensives usually brought counter-offensives.⁴⁰

The *Yishuv* and, subsequently, the State Department responded to plain propaganda and hyperbolic hearsay. No invasion was forthcoming and further news from Amman indicated the futility, so far, of the Arab leaders' summit. There were also inklings that the king's pugnacity was

nothing but a move to delude the other Arab states, while his real intention remained taking over Palestine's Arab part only.⁴¹

During the lull in Amman talks, the focus of inter-Arab activity shifted temporarily to Cairo. Egypt's government promised the British ambassador that it had no intention of dispatching its army to Palestine, but deliberately avoided any reference to irregulars. Campbell doubted the government's capability of resisting domestic pressures to join in an invasion. His doubts increased when rumours of military movements towards the Palestine border spread in Cairo.⁴²

Bevin instructed his ambassadors in Arab capitals to warn their host governments against any premature invasion and counsel moderation. Egypt was the only state to respond positively. Azzam explained that the Arab leaders risked assassination if they did nothing. Although no decision was taken yet on sending the armies, infiltration by volunteers would surely continue. Riad al-Sulh updated the British ambassador to Beirut, Houston Boswell, about the Arab states' determination to avoid waiting for 15 May. He argued that the enflamed masses might overthrow any government that abstained from using its army.⁴³

Amman talks resumed on 29 April, upon the return of the Regent and Transjordan's Foreign Minister, Fawzi al-Mulki from Cairo. Abd al-Ilah announced Faruq's pledge to send the Egyptian army to southern Palestine. Kirkbride was astonished, in view of the promise given Campbell just a few days earlier, but al-Mulki insisted this was an authentic presentation of Egypt's position. Encouraged by this assurance, the conference decided in principle to invade Palestine. A disagreement over the invasion's timing — whether it should start before or after 15 May — broke out. As a compromise, Abu al-Huda proposed launching the attack when everyone were ready, assuming that preparations could not be completed before the end of the mandate.⁴⁴

On 30 April, Syria's Premier and Minister of Defence, Jamil Mardam and Ahmad Sharabati, joined the gathering in Amman. Simultaneously, the Arab chiefs of staff or their deputies met at nearby Zarqa to discuss the military implications. Meanwhile, the Iraqi government decided to dispatch an expeditionary force to Palestine, and on 28 April its advanced party departed for Transjordan. According to Kirkbride, the entire expedition consisted of one armoured car regiment, one lorried infantry battalion and 24 pieces of field artillery — altogether 1,500 men. They arrived in Mafraq on 4 May and for the time being, remained there. This move came in response to Abdullah's previous demands for assistance, preceding the decision for a wholesale invasion and the generals' consultations at Zarqa.⁴⁵

Reluctantly, the Arab states were dragged into the Palestine campaign. Their inability to build a significant military force under the League's

auspices, the ALA's defeats and the Palestinians' collapse left them no alternative — unless they accepted the fact of Jewish statehood. At the end of April 1948, they overcame their frictions and hesitations and made up their minds to take the risk. Even then, most Arab statesmen still hoped to avoid war by some last moment miracle.

Apologetics notwithstanding, there was much truth in Glubb's words to Nasr al-Din Nashashibi, a Palestinian journalist who interviewed him on behalf of the Egyptian newspaper *Akhir Sa'ah* on the invasion's fifth anniversary:

I did not think that we should enter into a war like this. I believed that the Arabs' threats meant only to intimidate the UN . . . The Arab statesmen had not prepared for war. They had never anticipated that it would really happen. Nonetheless, they ultimately joined the combat . . . in reaction to the pressure of public opinion and desire to ingratiate the masses.⁴⁶

In May–June 1953, the editor of this Egyptian weekly, Muhammad Hassanin Haikal, published his own recollections of that period. Describing his visits to Palestine and his interviews with Abdullah, Noqrashi and several Egyptian generals, he related to the invasion's background in a similar fashion.

The Arab statesmen's talks at Amman on 30 April 1948 triggered the decision to invade Palestine. Subsequently, the generals had two weeks to complete their preparations. Soon, a dispute broke out over appointment of the Arabs' supreme command. Abdullah claimed the post for himself while Azzam insisted on empowering the League's military committee at Damascus to conduct the all-Arab military effort. The Iraqis did not care about the headquarters' location as long as an Iraqi general would chair it. The Egyptians might agree to a Transjordanian command, but vetoed an Iraqi commander-in-chief. Abu al-Huda stated explicitly that Transjordan would not place the Legion under the authority of the League's committee.

These differences rendered the establishment of a common headquarters impossible, but Abdullah adopted an honorary title of "Commander-in-Chief" and the Iraqi general Nur al-Din Mahmud, commanding his country's expedition, similarly bore the title of "Chief of Staff". As a substitute for establishment of a unified command, the Arab leaders assigned each expeditionary force with a sector of Palestine where it should operate independently. Azzam announced the League's guarantee of 1,500,000 Sterling for financing the campaign. Finally, the chiefs of staff arranged to meet at Damascus as soon as possible to jointly hammer out the military steps.⁴⁷

The Amman resolutions were approved under the shadow of desperate appeals for help from Palestine and horrendous stories of refugees flocking to the city from Jerusalem and elsewhere. In Kirkbride's opinion,

the Arab states were incapable of mobilizing a large army, apart from the Legion. Iraq would make do with the token force that was already on its way to Transjordan. The Syrian contingent would not be larger than the Iraqi one, and Lebanon's contribution would be even smaller. Egypt might send two brigades that had already assembled in Sinai in October 1947 — about 7,000 strong. The Arab leaders were aware of this expedition's inadequacy for occupying the whole of Palestine. Kirkbride believed that they might have been content with protecting Arab areas from further Jewish attacks, but noted, ruefully:

Jerusalem has hypnotized them all. They could resign themselves to an international control of Jerusalem. Indeed, in their present mood they would almost welcome it, but the idea of Jerusalem in Jewish hands drives them beyond reason.⁴⁸

After the battle of Qatamon, the Haganah seemed to gain the upper hand in Jerusalem. The leaders visiting Amman urged Abdullah to order the Legion's immediate intervention in the fighting, without waiting for the other armies. To counter-balance these pressures, Kirkbride warned the king against any rash move. He promised that the mandate would not end before 15 May; the British army would stay in Jerusalem pending termination of the mandate and the Legion's premature interference would be a grave mistake. Abdullah was so relieved by these assurances that he embraced the ambassador. Simultaneously, Abu al-Huda resisted the chiefs of staff's call to activate the Legion immediately by demanding to know in advance the strength of their contingents. In Cairo, Azzam queried Campbell whether the British army in Rafah would let the Egyptian army cross the border between Sinai and Palestine or use force to bar passage. This inkling of things to come notwithstanding, the British did not observe any military movements in Sinai or across the Suez Canal.⁴⁹

Abdullah's mood was unstable. While the battle of Qatamon was raging, he informed Kirkbride of his determination to proceed immediately to Jerusalem to protect the holy places. Apparently, Abdullah did not keep this idea to himself and may have generated the aforementioned rumours in Jerusalem of an imminent invasion. Although Kirkbride had dissuaded the king, he was not sure of his ability to do so in the future, should the Jews persist with their offensive.⁵⁰

Despite the secrecy that surrounded the discussions in Amman and Zarqa, and follow-up talks in Damascus, the *SHAY* guessed that in one way or another they would result in the involvement of the regular Arab armies in the campaign. Nevertheless, the Arabs would ultimately acquiesce to the American trusteeship plan and the League would impose it on the Palestinians.⁵¹

The United States amplified their efforts to effect a truce in Palestine. The consul in Jerusalem presented the American scheme to the Political Department and the delegation to the UN submitted it to the Jewish Agency legation in New York and to the Arab delegates. The State Department demanded the *Yishuv* postpone declaration of statehood and promised extensive aid should the Arabs break the cease-fire and invade Palestine. Shertok sent endless telegrams to Tel Aviv, weighing the proposal's benefits and disadvantages and asking for instructions, however, Ben-Gurion deliberately ignored them. Having no guidelines, Shertok avoided the American officials or gave them evasive answers. He brought the matter before the American Zionist Executive, where opinions were divided equally with a slight advantage in favour of those who preferred delaying declaration of statehood.⁵²

Concurrently, another initiative emerged in Jerusalem. Several consuls and the UN mission formed a committee under the Belgian Jean Nieuwenhuys that tried to mediate a cease-fire.⁵³ Ben-Gurion, however, would not listen to any proposal suggesting postponement of statehood. Along the borders an invasion appeared to have already commenced or to be about to begin at any moment. Intelligence reports from Syria spoke of an alleged decision by Arab leaders to dispatch regular troops disguised as volunteers, prior to the mandate's end.⁵⁴ Subsequently, "Syrian soldiers" were seen in various places south of Haifa, or embarking ships in Beirut harbour on their way to relieve Acre. Aimed at bolstering the Palestinians' spirit, other stories circulating cited Iraqi volunteers said to be pouring into the country and a new (imaginary) mobilization of Druze in Syria. Yiftah brigade in Galilee claimed to have been attacked by regular Syrian troops, accompanied by local Arabs and backed by the Lebanese army.⁵⁵ Air reconnaissance reports contradicted allegations of the Syrian army's involvement in combat. According to British intelligence sources, the Arab troops in Upper Galilee belonged to the ALA. They were under Shishakli's command and tried to assist Safed, where the Arabs came under growing pressure.⁵⁶

Considering the alleged infiltration from Syria and Lebanon a prelude to the forthcoming offensive, Sasson ascribed to this invasion six goals:

- 1 Responding to domestic exigencies;
- 2 Diverting Jewish forces to Galilee to alleviate Arab hardships elsewhere;
- 3 Demonstrating Syria's power to Transjordan while premier Mardam was visiting Amman;
- 4 Relieving the Mufti from total dependence on Transjordan and encouraging him to insist on a Palestinian state in the whole of the country;

- 5 Bringing American pressure on Britain to delay its withdrawal;
- 6 Prevailing on the Security Council to promote a truce.

Excluding Transjordan and Iraq, he maintained, the Arab states still wanted a cease-fire. They hoped thereby to postpone partition and Jewish statehood on the one hand and obstruct Abdullah's occupation of Palestine's Arab parts on the other hand.⁵⁷

Against this background of opposing news of an imminent invasion, two *PALMAH* members posing as Palestinian refugees infiltrated into Syria on 7 May and for several days travelled as far as Damascus and Beirut. These agents, however, did not have better access than the plain Arab informers. Their information confirmed previous estimates that the Syrians would penetrate from Bint al-Jbail to Malkiya to relieve Safed. This, indeed, had been the Syrian army's original scheme, but at the last moment the Syrians modified it.⁵⁸

During a second round of talks at Damascus on 11–13 May 1948, the Syrian chief of staff, General Atafa sketched a plan of the forthcoming invasion. This outline envisaged the Syrian and Lebanese armies advancing along the coastal route to Acre and then turning eastwards to encircle Galilee. In Nazareth they would join forces with the Legion and the Iraqi army that should have crossed the border at Sheikh Hussayn Bridge near Bisan. All four contingents would proceed from Nazareth through Wadi Ara to Netanya to bisect the Jewish State. Simultaneously, the Egyptians should advance from Gaza northward along the coast.

Abdullah rejected this plan, which served Syrian interests but ignored his own aspirations. Worried about their eastern flank — which the Syrian scheme left exposed — the Egyptians joined the king's opposition. Consequently, the Arab planners had to revise their scheme. According to the new strategy, Lebanon's army should proceed along the coastal road to Acre. The Syrians should march from the Golan Heights to Safed and Nazareth. The Iraqis should attack the valley of Izrael from Samaria. The Legion should occupy Nablus and Ramallah, then link up with the Egyptian army at Hebron and keep a reserve force on the Jericho–Jerusalem road for possible intervention in Jerusalem. The Egyptians should cut the Negev off from the rest of the Jewish State by advancing along the coast and the Uja–Birsaba route. This revised strategy, as well, was not the last word.⁵⁹

Abdullah succeeded in imposing his will on the Arab coalition primarily because his partners were afraid to go to war without his Legion. Azzam told Kirkbride that they might even shift their position more in line with the king's political stance and agree to a Jewish State, albeit smaller than the one envisaged by the UN plan. Concessions, Azzam stressed, might be discussed only after stabilizing the military situation

and restoring Arab honour — not out of weakness. Kirkbride noted this essential change of the Arab League's declared position, which hitherto had insisted on an independent Arab state in the whole of Palestine.⁶⁰

Concurrent with debates among Arab political and military leaders over the invasion plan — its timing and command, Ben-Gurion and his aides surveyed the *Yishuv's* capability for resisting the invaders. Most available intelligence portrayed the forthcoming offensive as a Transjordanian–Iraqi enterprise. Ben-Gurion, however, was not deceived. Despite Sasson's anachronistic estimate that Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Saudi Arabia opposed the war, he ordered Yadin to prepare for an attack on all fronts.⁶¹

Under the new circumstances, the *Haganah* had to revise Plan D. The original scheme had anticipated an ALA offensive with the end of the mandate. It provided for defending the Jewish settlements against this threat and securing control of the Jewish state's entire territory as the borders were set forth in the partition plan. Unaware of the British evacuation's details and timetable, the planners presumed that the withdrawal would take place simultaneously across the country and serve as a signal for setting Plan D in motion. Since the actual retreat had been gradual, the scheme had never been activated. Taking advantage of local favourable circumstances, various brigades accomplished some of its objectives. In other cases, the enemy pre-empted the *Haganah* and occupied the targets.

When the *Haganah* crystallized the scheme, suspicions of Britain's intentions were paramount. The approaching termination of the mandate did not remove the uncertainty. Plan D assumed that no British troops would be present in the country when the plan was launched, but this assumption proved erroneous. British units were likely to stay in Haifa enclave, Rafah and possibly Jerusalem after 15 May. Yadin was left in the dark about their conduct in the face of the planned *Haganah* offensive. He did not exclude the contingency of these forces seizing major roads under a pretext of protecting their lines of communications.

The main modification of plans concerned the Arab armies' role. In March 1948, the *Haganah* still speculated as to the odds whether there would be intervention. Early in May invasion by regular Arab armies appeared certain, but the scope and character of the forces were still an unknown. Yadin did not trust Britain's pledge to pull the Legion out of the country before the mandate's end. He emphasised the core role that Arab battle strategy assigned the Legion's units still in Palestine. At the same time, he belittled the significance of the ALA. In his estimation, the League's army was incapable of doing more than harassing Jewish traffic and settlements.⁶²

Four days before the mandate's end, the *Haganah* had no details of the

imminent Arab invasion, except for wild rumours and hearsay. Realizing this shortage of intelligence, Yadin was careful not to be duped by the lack of clear-cut signs of Arab intentions. In the course of a controversy in the People's Executive about the probability of an invasion, he told the audience that for him — an invasion was a certainty. Ready for the worst possible scenario, he evaluated the situation and made plans for the forthcoming defensive campaign on the basis of his own hunches.⁶³

Although the British had better access to sources within the Arab armies and an abundance of information on developments in Arab capitals, they also failed to grasp the full significance of the Arab leaders' gatherings in April–May 1948. Only on 8 May did the Foreign Office conclude that the invasion would take place.⁶⁴ Yet, one should keep in mind that the Arab leaders themselves had not completed their plans by then, and continued to modify them until the last moment.

On 10 May, news from Beirut indicated that Lebanon would not take part in the military operation. This abstention was due to the Maronites' opposition and reservations among Jabal Amal's Shi'ites.⁶⁵ Iraq, by contrast, reinforced its expeditionary force and more troops assembled near Baghdad on their way to Transjordan.⁶⁶ Lebanon's decision to abstain from participating in the military venture forced the Arabs to introduce — on the eve of D-Day — more changes concerning the role of the Iraqi and Syrian forces.

Having returned from Amman on a Jewish Agency's errand, a foreign correspondent divulged that the Legion's true mission was restoring order in Palestine's Arab part. This stood in sharp contrast to alarming news from Palestinian sources on Abdullah's ultimate goals.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the Jews still misinterpreted Abdullah's aspirations. Sasson and the Arab section perceived the invasion, if it indeed took place, as primarily a Transjordanian and Iraqi enterprise. The ALA was disintegrating, Safwat resigned, and they believed that the non-Hashemite Arab states preferred a truce to war. Only if a cease-fire was not concluded, other Arab states might join Abdullah — against their will. On 11 May the Arab section reassessed Abdullah's position, firmly convinced that Britain stood behind him: "After having prepared the ground . . . for Abdullah's invasion, they will do nothing that might obstruct his schemes."⁶⁸

Surely, Abdullah opposed the proposed truce but for different reasons. Pretending to save the Palestinians, he strove to occupy Palestine's Arab segment for himself. Fearing that a truce might deny him this opportunity, Abdullah agreed to a cease-fire only on condition that the Legion would be responsible for supervising it. In this manner he thought to secure his future grip on the Arab zone. Iraq backed this demand while the British prevailed upon the king to abide by the truce. In return, they promised to work for acceptance of his stipulation concerning the

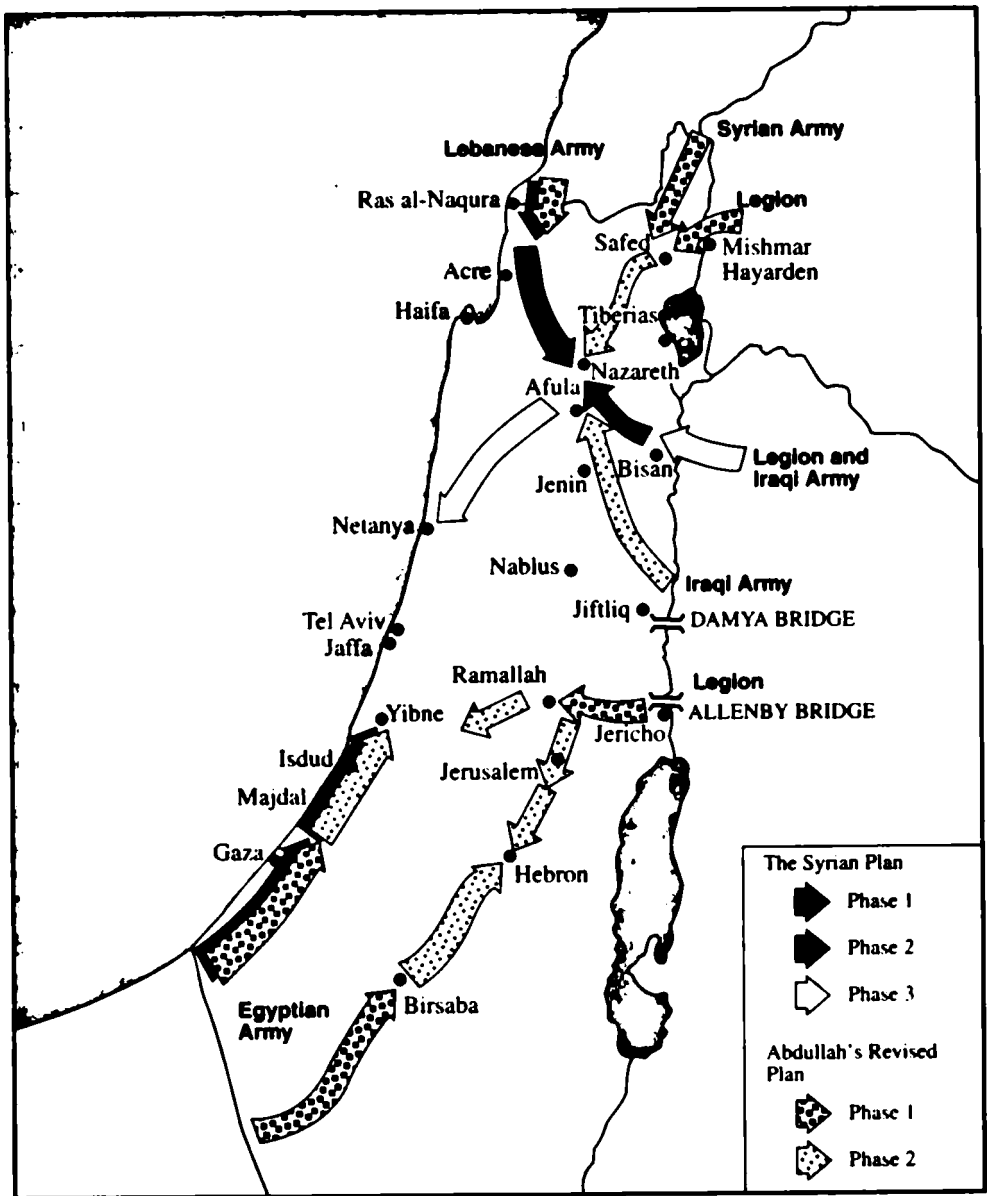
Legion's supervisory role.⁶⁹ The hasty building of Ramallah–Jericho road constituted an indirect indication of the Legion's real mission and evidence of Abdullah's intention to occupy the Arab regions only. Glubb's plan excluded the use of Sheikh Hussayn Bridge over river Jordan because it led straight into territory earmarked for the Jewish State. The road from Allenby Bridge headed for the supposedly international enclave of Jerusalem. The Legion's only route was crossing the Jordan at Allenby Bridge and making a long detour through Jordan valley to Jiftliq and Nablus ending in Ramallah. This primitive route could hardly serve as the sole line of communications between the two banks, carrying traffic on both directions. Three weeks before termination of the mandate Glubb found an alternative path leading from Jericho to Ramallah, and asked the Public Work Department (PWD) in Jericho to quickly construct this secondary line of communication. The Legion's budget covered the expenses.⁷⁰

Once more, Bevin instructed his ambassadors in the Arab capitals to counsel prudence. They should have advised the governments to content themselves with occupying territories allotted to the Arab state and defending them against further Jewish attacks.⁷¹ On the day of the invasion, Kirkbride replied that he had no audience to which he could preach moderation. The Arabs were in a state of euphoria, and pending a drastic change of their military situation would not listen to reason.⁷²

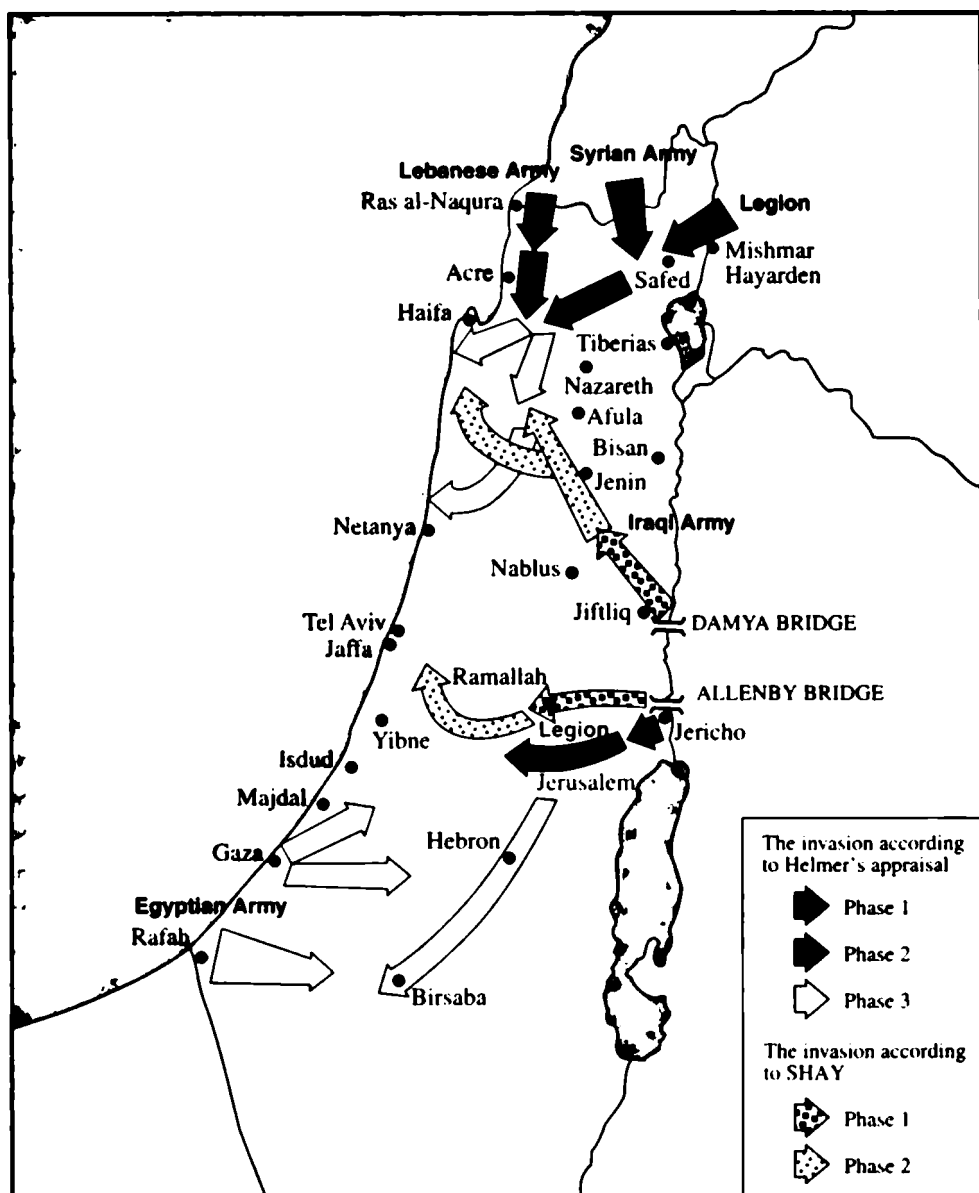
The fanatical content and bellicose tone of Arab broadcasts corroborated Kirkbride's description of moods in Amman.⁷³ Cunningham, by contrast, stressed the Jews' confidence in their ultimate success, even if they were to fight alone.⁷⁴ This optimistic British assessment was delivered only four days before the People Executive's meeting in which Yadin and Galili questioned the *Haganah's* capability for thwarting the invasion.

Egypt's position was a worrisome unknown. Since October 1947, Noqrashi consistently refused to involve the Egyptian army in Palestine. His concept of the army's role was filling the vacuum that would be created by British evacuation of the Suez Canal zone. In his opinion, Egypt should back the Palestinians' struggle with money and volunteers only. This stance gradually eroded after the battle of Mishmar Ha'emek. Fearing that a refusal to join the Arab coalition might impair his domestic standing, Noqrashi reported on the situation in Palestine to the Senate and obtained its approval for intervention.

The Senate's resolution on 12 May, and king Faruq's subsequent message to leaders of the Arab states, were not unequivocal even at this late date. Nonetheless, they were encouraging enough to revive Arab hopes. Egypt's decision generated lofty talk and audacious notions as to what should be the Arabs' course of action upon the close of the mandate. Abdullah, in particular, regained his bellicose mood.⁷⁵



Arab invasion plans



Jewish perceptions of the Arab invasions plans

On 13 May, the British army in the Canal Zone noted Egyptian convoys crossing the canal eastbound. A British unit at Rafah reported the arrival of two trains from Al-Arish loaded with soldiers. They took up positions around Rafah crossroads and deployed anti-aircraft guns to cover the troops' deployment.⁷⁶

By listening to British wireless communications, the SHAY identified on 14 May — for the first time — Egyptian army's concentrations at Al-Arish and Rafah, and a ship transporting troops to Majdal, north of Gaza.⁷⁷ Oded Messer, Negev brigade's operations officer, later recalled:

We had not foreseen combat as it took place after 15 May . . . We conceived a war against strong gangs, but without support arms . . . Cognizance of the invasion's contingency began only a day or two before 15 May.⁷⁸

The Jewish Agency learned of Egypt's decision from a French source in Beirut. This source also reported the Arabs' battle order and his account was the closest to reality of all the information that Jewish intelligence had gathered prior to the invasion. He contradicted, of course, most earlier accounts about the size of invading forces.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the Arab section still adhered to its previous conception of the invasion as a predominantly Transjordanian-Iraqi undertaking, assisted by Syria and symbolically by Lebanon and did not accept Egypt's participation as a *fait accompli*.⁸⁰

Having learned of Lebanon's determination to stay out of combat, the Syrians changed their plan at the last minute. Afraid of penetrating into central Galilee with both their flanks exposed owing to Lebanon's inaction, they moved their expedition — which had already assembled in south Lebanon for attacking Safed — across the Golan Heights establishing their staging area at the southernmost tip of the plateau. They decided to break through Samakh to Tiberias, with Lake Kinneret securing their northern flank and the Iraqis protecting their southern flank. Although air and ground reconnaissance spotted the movement of the Syrian column, the *Haganah* did not comprehend its meaning and the Syrians' appearance south of Kinneret came as a surprise.⁸¹

On 14 May, Kirkbride reported the invasion plan to London: A Syrian-Lebanese column would penetrate from the north and another Syrian column from Samakh. The Iraqis were to attack kibbutz Gesher near Sheikh Hussayn Bridge while the Legion — according to its original scheme — would deploy in Hebron, Ramallah and Nablus before spreading out to other Arab regions.⁸² Half an hour after midnight, the SHAY officer of the northern sector reported: "The Legion is running wild and ransacking Naharayim [power station]. They have not hurt the people."⁸³ Twelve hours later, at noon of 15 May 1948, Kirkbride reported to London on the movements of the Legion and Iraqis forces:

Two brigades crossed at midnight to Palestine heading for Ramallah and Nablus. According to a previous agreement, the ALA assembles north of Ramallah for a week of respite and rehabilitation . . . The Jews partly demolished the bridge near Naharayim precisely before the Iraqi assault. Iraqi infantry crossed the river and occupied the settlement Geshet, but their supplies have not yet crossed. The Jews at the police fortress hold on.⁶⁴

Thus the Arab invasion of Palestine commenced, though not all the details were accurate.

The invading Arab expeditionary forces were incapable and insufficient for taking over the whole country. Despite the wild rhetoric that had preceded and accompanied the invasion, the invaders' goal was not and could not be "pushing the Jews to the Mediterranean". The purpose of this propagandist slogan was mobilizing domestic support for lame politicians who had undertaken a crucial decision and feared its consequences.

Drawn into the war by the collapse of the Palestinians and the ALA, the Arab governments' primary goal was preventing the Palestinians' total ruin and the flooding of their own countries by more refugees. According to their perception, had the invasion not taken place, there was no Arab force in Palestine capable of checking the *Haganah's* offensive. Since the acceleration of the British withdrawal at the beginning of April, this campaign gained momentum with every passing day. It might not stop at the partition borders, as Jaffa had already fallen and Acre was about to fall. Both towns were within the area allotted to the Arabs by the partition plan. Eventually, and in the absence of any independent military capacity or outside assistance, the majority of the panicked Palestinian population would have wandered into adjacent Arab countries.

The *Yishuv's* comprehension of the Arab onslaught was totally different. Against the backdrop of the Palestinians' violent opposition to the Zionist enterprise since the early 1920s, and the Arab states support for their struggle since 1936, the *Yishuv* perceived the peril of an Arab invasion as threatening its very existence. Having no real knowledge of the Arabs' true military capabilities, the Jews took Arab propaganda literally, preparing for the worst and reacting accordingly.

Fighting and Flight after the Invasion

On 14 May 1948, the British mandate in Palestine expired and the *Yishuv* declared statehood. A war between Israel and the Arab states broke out immediately, and the Arab armies invaded Palestine. This clash continued the civil war that had started after the UN resolution on partition, but differed from its predecessor in being a confrontation between sovereign states employing regular armies. The Palestinians, who hitherto had carried the main burden of the Arab struggle, almost vanished after the invasion. Having rejected the opportunity to gain and exercise sovereignty, they rapidly lost their military and political significance in this new campaign.

The absence of an agreed plan of action on the Arab side, and ignorance of the invading armies' intentions, capabilities and movements on the Jewish side, combined to impede a systematic comprehension of the invasion's means and goals. Furthermore, this gap in understanding at the time of the events has been passed on to later study of this war. To the extent that the invasion has been researched, its reconstruction has reflected highly partisan apologetics — Israeli or Arab — and mistaken premises even in contemporary research. The picture that "new" historiography has recently created has also been inaccurate and, sometimes, misleading.¹

The Arab armies' encroachment transformed the war's character. A greater variety of troops, arms and methods of warfare multiplied the firepower and accelerated the tempo of military actions in the field. Furthermore, the balance of power shifted in favour of the Arab side. Between the invasion on 15 May and the truce on 11 June, the Arabs were superior in fighting manpower and armaments. Nonetheless, their expeditionary forces were too small for undertaking major offensive operations in Jewish-held areas. Divided command, a lack of combat

experience, poor communications and serious supply problems further handicapped their capabilities. Excluding the Legion, the invading forces had little knowledge of Palestine's terrain and the Jewish enemy. The Egyptians, for example, even had a shortage of topographical maps of Palestine and had to borrow maps from the Legion.

On the opposite side of the front line, thousands of Israeli officers and soldiers who had taken part in the Second World War applied their experience and expertise in the present encounter. Contrary to the Arab commanders' vacillations, the *Haganah* displayed a strong offensive spirit. It had a comparatively good communications system and, relying on internal lines, enjoyed superior mobility.²

Israel's better intelligence services notwithstanding, for several days the Israeli high command was in the dark about the enemy. Although the Arab coalition attacked simultaneously on all fronts, the *Haganah* had anticipated primarily an operation by the Legion, assisted by an Iraqi expeditionary force. Parallel to blocking the invading armies, the Jewish forces continued the struggle against the remnants of their older adversaries — the Palestinians and the ALA. Consequently, several days passed before the fog of battle cleared and the various antagonists were correctly identified and located.

The entries for those days in Ben-Gurion's war diary are full of erroneous, partial and sometimes deceptive information and interpretation. The alleged presence of the Legion everywhere — from Birsa in the south to Samakh in the north — dominated the picture. Although the true situation clarified within a week, it was still incomplete. Several days had elapsed before the General Staff noticed the ALA exit from Latrun and the Legion's subsequent deployment in that area.³ Confusing the ALA remnants in Galilee with Syrian and Lebanese regular troops, the *Haganah* referred to all of them as "regular Arab army". On 15 May, Yiftah brigade reported a fierce battle with invading Lebanese troops at Malkiya. These were, however, local combatants and remains of Shishakli's Yarmuk battalion.⁴

Reluctant to take part in the fighting, Lebanon's small army deployed along the coastal route from Ras al-Naqla to Saida.⁵ The military's Christian commanders refused to involve the army in battle, but allowed Muslim soldiers to join the ALA and the Syrian army. Only 300 troopers chose to take advantage of this opportunity. A French agent in Beirut came to Jerusalem to tell Jewish Agency officials that the Lebanese were unwilling to fight and would not take any initiative. The message also implied a request from Israel to refrain from violating Lebanon's territory and sovereignty.⁶

While its own army stood aloof, Lebanon's government permitted the Syrians in May and the ALA in June 1948 to use its territory as a staging

ground to invade Galilee. The Syrian army re-entered Lebanon in the summer of 1948, and by the end of the war it was hardly possible to distinguish between the variety of forces (Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinian, North-African volunteers and ALA troopers of various origins) in the country's southern district.

At the last moment, Lebanon's inaction caused the Syrians to change their original planning. Afraid of exposing their flanks, they gave up their intention to penetrate into central Galilee to liberate Safed. As a substitute, the Syrian army crossed the border into Palestine near al-Hama and attacked Samakh. Concurrently, the Iraqi expeditionary force tried in vain to occupy kibbutz Geshar near Naharayim. Abdullah's Legion took over the Arab towns Ramallah, Nablus, Tulkarm, Qalqilia and Hebron. Upon the League's orders, the ALA moved out of Palestine for reorganization, but its rear guard still fought in Latrun and around Jerusalem and Qawuqji's guns shelled the city's Jewish quarters.⁷

Azzam strove to lead the invasion as an all-Arab co-ordinated thrust. The League adopted resolutions concerning the management of the war; however, it lacked the ability to influence the conduct of military operations. The Arab states waged the war not only for the Palestinians' sake but also for attaining particular interests of their own. Each member state maintained and reinforced its expeditionary force in accordance with its own capabilities and discretion. From the beginning, the resolutions of the League on military matters remained solely on paper, with no effect in the field.⁸

Three days after the invasion, the Jewish state clearly had not succumbed to the opening blow. Contrary to Arab radio and press reports, the invasion appeared to lose its momentum. The Iraqis and the Syrians encountered fiercer resistance than they had expected and halted after advancing only a short distance.⁹

Meanwhile, all attempts at achieving a cease-fire in Jerusalem failed. Promptly upon the departure of the British, the *Haganah* secured most of the new city. Operation *KILSHON* caught Arab irregulars off guard. They restricted their response to indiscriminate shelling of Jewish neighbourhoods and did not attempt to counter-attack. When a *PALMAH* unit broke through the Old City's wall at Zion Gate and made contact with the besieged Jewish quarter, the Arab irregulars seemed to lose their trump card in the struggle for Jerusalem as well as their nerves. They desperately appealed to Abdullah for help and warned him of the town's imminent downfall.¹⁰

Abdullah, whose Legion had already achieved all its original objectives by seizing the principal Arab centres, received the call while he was visiting the Iraqi expedition in Jordan valley. Back in Amman, he told Kirkbride that the Syrian army had to stop at Samakh and was incapable of a further

advance. The Iraqis' vanguard proceeded as far as Kaukab al-Hauwa (Belle Voir), but the Jews at Gesher and in the nearby police fortress were holding their own and menaced the Iraqis' line of communications. The Iraqi command refused to push forward without the Legion's assistance. In view of the Legion's eventual involvement in Jerusalem as the war unfolded, this was an unlikely eventuality.¹¹

Abdullah did not overstate the Syrians' tribulations. Their expedition consisted of one infantry brigade supported by a company of obsolete tanks, two companies of armoured vehicles and 24 pieces of field artillery.¹² Its course had originated in Qatana on 1 May, when a state of alert had been declared in all units bound to take part in the campaign. Having completed the preparations, the Syrian column moved to Beirut on 12 May, turned south and arrived in Saida on the next day. The convoy proceeded to Bint al-Jbail with the objective of crossing the border at Malkiya. After the change of plans (see p. 136), it turned to Nabatiya, Banias and via Qunaitra arrived in Samakh sector.¹³

In the first campaign in its history, the Syrian army sustained heavy losses, first at Samakh and then in an abortive attempt to storm kibbutz Degania. Consequently, the expedition retreated to Golan Heights to reorganize. Syria's Minister of Defence, Sharabati, and the Chief of Staff, General Atafa, blamed one another for the fiasco. Atafa resigned, and Prime Minister Mardam discharged Sharabati and took over the defence portfolio. He promptly appointed a new commander-in-chief, Husni al-Za'im, who at once embarked on reorganizing the army.

Egypt's expedition advanced along two routes: the coastal road to Majdal, where a battalion had landed by sea, and the inland route from Sinai via Uja and Birsaba to Hebron, Bethlehem and Jerusalem's southern approaches. Following a futile attack on 15 May, they bypassed kibbutz Nirim opposite Rafah. They could not, however, skip Yad Mordechai, which blocked the way to Majdal. Therefore, the Egyptians besieged the kibbutz. The siege slightly delayed their progress but the settlement was eventually evacuated and the way was opened to continue the advance.

The Israeli high command mistakenly assessed that the Egyptians were heading for Tel Aviv, but the invading force turned east to make contact with their troops in Hebron. Kibbutz Negba threatened their movements on Majdal-Hebron road, and they tried in vain to subjugate it by continuous shelling, air bombing, armoured raids and infantry attacks. Advancing unopposed along the desert and mountain route, the second Egyptian column appeared south of Jerusalem and stopped opposite kibbutz Ramat Rahel.

Contrary to the *Haganah* vision of the Legion being everywhere, four days after the invasion Abdullah's army had not yet encountered any

Jewish forces. It had crossed the river at Allenby Bridge and moved along Jordan valley via Jiftliq to Nablus. One brigade remained in Samaria and the second proceeded to Ramallah and Latrun. The empty convoys returned for a second round through the new Ramallah–Jericho road. Simultaneously, two infantry companies advanced on foot from Jericho to Jerusalem and on 17 May appeared on the Mount of Olives. There was no likelihood of confronting any Jews along these routes.¹⁴

These manoeuvres indicated the Legion's intention to occupy the Arab regions only and avoid engagement in Jerusalem, assuming that a cease-fire might still be enforced in the city. In two days, the Legion completed its deployment without encountering any obstacles. However, the *Haganah* conquests beyond the partition line in Galilee, Abdullah's allies' troubles, the irregulars' setbacks in Jerusalem and especially the *PALMAH* thrust into the Old City — all exerted heavy pressure on the king to turn the Legion against the Jews.¹⁵

Visiting London three months later, Glubb affirmed that the failure to institute an international regime in Jerusalem and the fear of a Jewish occupation of the whole city caused Abdullah to send the Legion into battle.¹⁶ Kirkbride's reports at the time, as well as his memoirs and Glubb's own recollections convey a different impression: When the *Haganah* checked the invading armies and engaged them in fierce battles, the Arab governments demanded Abdullah activate the Legion to alleviate their difficulties. Glubb wavered between marching on the Jewish state's borders and liberating Jerusalem's Arab quarters, or possibly the entire city. He chose the second, more prestigious alternative, and on 18 May ordered the Legion to enter Jerusalem.

This decision reflected British no less than Transjordanian considerations, and mainly demonstrated Glubb personal calculations to ensure he would continue to remain the Legion's British commanding officer. Jerusalem was outside the Jewish state's bounds. The Legion's involvement was, therefore, less likely to impact on British–American relations than an invasion of Israeli territory. Furthermore, the Legion's engagement in Jerusalem would not compel Britain to withdraw British officers from service in the Legion. This was the likely outcome had Glubb preferred the first alternative. Nonetheless, following the Legion's intervention in Jerusalem, Britain imposed an embargo and suspended its financial aid to Transjordan.¹⁷

Prior to the invasion, the Foreign Office banned British officers from participation in combat. Britain lifted this restriction, which had not been fully enforced in the first place, after learning of the accidental death of the American officer serving in the IDF — Colonel David Marcus (Mickey Stone) — while commanding the front of Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road. Glubb convincingly maintained that his status was not different from Stone's.¹⁸

Glubb decided to dispatch half the Legion to Jerusalem and position the other half at Latrun to isolate Jerusalem from the coastal plain and defend the approaches to Ramallah. This crucial decision turned the Legion's campaign from a policing operation among a friendly Arab population into a fierce battle with the IDF.¹⁹

A week after the invasion, the Arab commanders reassessed the situation and decided to modify their plans. Turning their main effort to eastern Galilee, the Syrians retreated from Samakh. The Legion concentrated on Jerusalem and the Iraqis withdrew from Geshar to replace the Legion in Samaria. To frustrate a possible Jewish initiative in this sector, the ALA remnants should have taken the Iraqis and the Syrians' sector opposite Geshar and Samakh.²⁰

Two days later, the Arabs altered their new scheme. The ALA pulled out from all fronts for a speedy reorganization before invading Galilee from Lebanon. Iraq's expeditionary force split: — a major contingent moved to Samaria and the rest remained on Jordan's eastern bank opposite Geshar. The Egyptian army halted at the Majdal-Hebron line where it intended to stay put.²¹

In less than a week, the offensive's drive faded. Israel seemed to have contained the onslaught successfully and the Arab governments were gradually disillusioned. Their dream of a *Blitzkrieg* to destroy the Jewish forces had not materialized. The ramifications of the Arab armies' logistic shortcomings began to appear and their stocks of ammunition — insufficient in the first place for waging a protracted war — dwindled. Although the military commanders were dissatisfied with their gains, they refused yet to admit their own undoing. Nonetheless, Abd al-illah hinted to Britain's ambassador in Baghdad that interruption of the campaign through outside arbitration might satisfy the Arabs' honour.²²

Kirkbride feared that if the Jews were victorious they might refuse a cease-fire. His apprehensions relaxed after the first battle of Latrun on 25 May. An IDF brigade, the new 7th, tried to open the road to Jerusalem. Engaging the Legion's positions around Latrun, the brigade sustained heavy casualties and failed to accomplish its mission.²³ In the wake of this Arab success, Kirkbride feared that revived hopes among the Arabs that triumph was imminent might now prevent them from accepting the truce's provisions.²⁴ Naturally, the Legion's achievement at Latrun encouraged the Arabs. They stipulated several preconditions for a cease-fire, first and foremost — repeal of Jewish statehood. Israel perceived these excessive demands as an excuse for postponing the truce in expectation of further victories.²⁵

Britain modified its stance. Previously, the British delegation to the UN had obstructed an American proposal at the Security Council calling for a truce and threatening with sanctions any party who failed to comply.

After the first battle of Latrun, Bevin ordered his ambassadors to secure the Arabs' acceptance of the cease-fire's provisions.²⁶

Late in May, the Egyptians resumed their advance. A battalion-strong column moved from Majdal to help the Palestinian irregulars and the refugees that had flocked to Yibna. After two weeks of total Arab domination of the skies in daylight, the Israeli air force — equipped with *Messerschmit* fighters that had just arrived from Czechoslovakia — attacked the convoy and brought it to a halt near Isdud.²⁷ A combined attack on this Egyptian spearhead by the IDF's Giv'ati and Negev brigades followed. Although it ended in failure and heavy losses, the Egyptians halted at Isdud and made no further attempts to advance.

After the Egyptians and Transjordanians linked up in Hebron, first frictions over control of Palestine's Arab areas broke out. The Legion frustrated an attempt to appoint an Egyptian governor in Bethlehem. In Hebron, both the Legion and the Egyptian army nominated governors. Kirkbride remarked ironically that half the city obeyed the Egyptian officer while the other half submitted to his Transjordanian partner.²⁸

So far, the Iraqi contingent was too small to have a significant impact on the campaign. Realizing its inadequacy, Iraq's General Staff brought more troops from Kurdistan to Baghdad in preparation for reinforcing the expeditionary force. On 29 May, a second brigade departed for Transjordan on its way to Palestine. The Iraqis strove to restore their good name, which had been tarnished by their performance at Gesher, and partly succeeded in restoring their reputation in the battle of Jenin on 1 June.²⁹ The Carmeli brigade occupied the town after its residents had pulled out. Arriving just in time at Samaria, the Iraqis counter-attacked immediately and successfully uprooted the IDF from Jenin.

Following the Egyptians' advance along the coast, the Iraqis' dispersal in Samaria and the Syrian army's retreat from Samakh, the campaign entered a new phase. Deliveries of arms that had been purchased before the mandate's end arrived in Israel and helped restore the balance of power. Although all three Israeli major initiatives in the end of May and the beginning of June 1948 were tactical failures, strategically they turned the tide of the war. By waging the battles of Latrun against the Legion, Isdud against the Egyptians and Jenin against the Iraqis, the IDF had grabbed the initiative out of the hands of the Arabs and retained it for the remainder of the war. The invaders gave up any hope of further conquests. Consequently, they remained on the defensive and focused ineffectively on holding the terrain that they had captured in the fortnight following the invasion.

Having checked the invasion, the IDF endeavoured to restore the situation wherever ground had been lost and the Arabs had cut off important lines of communications or menaced populated centres. Ben-Gurion and

his military advisers carried out daily appraisals of enemy strength in each sector and the threat posed by each of the invading Arab armies, looking for the crucial point in the configuration of forces where a successful attack might effect the entire course of the war. The futile attack on Latrun was only a prelude to further and more offensive moves in this sector. Rather than withdrawing in the wake of its defeat, the IDF fortified its positions opposite the Legion, and prepared for a new assault that took place on 31 May. Despite its failure, Ben-Gurion relentlessly prevailed on the General Staff to prepare for a third attack. Simultaneously, the IDF embarked on building an alternative route to Jerusalem, hidden from the Legion's sight and line of fire.³⁰

Obviously, the IDF General Staff had overstated the weight of the Syrian-Lebanese peril and had allocated too many troops to the northern front while they were badly needed against the Legion and the Egyptian army. Insisting on giving first priority to lifting the siege on Jerusalem, Ben-Gurion demanded the transfer of Yiftah brigade from Galilee to the central front in order to attack Lydda and Ramle before the impending truce. Still apprehensive that the withdrawal of this brigade might expose Galilee, Yadin objected. Alon, Yiftah's commanding officer, suggested occupying Galilee first, then advancing along Jordan valley to cut off the Legion's line of communications with Transjordan and force its retreat from Latrun.³¹ The feasibility of this brilliant manoeuvre under prevailing conditions was, however, dubious. After the second attack on Latrun had failed, and anticipating a further Egyptian advance in the south, Yadin complied with Ben-Gurion's wishes and transferred Yiftah to the central front.³²

Lebanon's decision to remain on the sidelines and Syria's rout in the battle of Samach left the Arabs of Galilee defenceless. Hence, the League's military committee cut the ALA reorganization and hastily dispatched it to this region. Yiftah's departure created a temporary vacuum, and this lull made it possible for the ALA to penetrate as far south as Lubia and Nazareth, followed by the creation of an Arab enclave in central Galilee, linked with Lebanon.³³

The ALA thrust into Galilee ended the invasion phase. A single regiment, the *Hittin* under Madlul Abbas, arrived in Nazareth. Abbas took control of the city and extended his domination to surrounding villages.³⁴ Qawuqji himself remained in south Lebanon and trickled his forces into Galilee as they were ready. Their number in Nazareth at the beginning of the truce did not exceed 500.³⁵

On *Hittin*'s way to Nazareth, Abbas made a futile attempt to subjugate Sejera — a Jewish settlement close to the road from Nazareth to Upper Galilee and Lebanon. This route should have been the ALA's main line of communications but was insecure as long as Sejera could menace

it. Having failed to defeat the settlement, the ALA had to retain a relatively large force to safeguard the nearby crossroads.

The movement of ALA personnel into Galilee persisted during the truce. By the end of June, Arab troops in Galilee numbered about one thousand and more were flowing in from Lebanon. Half this force stayed at Nazareth and the rest dispersed along the line of communications and in the villages. They strengthened their defences; patrolled the terrain between them and adjacent Jewish settlements; registered private weapons; and enlisted local youth. Their few pieces of artillery and armoured vehicles moved from one place to another to impress the populace and restore confidence.³⁶

One of the ALA's main weaknesses was lack of independent logistics. The League's military committee was incapable of properly maintaining a military force, even of this small size, under war like conditions. Before its penetration of Galilee, the committee arranged for the ALA to receive its supplies from the Lebanese army. The hasty march to Nazareth began while the Lebanese were not yet ready to fulfil their role. Madlul Abbas complained about their impotence and grumbled about his own unsolved predicament, primarily a shortage of food and other supplies.

Arriving in Nazareth, Madlul realized that he would have to sustain not only his troops but also the local militia and a gang of Hajj Amin's partisans that had arrived in the town at the beginning of the war. The League's military committee refused to undertake this expenditure, claiming that the AHC should finance the Palestinian combatants and care for their food and clothing. For reasons of economy, it forbade Madlul to enlist Palestinians into his regiment. During the truce, the committee improvised an independent system of supply to reduce the ALA's dependence on the Lebanese army.³⁷

Most Palestinian *Mujahidin* assembled after the invasion in Lydda and Ramle. Lydda's permanent population of 20,000 mounted to 30,000 after absorbing refugees from Jaffa and the surrounding countryside. About 1,000 residents possessed arms.³⁸ A few hundred tribesmen from Transjordan — mostly Bedouin from Karak district — joined 700 *Jihad al-Muqadas* combatants, a handful of Iraqi irregulars under a British deserter and the local militia of Lydda and Ramle. The Legion appointed a military governor for the twin cities and stationed a company in their police fortresses, which served as outposts of the Legion's main position in Latrun. Confusing the tribesmen with the Legionnaires, the IDF mistakenly estimated that a large Legion force — 1,200 strong — assisted by 700 Palestinian combatants had assembled in the two towns, ostensibly to threaten Tel Aviv.³⁹

By the beginning of June 1948, only the Syrian army failed to occupy any Palestinian territory. Hence, the Syrians were determined to conquer

a Jewish settlement to restore their prestige. On 5 June, they attacked Mishmar Hayarden — a small settlement on the main road from Palestine to Damascus — for the first time. The attack was checked, but exposed the IDF's weakness in that sector. One day before the truce — on 10 June — the Syrians successfully crossed Jordan River, establishing a bridgehead and capturing the isolated Jewish settlement. To divert the IDF attention, they launched simultaneous attacks in other sectors of the front.⁴⁰

Mishmar Hayarden's fall generated euphoria in Syria. It fuelled a massive propaganda campaign claiming that the Arabs had been on the verge of a decisive triumph, but at the last moment the truce saved the Jews from total ruin.⁴¹ According to a report that was written after the war by a well-placed Syrian source, the attack's objective was not Mishmar Hayarden, but kibbutz Ayelet Hashahar on the main road to Hula valley. The assault dissipated after the attackers had suffered heavy casualties and came to a halt after the conquest of the small settlement. Za'im urged his field commanders to carry on, but they ignored his orders.⁴²

The Syrians' success worried Israeli commanders. They speculated about the enemy's next moves and were particularly concerned about the possibility of a co-ordinated attack by the Syrians and the ALA to cut off Hula valley from the rest of the country.

Logistic circumstances increasingly hindered the Arab armies' movements. On 6 June, Kirkbride reported that the Legion's ammunition sufficed for seven days of combat only. The Iraqis were in a similar state and the Legion's stock of spare parts, upon which the Iraqi expedition also depended, dwindled below the red line. The Egyptians were better off, but their fighting spirit was poor and they would "undoubtedly run away if faced with fierce resistance", Kirkbride said. He cautioned that the Legion's withdrawal from Latrun and the subsequent opening of the road to Jerusalem might set off a general Arab retreat. A fresh wave of refugees would follow the withdrawing armies and inundate neighbouring Arab countries. The only outlet was rapid enforcement of a cease-fire to rescue the Arabs from impending catastrophe.⁴³

Kirkbride's evaluation ignored the IDF difficulties, but his report on the Legion's diminishing stock of ammunition was correct. The shelling of Jerusalem subsided. IDF listeners intercepted several orders to ration dispensing artillery and mortar shells. The Palestinian irregulars and the Egyptian Muslim Brethren south of Jerusalem also exhausted their munitions.⁴⁴ British estimates of the Arab armies' deteriorating state might have reached the ears of Ben-Gurion, who noted in his diary: "The Arabs are on the verge of their fatal end. They have no arms and munitions. They want to end the war, but only in a way that will save their face."⁴⁵

Yadin and his aides did not comprehend the full significance of the

Arab armies' hardships. Anticipating a truce, they judged that the Arabs might venture a last effort to accomplish at least some of their objectives. The enemy's wireless communications, however, revealed fatigue. Therefore, Yadin urged various units to exploit the Arabs' weariness to regain ground that had been lost earlier in the war. He encouraged the troops to take the initiative everywhere and usher in the truce with a series of *fait accompli*.⁴⁶ Exhaustion, however, was the lot of all protagonists. Apart from British reports on the Arabs' quandaries, Ben-Gurion also received letters and telegrams from Jerusalem painting a disturbing picture of a desperate community. People in the city severely criticized Jewish political and military leadership in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem for its inability to ease their distress.⁴⁷

When the UN-imposed truce finally commenced on 11 June 1948, all belligerents were exhausted and needed a time-out for recovery. The death toll was heavy. More than 1,600 Israelis were killed in the month following the invasion, 1,200 of them soldiers. They constituted a quarter of the *Yishuv*'s casualties throughout the entire war and 0.25% of the total Jewish population. Almost a third of the soldiers (32%) were killed in battles against the Legion. About a quarter were killed in skirmishes with Palestinian or ALA combatants; 21% fell in the Egyptian sector; 11% died on the Syrian front; and 8.5% in battles against the Iraqis.⁴⁸ In Jerusalem alone, the Israelis sustained since the invasion 383 dead (204 soldiers and 179 civilians) and 1,433 injured (415 soldiers and 1,018 civilians).⁴⁹

Glubb maintained that the Legion had sustained 500 casualties in this period, but did not differentiate between dead and injured. According to daily reports on hospital bed occupancy, the *SHAY* calculated that 250–300 Legionnaires were killed and 500–600 wounded. The difference might have stemmed from counting Transjordanian irregular tribesmen by the *SHAY* while Glubb ignored them.⁵⁰

Lebanon's army suffered only one fatal casualty — a fact underscoring its degree of involvement in combat. The Syrians counted 315 dead and 400–500 wounded soldiers. The Iraqis' had 200 killed and 500 injured. Six hundred Egyptians were killed and 1,400 wounded (including the Muslim Brethren's contingent). Since its reappearance on the battlefield at the beginning of June, the ALA had sustained about 100 casualties, mostly in the battle around Sejera. There is no record of the Palestinians' fatalities at this stage.⁵¹

A report by the American embassy in Baghdad cites higher figures of Iraqi losses: Eight officers and 331 personnel of other ranks in the Iraqi Expeditionary Force were killed during that period and 391 injured. In addition, 386 Iraqi ALA troopers were killed and 476 wounded since the arrival of the ALA in Palestine.⁵²

The Arab armies held 800 Jews as prisoners of war, mostly from *Gush Etzion* and the Old City of Jerusalem. They were interned in a camp near Mafraq. The rest were captured by the Egyptians, mostly at Nitzanim, and by the Syrians in Mishmar Hayarden. Israel held 1,300 Arab prisoners, mainly Palestinians.

The Jews captured seven Arab or mixed towns, 50 large villages beyond the partition lines and a larger number of hamlets and Bedouin encampments. The Arab armies occupied 14 Jewish settlements, only one of them (Mishmar Hayarden) within the Jewish state's partition boundary. Twelve Arab villages remained within Israel's borders, but refused to accept Jewish authority. The Arabs seized 350 square kilometres of Jewish territory and the Jews occupied 700 square kilometres of Arab territory. These figures excluded the Negev, where neither side had complete control of open ground beyond inhabited locations.⁵³

Temporary military administrations replaced the mandatory government in the Arab occupied areas. Egyptian and Transjordanian governors now ruled the Palestinians, attempting to reorganize civil services. Palestinian institutions vanished or disintegrated, yet the AHC still existed abroad and retained a delegation at the UN centre in New York.⁵⁴

The truce was scheduled to last four weeks. For a few days — between announcement of a cease-fire and its stabilization — each side tried to improve its positions and deny its adversary such improvements. The Arab military governors instructed the troops and the population to report immediately whenever the Jews violated the truce. A rush of true and false grievances about expulsions, shooting of harvesters and burning of granaries in abandoned hamlets followed suit.⁵⁵ The mediator on behalf of the UN, Count Folke Bernadotte, refused to arbitrate these matters. Later, British diplomats exonerated the Arab governments' rejection of Bernadotte's proposals, citing the mediator's attitude to breaches of the truce by the Jews.⁵⁶ On the opposite side, Shertok complained to Bernadotte about 90 violations of the truce by Arabs, 50 of them in Jerusalem. The list included cases of shooting, mining, seizing ground and erecting fortifications. Israel's principal complaint concerned the continued flow of Arab troops into the country.⁵⁷

Apart from regular units that reinforced the Arab states' expeditions, several hundred Lybians and Tunisians volunteered for the ALA. Egyptian authorities held up the group en route to Palestine and eventually they went back to their respective countries. To balance the ban that they had imposed on immigration of Jews from detention camps in Cyprus, the British stopped other groups of volunteers in Benghazi and prevented them from proceeding to Egypt. In the summer of 1948, the North Africans arrived in Beirut by sea and joined the Syrian army in south Lebanon and the ALA in Galilee.⁵⁸

The invading armies also incorporated irregulars that had fought in Palestine prior to the invasion. Those who refused to enlist were disarmed. The Legion, the Iraqis and the Egyptians raised additional auxiliaries in Palestine and in their own countries.⁵⁹

A disturbing issue was the ALA, the irregulars and the Palestinian auxiliaries' disposition: whether they would abide by the truce or engage in guerrilla actions. Qawuqji declared that the cease-fire did not bind him. ALA units repeatedly engaged IDF troops in western Galilee, and Qawuqji ordered his subordinates to inform the UN observers that "we have no confidence in their promises".⁶⁰

Referring to the ALA as an army, the IDF overestimated its significance and capabilities. This was probably a vestige of the civil war when the *Haganah* considered the volunteers of the League a more formidable enemy than the Palestinian militia. The *SHAY* still considered Qawuqji's defeated troops a menace to Israel's hold of eastern and western Galilee.⁶¹

The ALA had hardly any offensive intentions, and no capability for implementing them if it did cherish such notions. Other irregular formations also had little impact on the military situation. The AHC exhausted its resources and could barely pay the *Jihad al-Muqadas'* salaries. Palestinian activists in Lydda and Ramle warned the Mufti that the delays — particularly in salary payments — might drive the rank-and-file to join the Legion's auxiliaries. Hajj Amin's aides abroad suspended the dispatch of supplies to their partisans in Palestine fearing that Legion guards or UN observers at Allenby Bridge might confiscate the deliveries. Ultimately, they sent munitions by an aircraft, which took off in Cairo and landed in Jordan valley bypassing the checkpoints over the river. When the shipment arrived, the astonished *Mujahidin* discovered that the long-awaited ammunition was mostly unusable.⁶²

A principal feature of the changing tide of the war in May–June 1948 concerned the movement of the population. The mass flight had climaxed on the eve of the invasion; slowed down in the following weeks and almost ceased. Two regions, western Galilee and the southern coastal plain, were exceptions to this rule. For a fortnight after the invasion, pending the Egyptians' arrival at Isdud, Giv'ati brigade was free to deal with the remaining Arab hamlets in its sector on the southern front. Anticipating the likelihood of confrontation with the advancing Egyptian army, the brigade took no chances and occupied all Arab hamlets. Generally, the tenant farmers had abandoned their homes before the Jewish soldiers' approach. They moved to larger villages close to the coastal route through which they expected the Egyptians to arrive.⁶³

Unlike the pre-invasion period, Giv'ati's actions after 15 May 1948 were designed to deliberately drive out the Arab population from villages close to Jewish settlements or adjacent to main roads. These expulsions

appeared necessary in face of the looming Egyptian threat — a move designed to deny the invader access to bases near Jewish settlements from which they might later attack them. Giv'ati soldiers, as those of other IDF originally territorial brigades, had served and fought in the vicinity of their own home turf. After six months of skirmishing, they deemed their neighbours an active and dangerous fifth column of the new invading enemies. Deporting them appeared both militarily vital and morally justified. Officers and soldiers did not attempt to conceal harsh treatment of civilians in their after-action reports, believing their conduct to be correct and indispensable.

When the Egyptian spearhead reached Isdud on 29 May, Giv'ati expelled the Arabs of Nabi Rubin south west of Rishon Le'Zion, to the sand dunes of Yibna. A few days later, parallel to the abortive attack on Isdud, Yibna fell and the indigenous inhabitants as well as refugees fled to Gaza. On the eve of the truce, Giv'ati occupied Julis, an Arab hamlet to the rear of kibbutz Negba, while Negev brigade destroyed hamlets further to the south, including several villages that had already been assaulted but the inhabitants had later sneaked back to. This time, the soldiers demolished the hovels to prevent the tenant farmers' return. The inhabitants escaped to Majdal, where the number of refugees mounted to 30,000 persons.⁶⁴

In the central sector, the Alexandroni brigade took over the coastal village of Tantura to deny the Arab enclave in Carmel ridge access to the sea. The encircled villagers could not run away and a few dozens were killed in the course of the battle as well as 14 Israeli soldiers. Accusations that have been recently publicized in the Israeli press, blaming Alexandroni for a deliberate massacre after the attack, appear unsubstantiated.⁶⁵

Following the conquest of Tantura on 23 May, men of service age were interned as POWs and 500 non-combatants went to nearby Furaydis. Behor Shitrit, the Minister of Minorities' Affairs, asked Ben-Gurion whether to allow them to remain there or transfer them beyond the lines to some Arab-held territory. If they were to remain, he added, a budget for their subsistence was necessary because they had no means of their own. Ben-Gurion's reply, if he answered at all, has not been found. Tantura's deportees did not stay in Furaydis for long. Probably they were dispatched to the Iraqis' lines in Wadi Ara and ultimately arrived at a refugee camp near Tulkarm.⁶⁶

After the invasion, the Israeli air force (IAF) had been grounded owing to Arab superiority in the air. Late in May, Israeli aircraft reappeared in the skies and early in June bombed Arab towns in Palestine and Amman. These bombings terrified the population and people fled from Jenin and Tulkarm to the open fields. They usually returned to their homes,

however, if the air raids were not followed by ground attacks.⁶⁷ In western Galilee, a region that had not been overrun by any Arab army, the Carmeli brigade accomplished the conquest of Acre and al-Zib, Samaria and Basa — three villages along the coast. Their inhabitants escaped to Lebanon, but about 5,000 people remained in Acre, mostly refugees from Haifa and the neighbouring hamlets.⁶⁸

Acre was outside the Jewish state's partition boundaries and its future status was ambiguous. For the time being, jurisdiction in the city rested with the military commander. At first, the residents believed that the Jews did not mean to stay for long and would be satisfied with safeguarding the road to western Galilee. Realizing their mistake, Acre's dignitaries complained about searches and expropriations. Nonetheless, they volunteered to send a delegation to western Galilee villages to persuade their Arab brethren to accept the Jews' domination.⁶⁹ Learning from the refugees about the essence of a Jewish occupation, the villagers did not rush to surrender. Stories of alleged maltreatment of Arab women by Jewish soldiers intensified the flight.⁷⁰

Nazareth was crowded with escapees. According to Sayf al-Din al-Zu'abi, its population mounted from 20,000 to 35,000. The municipality and the national committee accommodated them in monasteries, schools, public buildings and private houses, but their situation deteriorated from bad to worse. Smuggling of goods out of Haifa temporarily alleviated the shortage of essential commodities, but this channel closed after the last British soldier departed from the Haifa enclave on 30 June 1948. The arrival of the ALA in Nazareth did not improve the population's lot and at the beginning of July, the municipality appealed to Abdullah for help. Abdullah could barely help refugees in his own dominions on both banks, which naturally took preference over the Nazarenes. Thus, the king did not respond to their appeals.⁷¹

In eastern Galilee, Yiftah raised an irregular unit consisting of loyal Bedouin from the *al-Heib* tribe. They patrolled abandoned hamlets and encampments along the Syrian and Lebanese border and set them afire to impede their inhabitants' return. The *PALMAH*'s Bedouin also assailed villages on the opposite side of the border, frightening their tenant farmers into fleeing and plundering their cattle. Syrian special branch officers prevailed upon the Bedouin chieftain to repent, and once summoned him to their headquarters on the Golan Heights to meet with a higher and more persuasive authority, but to no avail.⁷²

Yiftah's small warfare actions behind enemy lines generated a flight from Lebanese villages. The demolition of the home of As'ad Beq — leader of the Shi'ite population in South Lebanon and a minister in the Lebanese government — had a special significance. For many years, he had contacts with the Jews and, allegedly, As'ad Beq himself organized

the raid in co-ordination with the Jews to forestall being accused of collaboration.⁷³

The Shi'ites of Jabal Amal did not welcome fugitives from Hula region and drove them back to the marshes down in the valley. These unfortunate escapees found shelter on the moor because Syrian authorities also blocked their infiltration.⁷⁴ Eventually, the flight spread beyond the Syrian border. The residents of Banias and adjacent villages ran away after Israeli aircraft raided the area. Many other villagers along the Syrian side of the border followed suit.⁷⁵

On the Iraqi front, the battle for Jenin prompted similar reactions. Peasants from adjacent hamlets joined the people of Jenin and fled south-bound. On the basis of patrols and informers' reports, the northern front's command assumed that "the enemy had completely evacuated the Gilbo'a ridge owing to our pressure on Jenin". Since the Iraqi army had not retreated, the concept "enemy" necessarily related to the villagers.⁷⁶

At the beginning of the war, Tulkarm in western Samaria had been an asylum for middle class Arabs from Jaffa and Sharon district. Initially, the town had benefited from the impact of the arrivals' buying power on local commerce. When, however, the first wave of refugees exhausted its means and other newcomers consisted of destitute *fallahin*, the burden on the indigenous population grew. Most fields were close to the front line and could not be harvested. Another traditional source of income — trade in livestock with nearby Jewish settlements — ceased completely. Street beggars became a common sight, and those who could afford to do so, departed for Nablus or moved abroad.⁷⁷

At the request of the IDF Supreme Command at the end of April (see p. 108), the SHAY carried out a retroactive analysis of the mass flight, calculating the numbers of refugees and abandoned villages. The outcome of this analysis was a summary reviewing the causes for uprooting and describing its background from the beginning of hostilities until 1 June 1948. Among the 11 factors that had influenced flight, the authors of the report emphasized primarily "direct Jewish hostilities" as responsible for 70% of the abandoned sites. Orders from various Arab authorities caused the evacuation of 5% of the villages. Psychological warfare had only local impact and the contribution of all other causes was marginal. The authors also appended a list of deserted villages, the dates of their abandonment, its cause and the escapees' destinations. This problematic memorandum has already been exhaustively analysed by Benny Morris, and his analysis and conclusions were systematically criticized by Shabtai Tevet, thus there is no need to dwell upon it here.⁷⁸

Four weeks of Arab initiative and military superiority were insufficient to crush the Jewish state. Sustaining heavy losses during that period — the price of inexperience, poor training and misconceptions — the IDF

successfully contained the offensive and in due course gained the initiative and moved to counter-attacks. Furthermore, the invasion failed to achieve its other purpose: protecting the Palestinians and stopping the flooding of adjacent Arab states by escapees. The Palestinians' fate barely changed and the vast majority of the refugees could not return to their homes in the wake of the advancing Arab armies. The invaders made little progress and did not recover any important locations. On the contrary, more escapees fled from Jewish-controlled regions to seek shelter under the invaders' protection.

The Ten-Day Campaign and the Second Truce

The four-week truce in June–July 1948 gave Israel and the IDF the breather so very much needed to prepare to move from counter-attacks to the offensive. Bypassing the UN supervision system, Israel used the interval for bringing in important war materials that its emissaries had purchased during the previous months around the world. This vital complement of aircraft, guns, armoured fighting vehicles, small arms and ammunition restored the military balance.

In the course of this break in fighting, Ben-Gurion overcame several domestic crises that had emanated from both the abrupt transition to statehood and from his political rivals' reluctance to drop pre-statehood standards of the voluntary *Yishuv* society and adjust to new procedures of sovereignty and hierarchy. The climax was the *Altalena* affair when Ben-Gurion ordered the sinking of a vessel that brought reinforcements and armaments for the *IZL* in violation of the truce. Ben-Gurion subsequently enforced the government's authority over this formerly independent dissident underground organization, disbanding the *IZL*'s separate fighting units and dispersing its members among IDF units.¹

Even more significant for the future conduct of the war was Ben-Gurion's success in imposing his authority on the IDF high command. After many years of autonomy, indispensable for an underground organization, the *Haganah* leaders had quandaries over accepting genuine civil jurisdiction. On the eve of statehood, five of the General Staff's six directors resigned. This was a collective protest against Israel Galili's removal from the chairmanship of the *Haganah* Supreme Command Council. For all practical purposes, this council had vanished as a functioning body since the outbreak of the war. After a few days the directors resumed their posts, but efforts to preserve Galili's status at the expense of Ben-Gurion's authority continued. At the beginning of July 1948, the vice chief of staff

and two directors (of operations and training) again quit, complaining against Ben-Gurion's conduct of the war and the affairs of the armed forces in general. In the absence of the ailing Chief of Staff, Ya'acov Dori, they demanded Galili be reinstated as a "barrier" between the General Staff and Ben-Gurion — serving, in essence, as a supreme military authority.

Galili was a politician, not a soldier. He belonged to a faction that objected to Ben-Gurion's military leadership, rejected his concept of statehood and adhered to a rival political orientation. Under Ben-Gurion's threat to resign from both his posts (Prime Minister and Minister of Defence), the officers backed down and finally unconditionally accepted his sole authority. Thus, Ben-Gurion managed to frustrate the attempts of the left wing *MAPAM* party to undermine his status as Minister of Defence. These endeavours were part of *MAPAM*'s aspirations to maintain its influence in the army through its comrades in the General Staff and in the *PALMAH*.²

These political disputes delayed the IDF's reorganization, but did not halt it completely. The battle-worn units as well as new formations utilised the respite for rest, training, replenishing their equipment, rehearsing their missions and preparing for the next round of combat.³

On the opposing side, the Arab war effort was in a deadlock. An enormous gap existed between the Arab states' political goals and their military capabilities. Some reinforcements arrived in the country — particularly from Iraq and Egypt — but the Arabs did not find an answer to the arms embargo. The lack of spare parts, arms and munitions hindered their military capabilities. On the one hand, they could not persist with their offensive and were hardly capable of even holding their positions. On the other hand, they refused to admit their failure and accept the reality of Jewish statehood. Despite British urgings to continue negotiations, and promises that diplomacy might benefit the Arab cause more than resuming the fighting, the Arab governments rejected any suggestion implying Israel's continuous existence as well as Bernadotte's proposal to prolong the cease-fire.⁴

Afraid to resume hostilities, Abdullah was the only Arab ruler who dissented from the League's common stance. The Legion's shortage of ammunition left the king apprehensive as to the ultimate outcome of the fighting. Bernadotte's idea to annex Arab Palestine to his kingdom appealed to Abdullah and bolstered his hope of consolidating his territorial gains through a political settlement. Under these circumstances, the king did not rule out a Jewish state and wished to broach the issue with the UN mediator, behind his allies' back. Abdullah met with Bernadotte in Amman and informed him of his readiness to end the war and accept Bernadotte's plan as the basis for a settlement. He added, however, that

neither of these options would be possible until the other Arab leaders were frightened into a more rational state of mind. In front of Bernadotte, Abdullah acquiesced to a Jewish state and expressed his readiness to conclude a separate peace, should the Arab leaders continued to be unreasonable.⁵

Transjordan's position was an exception to prevailing postures in the Arab camp. The king did not carry enough weight to change the decision of the Arab League of 6 July against prolonging the truce. Abdullah still hesitated to quit the Arab coalition openly, and vainly tried to persuade his partners to accept extension of the truce. Having considered and dismissed the possibility of withdrawing the Legion from Palestine, Abdullah ordered it to remain on the defensive upon the end of the cease-fire and hold its fire unless attacked.⁶ Last-minute efforts by British diplomats to revise the League's decision also proved fruitless. Discarding Clayton's admonitions, Azzam Pasha asserted that the Arabs had sufficient arms for a two-month campaign and would obtain more, one way or another, even from Soviet Russia, while "America's bark would be worse than its bite".⁷

Their bellicose mood notwithstanding, the Arabs lacked clear goals and operative plans for renewal of hostilities. On the other side of the front line, Yadin and his staff officers had begun planning the next stage of the war shortly after declaration of the truce. Spurred by fears of the enemy's intentions and over-estimations of Arab capabilities, the Jewish planners were determined to grab the initiative and contemplated decisive moves based on a pointedly aggressive spirit.

Several vulnerable points along the cease-fire's line seemed likely to attract Arab onslaughts if and when fighting resumed. Most conspicuous among them was the Negev, due to its remoteness and isolation. While carefully observing the cease-fire, the Egyptian army also took advantage of the truce to seize additional and previously unoccupied ground, completing in this manner the isolation of the Negev. The Negev brigade asked the IDF high command to dispatch reinforcements to the region. In view of the looming political threat to excise the Negev from the borders of the Jewish state, the brigade's SHAY officer even suggested breaking the truce at the right moment to inflict a decisive blow to the Egyptian army. Failing to do so, he asserted, "we are liable to lose Negev at the negotiation table without having lost any ground before the truce".⁸ Yadin demanded Ben-Gurion take action that would enable dispatch of supplies to the region. Otherwise, he cautioned, "the continuing stalemate may create a decisive matter of fact to our detriment".⁹

At the beginning of the civil war, Ben-Gurion had assigned the Negev a high preference, but after the campaign had focused on Jerusalem he changed his priorities. In a first conference with senior field commanders

since the beginning of the war — held on 18 June 1948, Ben-Gurion defined the IDF's future objectives, ruling that the primary task was destruction of the Legion and occupying the Triangle Jerusalem-Latrun-Ramallah. Thus, he said, the IDF would secure a decisive victory. This accomplished, the IDF would then be free to deal with the other Arab forces and drive them out of the country.¹⁰

In accordance with Ben-Gurion's directive, the general staff prepared operation LRLR (Lydda, Ramle, Latrun, Ramallah) — later renamed *DANI* — as the IDF's principal effort for the next phase. In the biggest operation since the outbreak of the war, four brigades assembled under a unified operational command. This concentration of forces reflected a somewhat suspect and inflated assessment of the enemy's strength in the twin cities of Lydda-Ramle. Believing that the Arab coalition was still alive, the planners also took into account possible intervention by Iraqi and Egyptian troops.¹¹

After the campaign, the revised appraisal of enemy forces in *DANI* operational zone was two Legion companies and 1,300–1,500 Palestinian and other irregular combatants in Lydda and Ramle. An armoured car company was stationed in Bet Naballah. An infantry battalion plus a company of armoured vehicles held Latrun. Two infantry companies were scattered between Latrun and Jerusalem and one battalion was in the city.¹²

Another mistaken assumption concerned the Legion's intentions. The IDF perceived the Legion's position at Latrun and its outposts in Lydda and Ramle as "tightly-clenched fists" aiming at Tel Aviv and at the newly opened access to Jerusalem (the "Burma Road"). Continuing to misread the Legion's war objectives, the IDF General Staff did not change this assessment despite additional and more trustworthy intelligence that reached HQ just prior to launching the operation — information that clearly testified that the Legion was on a defensive footing.¹³

Simultaneously, the IDF planned two campaigns in the north. Operation *BROSH* against the Syrian bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden should have precluded a pincer attack by the Syrian army and the ALA against eastern Galilee. A second strike — against the ALA in Shafa'amr and western Galilee — was engineered to forestall a thrust toward Acre and Haifa by Arab forces. (Operation *DEKEL*).¹⁴

Bernadotte's efforts to prolong the truce had come to nil, and the fighting flared up on 9 July 1948 — lasting ten days — until a second truce was declared on 18 July. On the Jerusalem front, the IDF easily razed the Arab villages south-west of the town. However, the principal thrust on this front — another venture to break through the wall into the Old City (operation *KEDEM*) — failed. Subsequently, the IDF repelled several attempts to storm the northern quarters of the new city. Thus, fighting in

and around the city ended inconclusively. Nonetheless, this was only of secondary importance, for the main battles at this point of the campaign, took place elsewhere.¹⁵

Operation *DANI*, the IDF main effort of the Ten-Day Campaign, began on 10 July with the conquest of Lydda airport and the former Templars' colony Wilhelma. Concurrently, the IAF bombed Lydda and Ramle.¹⁶ The next day, IDF troops outflanked Lydda to cut it off from the Legion positions at Bet Naballah and Latrun. Simultaneously, another column attacked Ramle. The towns' calls for assistance became panicked, reflecting the residents' growing despair.¹⁷

Responding to alarmed appeals with soothing but non-committal replies, the Legion's divisional headquarters at Ramallah did not yet comprehend the gravity of the situation. Concurrently, the military governor published official proclamations to the populace denying "Zionists' propaganda" about the IDF gains in occupying surrounding hamlets and promising the imminent arrival of reinforcements.¹⁸

By that time, an Israeli motorized raiding battalion led by Moshe Dayan broke into Lydda, crossed the town and proceeded to Ramle. The raiders withdrew later, but the strike shook the inhabitants' last vestige of confidence. Ramle surrendered immediately, and when Yiftah troops entered Lydda the next day, they encountered little resistance and many white flags.¹⁹

In both cities, the legionnaires were in a state of confusion and the irregulars disintegrated. The Legion's unit withdrew from Ramle before its surrender, while in Lydda the legionnaires held on in the police fortress after most of the town had fallen into Yiftah's hands. Their alarmed transmissions to Ramallah filled the air. Concurrently, the *Jihad al-Muqadas* dispatched urgent appeals for help to their comrades in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Desperate pleas came from various quarters in Lydda and possibly Ramle — enclaves that were probably isolated from each other. A wireless operator in Lydda desperately transmitted to Ramallah: "Have you no God in your hearts? Don't you feel any compassion? Hasten aid!"

The headquarters in Ramallah was unaware of actual conditions in the twin towns. On the next morning, 12 July, a Legion sergeant at the police fortress reported that further resistance was unrealistic, so he and his men contemplated surrender. The only help that the Legion extended to the twin towns was dispatch of a platoon of armoured vehicles from Bet Naballah. This patrol entered Lydda on midday 12 July and retreated after a short skirmish with Israeli troops. In the aftermath, the sergeant and his men abandoned the police fortress and withdrew to Bet Naballah.²⁰

The IDF offensive threw Glubb into panic. Back in Amman after a tour of the Legion's positions in Palestine, he reported that if IDF pressure

continued, his troops' situation would become critical. Anticipating an attack on Latrun following the collapse of its outposts, he urged the Transjordan government to withdraw the Legion to the eastern bank while it still had enough ammunition to cover a retreat and extricate its units intact. Transjordan's government dismissed his advice and gave Glubb a written order "to hold on at all costs".

Glubb felt he was facing the alternatives of carrying out an order that might lead to the annihilation of the forces under his command or resignation. He explained his dilemma to Kirkbride, who instantly alerted London, demanding the embargo be lifted — warning of the grave consequences to Britain's status in Transjordan and the entire Middle East should Britain persist in withholding ammunition from the Legion.²¹ Bevin retorted: "The situation reported in your telegram is exactly that which I have been working my hardest to prevent." Refusing Kirkbride's request for an urgent supply of ammunition, he stated: "I can only help King Abdullah when the Arab League has agreed to an extension of the cease-fire."²² Lydda and Ramle's downfall shook the confidence of Abdullah and his ministers in Glubb. The Legion's commanding officer had warned them long ago of the scarcity of ammunition, but they were convinced that he was concealing large quantities to create a bogus shortage — with the ulterior motive of prolonging the truce. In the ministers' presence, the king told his commander-in-chief that if he wished to resign, there was nothing to stop him. Glubb ignored the pointed jab while transmitting its tacit meaning to Kirkbride: The fighting would continue, and the IDF would probably overrun the Legion unless the other Arab states replenished its stocks. He asked for guidance — whether it was better for the Legion to go down under British command or accept the king's suggestion and leave the Arabs to face alone their final defeat.²³

Abdullah's militancy was based on his allies' promise to furnish the Legion with ammunition. This pledge was given at an emergency conference in Amman on 12–13 July in which the premiers of Syria and Lebanon, as well as Azzam Pasha, prevailed upon the king to continue fighting.²⁴ However, Egypt and Syria proved to be merely broken reeds, and none of the promised supplies reached the Legion's depot. Having run the gauntlet on his way to Palestine and back, with every villager on the road spitting at him and calling him a traitor, on 17 July Glubb met again with Abdullah to offer his resignation. Dismissing the suggestion this time, Abdullah told the British officer that a change of command was inconceivable in the midst of such a crisis. He complained, however, about Glubb's forecasts of defeats and failures. Pointing out that all his prophecies for the last two months had come true, Glubb insisted it was his duty to tell the truth frankly. Abdullah ended the showdown by asking Glubb to remain at his post.²⁵

Glubb's apprehensions proved excessive. After occupying Lydda, Ramle and the hamlets between these cities and Latrun, the IDF offensive lost its momentum. The Legion successfully held its main positions and in two well-conducted local counter-attacks — at Kula on 16 July and north of Latrun on 18 July — inflicted heavy casualties on the IDF.²⁶

Although the fighting involved the IDF, the Arab armies and the ALA, the main victims continued to be the Palestinians. After a break in mass flight lasting several weeks in the wake of the invasion, the exodus resumed. At this phase, most refugees were residents of Ramle and Lydda. Ramle capitulated on 11 July. On the same day, 600 Palestinian and Transjordanian irregulars left the town, but most inhabitants wished to stay. They numbered between 10,000 and 12,000, as the Minister for Minorities' Affairs, Behor Shitrit, who visited the city on the next day, learned. During the tour, he heard that operation *DANP*'s commanding officer, Yigal Alon, had ordered that all males of military age be detained as prisoners-of-war and the rest be deported across the lines. The army imposed a curfew and began combing the town.

The Legion's sortie into Lydda after its capitulation had severe consequences for the town's population. Conceiving the three armoured vehicles as a spearhead of long-expected reinforcement, Palestinian combatants began shooting at IDF soldiers, inflicting several casualties. Yiftah's prompt reaction was merciless — killing about 250 Arabs. Upon orders from *DANI* headquarters, the inhabitants were driven out of the city and the troops showed them the way to the Legion's positions in the mountains. Terrorized by the slaughter, they did not argue and left the town forthwith.²⁷

During his aforementioned visit to Ramle, Shitrit learned that the army intended to treat the 30,000 inhabitants of Lydda in the same manner as it had done in the adjoining town. Upon his return to Tel Aviv, he shared his impressions with Shertok who immediately reported them to Ben-Gurion. Under the circumstances, Ben-Gurion directed:

- (a) To announce in both cities that those who want to leave may do so.
- (b) To warn the inhabitants that the Israeli authorities have no obligation to feed them and those who remain will be responsible for their own nourishment.
- (c) By no means should women, children, sick and elderly people be forced to depart.
- (d) It is absolutely forbidden to desecrate churches and monasteries, unless there is a military need to do so.
- (e) Searches should not entail sabotage and damages.²⁸

While Ben-Gurion's instructions were delivered to the troops, the bulk of

the towns' residents were already on their way. The majority of Lydda's inhabitants went to Ramallah district, while those from Ramle went partly to Ramallah and partly to villages in the south under Egyptian rule. A few went further east, and crossed the Jordan River. Already burdened with the problem of Palestinian refugees who had preceded them, Transjordan's authorities hastened to bar their entrance. About 700 Christian Arabs remained in Lydda.²⁹

Lydda's massacre was probably the bloodiest throughout the war, but figures such as a thousand victims that have been cited by Arab sources were highly exaggerated. Recently, Benny Morris has portrayed events in the city as proof of a deliberate policy of expulsion on Israel's part, sanctioned by the highest authority — namely Ben-Gurion.³⁰ The only evidence in support of this allegation has been an oral testimony, attributed by secondary sources to Izhak Rabin, about Ben-Gurion's visit to *DANI*'s HQ on the same day (simultaneous to Shitrit's above mentioned visit to Ramle). The story goes that Alon and his chief of operations Rabin asked Ben-Gurion what to do with Lydda's population after the uprising. In response, Ben-Gurion waved his hand and said: "Expel them!" According to another version, he said nothing and only waved his hand. His gesture was avowedly interpreted as sanctioning a deportation.

This myth bears little credence. By the same token, Ben-Gurion might have waved his hand to get rid of a fly. All the circumstantial evidence is stacked against such an interpretation: Ben-Gurion's directive following Shitrit's intervention indicates a different policy. Ben-Gurion's habit was not "waving" his orders but formulating them clearly and expressing them verbally or in writing. There is no record of any consultation that had broached a deliberate expulsion prior to resuming hostilities, or related to Lydda and Ramle in particular. Formulating Israel's position *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians' mass flight required long and careful discussions and several committees, but this hammering out began only after the second truce came into force. Moreover, Lydda did not set a pattern, and the way events unfolded in Lydda did not follow in other contemporary cases, such as Nazareth. The "waving tale" is far from sufficient to support assertions of a deliberate and premeditated policy of expulsion.

Yigal Alon, by contrast, was renowned for his scorched earth policy and methods throughout the war. Wherever he commanded the *PALMAH* or IDF troops, no Palestinian inhabitants remained — be it in eastern Galilee, the Lydda-Ramle area or, later, in the Negev. Alon's political and personal allegiance and inspiration did not derive from Ben-Gurion, but from his political rival Izhak Tabenkin, a leader of the activist left wing party *MAPAM*. Ignoring Ben-Gurion on several other occasions, Alon did not require his approval for taking advantage of the Lydda's mutiny. One should also remember that as early as 10 July, Alon

ordered to expedite the flight of non-combatants from Ramle.³¹ The severe punishment that was inflicted on Lydda's civil population did not provoke any questions or grumbling among the troops. By the Ten-Day Campaign, the disposition of IDF soldiers towards the Palestinians had become extremely harsh and unforgiving. Regarding them responsible for the calamities that had befallen the *Yishuv* since the invasion, the Israeli troops thought that the Palestinians were worthy of their fate and deserved to pay a heavy price for summoning the invaders. Previous scruples about treating them harshly that had been widespread until the invasion, subsided. Lydda's events should be evaluated against this background, further enflamed by the heated atmosphere on the spot, sparked by the apparent uprising.

Accusing them of deliberately leaving the towns at the Jews' mercy, Arab contemporaries blamed the Legion and the British — not Ben-Gurion — for Lydda and Ramle's downfall. The Palestinians' expectations from the Legion were, however, excessive. From the beginning of its deployment in Palestine, the Legion had neither the intention nor the capability of defending these cities. Realizing his small force's inadequacy for waging war on a wide front, Glubb — employing sound military judgement — preferred to concentrate his forces to defend the approaches to the mountainous area of Jerusalem. Here, the IDF numerical superiority was immaterial, as the Legion's successful defence of Latrun against four attacks proved.

From the Legion's standpoint, Lydda and Ramle were mere outposts of Latrun. Their garrison was likely to abandon them after having delayed the enemy, withdrawing to the main position — as the garrison indeed did. Any extension of the front to protect the cities in earnest would most probably have caused the Legion's undoing. This is precisely what happened a few months later to the Egyptian army, whose headquarters extended its forces' lines beyond their capacity to efficiently defend them.

The Iraqi expeditionary force also remained stationary in face of Ramle and Lydda's collapse. Notorious for their idleness before the truce, the Iraqis remained passive during the Ten-Day Campaign, as well. At most, they exploited favourable local circumstances to attempt minor assaults. A principal reason — or excuse, for this policy was the length of their front line, which stretched from the Jordan valley in the north-east to Ras al-Ain in the south-west. Upon resumption of hostilities, the government in Baghdad decided to send a third brigade to Palestine. These reinforcements arrived at the beginning of the next truce, too late to have any effect on the campaign.³² During the first fortnight of the second truce, Iraq sent more reinforcements to Palestine bringing the strength of the expeditionary force to five brigades.³³

In view of the Iraqis' reluctance to fight, the Legion feared that they

were planning a retreat from the flat terrain of Sharon to the mountains of Samaria. In the midst of *DANI*, their withdrawal might have exposed the Legion's northern flank and force it to retreat from Latrun to Ramallah. Kirkbride anxiously reported the matter to London, hinting that the Iraqis should be warned of the far-reaching consequences of their alleged intention.³⁴

Five Arab villages in the Carmel ridge refused to recognize Israel's sovereignty. They had no aggressive intentions, but the villagers abstained from any co-operation with the Israeli administration and were determined to defend themselves against any attempt by Israeli soldiers to enter their communities. Probably they preferred to await the decisive outcome of the war before committing themselves.³⁵ The Iraqis pretended to protect this Arab enclave and helped the peasants with supplies and advice. Officers from Jenin who visited the villages promised to construct a landing strip for bringing supplies in by air and advised fortifying the sites. Local notables went to their headquarters and the Iraqis assured the delegation of their determination to liberate the enclave when the cease-fire expired.³⁶

The Carmel Arabs' contacts with the Iraqis provoked the IAF into bombing Ijsim, the principal village in this enclave, upon resumption of hostilities. Subsequently, the IDF occupied Tira and Ain Hud at the northern end of the enclave. Not far from Carmel — in Wadi Ara — the Iraqis sat idle and did nothing to relieve them.³⁷

After Tira's occupation, the IDF interned 36 men in a POW camp and transferred 200 women and children to Lajun and across the lines to Samaria. The evacuees disseminated rumours alleging the burning alive of 28 villagers by Israeli soldiers. Azzam complained to the UN mediator, enclosing a list of the victims' names. He claimed to have based the complaint on an eyewitness' testimony. This story was fraudulent, and after holding an inquiry Israel denied it vehemently.³⁸ A UN investigation did not corroborate the allegations. In Saida, two observers interrogated persons who had posed as survivors of the alleged massacre. Their stories contained many contradictions and the investigating officers could not reach any conclusion. They recommended continuing the inquiry in the refugee camps at Samaria.³⁹ Findings of further inquiries, if there were any, have not been found. Since the UN mission did not approach the Israeli authorities on this topic anymore, it probably discovered that the alleged massacre had never taken place.

At the beginning of the truce, the IDF attacked the Carmel enclave. Since this was ostensibly an operation for internal security purposes — deep inside Israeli territory — the action did not infringe the cease-fire, which concerned only the adversary armies. The villagers appealed to the Iraqis at Jenin for help, but to no avail. Iraqi troops were close at hand in

Wadi Ara, but they abstained from any intervention and left the Carmel Arabs to their fate. Incapable of further resistance, the peasants opted to abandon their villages and went to Samaria.⁴⁰

Upon the refugees' arrival, the Iraqis complained to UN observers, claiming that the expulsion violated the truce. General William Reiley, the UN mission's chief-of-staff, whose observers investigated the complaint, located 8,111 refugees that claimed to have come from the three villages and the names of 62 killed and 63 missing persons. According to a government census at the end of 1946, the villages' population had numbered only 6,820, but presumably refugees from other hamlets posed as coming from the enclave hoping thereby to expedite their own return to nearby locations. The UN demanded Israel permit their return, but was met with a prompt refusal.⁴¹

On the northern front, the IDF attack on the Syrian bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden failed. The Syrians held their positions and recaptured a few hills that they had temporarily lost at the initial stages of the battle. This abortive operation (*BROSH*) practically ended the fighting on the Syrian front, which remained at a standstill and relatively quiet until the armistice agreement a year later.

A second effort on the northern front — operation *DEKEL* in Lower Galilee — fared better. This offensive emanated from the IDF's appraisal that Qawuqji was planning a thrust towards Acre. Various skirmishes that had taken place between the ALA and the IDF around Birwa crossroads, ten miles east of Acre, seemed to support this appraisal.⁴²

DEKEL opened with an onslaught on the large village Shafa'amr by the 7th Brigade. Concurrently, Golani attacked ALA positions around Lubia crossroads. This diversion served its purpose by attracting *Hittin* regiment from Nazareth to Sejera. Madlul Abbas, the commanding officer of Lower Galilee, hurried to confront the danger to his communication lines with Lebanon. The Arab troops opposing the 7th Brigade were left to their fate and rapidly collapsed.

Shafa'amr's Druze welcomed the IDF according to previously made arrangements, while the Muslims fled. After occupying the village on 14 July, the IDF modified the operation's original scheme. Northern Front's commanding officer, Moshe Zalitzky (Carmel), ordered the 7th Brigade to push forward to Nazareth.⁴³ On its way, the brigade occupied Safuriya (Tzipori), a large village infamous since the 1930s for its anti-Jewish radicalism, and 'Ilut on Nazareth's north-western approaches. Safuriya's inhabitants, expecting revenge for their numerous onslaughts upon Jews, had fled before the IDF captured the village.

'Ilut's residents displayed white flags and stayed put. Regretting their surrender, they later assaulted the small garrison that remained in the village while the rest of the column proceeded to Nazareth. As in Lydda

a few days earlier, the troops promptly inflicted a severe punishment on the rebellious population. First, a passing patrol stormed the village shooting in all directions to rescue the garrison's survivors. On the next day, a few dozen of the hamlet's youth were taken by soldiers to the surrounding hills and never returned. Probably they were executed.⁴⁴

Safuriya's downfall and its residents' flight shook the Nazarenes' morale. Madlul Abbas had been wounded in Sejera, and his deputy notified the local national committee that since the troops at his disposal were insufficient for defending Nazareth, he would evacuate the city. The SHAY learned of this development through Sayf al-Din al-Zu'abi who also conveyed the population's readiness to surrender. Accelerating its advance, the 7th Brigade's spearhead arrived at the town's western approaches as the ALA rear guard left through the north-eastern exit accompanied by several Muslim dignitaries of the Fahum clan. Before its withdrawal, the ALA imposed a curfew on the city that probably prevented a mass flight.

On the eve of Nazareth's occupation, Ben-Gurion had instructed Zalitzky to take all necessary steps against looters — including opening fire — and to avoid any damage to holy places. According to Ben-Gurion's diary, Carmel had ordered the population's expulsion, but Haim Laskov, operation *DEKEL*'s commanding officer, hesitated. Bypassing his superior, he addressed Ben-Gurion directly and asked for guidelines. Ben-Gurion immediately vetoed any deportation from the city.⁴⁵

When the IDF entered the city, most Nazarenes stayed in their homes and displayed white flags. Rumours about the fate of Lydda and Ramle frightened the inhabitants. They quickly handed over their arms and provided information on concealed weapons in various caches.⁴⁶ Only a few hundred families left the town and moved to Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan. Most of them were escapees from Haifa, Acre, Shafa'amr and the villages. Many refugees arrived at Bint al-Jbail in south Lebanon, where they joined escapees who had fled before the invasion and were still waiting to be admitted into Lebanon's interior. Learning of conditions in Nazareth after the occupation and realizing that no atrocities had taken place in the city, some refugees infiltrated through the thinly-held front lines and returned to the town.⁴⁷

Allegations of underground resistance cells in Nazareth had no foundation. Systematic searches did not expose any caches, and no attempt was made to harm Israeli soldiers or officials. The military governor, Elisha Soltz, thought that some weapons were still hidden in the town, but they might be detected only through informants and careful combing of every nook and cranny.⁴⁸

Nazareth's capitulation served as a model for several villages in Galilee, such as Sikhnin and Kafr Manda. Hoping to stay put in their homes, the

peasants surrendered to IDF units. However, at the beginning of the truce the ALA halted its withdrawal. A few days later it recaptured several villages that the IDF had not garrisoned and took revenge on the tenant farmers.⁴⁹

Just as the Iraqis in Samaria remained idle when the IDF occupied the Carmel enclave, so the Lebanese army remained passive throughout the campaign in Galilee. It made no attempt to relieve the IDF pressure on either the Syrians or the ALA. The prime reason for this inaction was the Maronites' unrelenting and strenuous objection to Lebanon's involvement in the war. Moreover, the Lebanese army was too small for significantly contributing to the Arab war effort.

According to an Iraqi liaison officer who inspected Lebanon's army and the ALA during the second truce, the Lebanese were capable of solely maintaining a defensive posture. There was no way to replenish their French arsenal and their limited stock of ammunition did not permit even local initiatives. Before taking part in combat, he concluded, this army would have to undergo comprehensive reforms requiring time and funds.

While exonerating the Lebanese, the Iraqi officer severely criticized the ALA. In his opinion, this was neither an army nor a guerrilla force and it was absolutely useless. He proposed reorganizing it as a guerrilla force for safeguarding the regular armies' flanks and harassing the IDF's rear. Finally, he suggested creating a unified headquarters for the three armies that operated in the northern zone to secure their co-operation and co-ordination with the other Arab forces in Palestine. Although his advice was sound, indirectly it meant to excuse Iraqi inaction.⁵⁰

During the Ten-Day Campaign, the Egyptian front was of secondary importance. Apart from limited ground operations on this front, Israeli aircraft bombed Cairo on 15 July 1948, inflicting 21 fatal casualties and damage to property. This air raid, a reprisal for the REAF's previous bombings of Tel Aviv, generated panic, which the Muslim Brethren were quick to exploit for inciting riots against Egypt's Jews and other foreigners.⁵¹

With the resumption of hostilities, an attempt to break through the enemy's lines and open the main road to Negev settlements failed. After *DANI*, the IDF transferred reinforcements to the southern front, but declaration of the cease-fire interrupted a second and more massive effort to occupy the vital crossroads of Karatiya on 18 July. For the time being, the Negev remained severed from the rest of the Jewish state.

Ben-Gurion's order of priorities before the campaign — defining the Legion as the primary enemy — proved valid. Although *DANI* did not achieve all its objectives, and did not demolish the legion, it forced Transjordan to abstain from active participation in the war's next stages. Feeling that an independent pullout by Transjordan might be more

dangerous than sharing defeat with the other Arab armies, Abdullah discarded Glubb's advice to withdraw the Legion before it might be too late. Yet, he prepared the ground for such a move in the future by notifying his partners that "unless the Legion is reinforced and replenished. it will be unable to maintain its position much longer".⁵²

Having repelled another attack on Latrun, by 18 July 1948 the Legion had exhausted its stock of ammunition. Logistic difficulties, augmented by the need to care for a large number of refugees, accelerated Transjordan's consent to provisions of the second truce. Glubb warned London of the inevitable outcomes if the League rejected the mediator's conditions for a truce.⁵³ He also told an American officer who served as a military attaché at the US consulate in Jerusalem: "If we shall not abide by the cease-fire, we are lost."⁵⁴

According to Glubb, Transjordan was on the verge of collapse. The treasury was empty. Azzam refused to deliver the League's promised subsidy, and Glubb feared that he would be unable to pay the Legionnaires' salaries. In this case, he cautioned the War Office, the only force capable of preventing the Jews from occupying Palestine entirely would disperse.⁵⁵

In view of the Legion's condition, Abdullah prevailed on the League to accept the truce and drop excessive demands that had no chance of being accepted by Israel. Transjordan's unwillingness and inability to continue fighting left the other Arab states no alternative. Under protest, they accepted Bernadotte's proposals.⁵⁶

The most significant outcome of the Ten-Day Campaign was practically ending the Israel-Transjordan war. Persisting incidents along the front line — particularly in Jerusalem — notwithstanding, both countries looked for means to terminate the confrontation. Henceforth, the IDF turned its main efforts against the Egyptian army.

At the beginning of the second truce, the Arabs still possessed 331 square kilometres of the Jewish state's territory (according to the partition plan, Negev excluded). The IDF occupied 1,300 square kilometres of the Arab state's territory, mostly during the Ten-Day Campaign. One Jewish settlement (Kfar Darom in Negev) was abandoned, while the IDF occupied three Arab cities and more than a hundred villages. Twelve Arab villages remained within the Jewish State's territory.

According to IDF calculations, the total number of Palestinian refugees since the outbreak of hostilities rose to 400,000. Most of them (250,000) fled from territories that the UN had allotted to the Jewish state and the rest escaped from Jerusalem and the Arab parts of the country. Presumably, about 100,000 Arabs remained in territories that had been captured throughout the Ten-Day Campaign.⁵⁷

Unlike the first truce, the second was not limited in time. It should have

lasted pending a comprehensive solution. Supervising the cease-fire necessitated a well-organized machinery and at the end of July Bernadotte issued instructions as to the functioning of UN observers in Palestine that were later complemented by a series of special directives.⁵⁸ The supervision apparatus numbered more than 300 officers, mostly American and French. Almost all served in Palestine and only a few went to the Arab countries to oversee the embargo.⁵⁹ Disliking the idea of an unlimited truce, Shiloah prevailed on Ben-Gurion:

In the world's eyes, the truce puts question marks on the state's existence. It imposes the UN officials upon us. Furthermore, it enables the Arabs to prepare and choose their own timing for attacking us.⁶⁰

Throughout the truce, the protagonists prepared for the war's likely renewal. The IDF completed the transition from a militia to an army by establishing Front Commands, relieving thereby the brigades from territorial responsibility and turning them into fully mobile formations. This reform enabled concentration of forces for the next offensives against the Egyptian army and the speedy transfer of forces from Galilee to the Negev and vice versa in October.⁶¹

The return of Chief of Staff Dori to his post, after having been ill since March 1948, pacified relations among the General Staff officers and between the military and the political echelons. Additional arms shipments increased the IDF's power in the air, at sea, in armour and in artillery. No new first-line units were formed, because the potential of able-bodied manpower had been exhausted. However, district headquarters organized new garrison units to relieve the first-line brigades from guard duties along the lines. Any future increases of the IDF order of battle depended on immigration and volunteering of Jews abroad.

The Arab governments dispatched more reinforcements to Palestine, but while the IDF formations relinquished their territorial defensive role, their opponents assumed a growing number of stationary and non-military functions. In the absence of efficient civil administration, they became involved in political and administrative issues emanating from the need to rule over a large population of indigenous inhabitants and refugees. These exigencies hampered their flexibility, diminished their freedom of action and encumbered them with a plethora of logistic problems.

Following the Ten-Day Campaign, the Northern Front lost much of its significance. The Syrian army — having sustained heavy losses and suffering from a severe shortage of ammunition — regarded further offensive actions unfeasible. Concurrently, Israel's decision to grant priority to the Negev in the next phase meant giving up any attempt at uprooting the Syrian army from its bridgehead on Jordan River's West Bank.⁶²

At the beginning of the truce, IDF intelligence forewarned of a possible

Syrian thrust into Galilee to join forces with the ALA, but this evaluation was erroneous. The Syrian front remained quiet; Za'im's principal anxiety was defending the bridgehead and the Golan Heights in face of a possible Israeli attack. The Syrians carefully observed the cease-fire and were determined to deny the IDF any excuse for assailing them. Moreover, they had no militant Palestinian auxiliaries who were the principal source of unrest on the other fronts.

Za'im strove to deny the IDF any possibility of driving a wedge between the Syrian and Lebanese armies to outflank the bridgehead. Therefore, Syria prevailed on Lebanon to prepare common defensive plans and allow the positioning of Syrian troops on its territory. Nonetheless, Za'im refrained from involving the ALA in these schemes. He distrusted the League's army and his relations with Qawuqji deteriorated from bad to worse. After the defeat in Lower Galilee, he saw no useful role for the ALA and ordered its Syrian officers to resign and return to their posts in the Syrian armed forces. This order further weakened Qawuqji's status.⁶³

Having lost control over most of the Palestinian warriors in Samaria and Hebron mountains, Hajj Amin endeavoured to organize guerrilla bands in ALA-held territory in Galilee. After the resumption of the mass exodus, AHC activists in Lebanon tried to enlist armed refugees into a Palestinian army, *Jish Filastin*. Enlistment meant returning to Galilee, and the campaign yielded a mere 200–300 recruits. They joined the banner of Nimr al-Naji, a former TJFF officer, from Safuriya who avowed to inaugurate guerrilla warfare against the IDF in Galilee in the manner of the 1936–9 gangs.⁶⁴

Despite high talk of "a new Palestinian army", these gangs remained insignificant. They organized and trained in south Lebanon and upon their arrival in Palestine, joined the ALA. Although they were militarily negligible, the AHC was responsible for their maintenance. For the Palestinian nationalists, it was still politically important to demonstrate the existence of a force loyal to the Mufti in Galilee.⁶⁵

Two months of truce had not yielded any political progress. Aware of its opponents' predicaments, the IDF nevertheless believed that the political stalemate would push the enemy to resume the fighting. It was unclear, however, when the Arab armies would open fire or what would be their objectives. Intelligence estimates ranged from local violations of the truce for limited gains to a full-scale renewal of the war.⁶⁶ At the end of August 1948, British intelligence also estimated that an outburst of hostilities in Palestine was approaching. According to its sources, Iraq and Syria — inspired by the Mufti and Azzam — intended to resume fighting shortly.⁶⁷

Yadin suspected that the Arabs' patience was about to explode. The Arab armies' activities since the cease-fire convinced him that they were

preparing to take the initiative at any moment because they were not equipped for the winter.⁶⁸ In mid-September 1948, he put the IDF on the alert, expecting an Arab onslaught to take place, orchestrated to parallel the opening of the UN assembly's session in Paris.⁶⁹

High talk and propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding, the Arab armies had no military option after the Ten-Day Campaign. Their preparations during the second truce displayed anticipation of Israeli attacks, not aggressive designs. The Arab statesmen pinned their hopes on achieving something in Palestine at the feet of the UN mediator and on British diplomacy. Cherishing these illusions, they refused to admit defeat and prepared for a prolonged stalemate. Ben-Gurion realized that the only way to break the deadlock was to take the military initiative under some pretext and inflict such a stunning blow to one of the Arab armies that it would be forced out of the war.

The Palestinians' Decay

The Ten-Day Campaign shook the foundations of the invading alliance. At the beginning of the second truce, the failure of the Arabs to achieve the invasion's goals was evident. Far from fulfilling their expectations, the invasion led to the opposite results. Instead of saving the Palestinians, the Arab armies' poor performance amplified their calamity. They did not restore the situation and the mass flight did not stop. The Palestinians lost additional ground and the number of refugees grew. Jewish statehood was an irreversible fact, and the Arabs were incapable of turning back the clock. Hence, time was ripe for mutual recriminations among the members of the coalition.

Diplomacy, domestic Palestinian politics and inter-Arab intrigues replaced Arab military efforts in Palestine. The disintegration of the Arab alliance was as slow and painstaking as its formation prior to the invasion. Starting at the beginning of the second truce, this process ultimately ended in separate armistice agreements between Israel and four Arab states, leaving the Palestinians out of the picture. Political controversies and military weakness played intermittent roles in the decay of the coalition. After the invasion had demonstrated their inadequacy, a fear of losing the expeditionary forces entirely was the main reason for the Arabs' paralysis in the fall and winter of 1948. Resolving the fate of parts of Palestine under Arab domination became the primary political challenge of the League. Ventures to decide this issue renewed old rivalries, and conflicting interests among the member states resurfaced. As on the eve of the invasion, Transjordan stood at the focal centre of the inter-Arab storm.

Fortifying his territorial gains against his Arab allies no less than against his Jewish foes, turned out to be Abdullah's primary concern. The Legion's shortage of manpower compelled Glubb to withdraw the garrisons from Hebron and Bethlehem and to hand responsibility for Samaria over to the Iraqi military. The presence of Transjordanian gover-

nors elsewhere notwithstanding, Transjordan's effective rule in the West Bank shrunk to the triangle Jerusalem-Ramallah-Latrun.

Transjordan's prestige in Palestine and Britain's status in Transjordan temporarily deteriorated in the wake of Ramle and Lydda's downfall. Following their retreat from Ramle, the Palestinian combatants immediately blamed the British and the Legion for their débâcle.¹ Ramallah radio nourished fomentation by calling for cancellation of the *'Id al-Fitr* holiday as a sign of mourning. Abdullah promptly intervened and ordered his confidant in the city, Aref al-Aref, to either change the station's tone or remove its director.² Enflamed public opinion in the West Bank looked for scapegoats and found them in the Legion's British officers. Widespread hearsay accused them of treason. Other rumours related to imaginary attempts on Glubb's life or — more credibly — claimed that he had resigned from his post and gone to London.³

When Britain's decision to withhold the next grant-in-aid's payment became known, anti-British agitation spread from the West Bank to Amman. Demonstrations against Britain broke out in the capital, and the crowd denounced the Legion's British command.⁴ Owing to health problems, Kirkbride was absent from Amman in those tense days. Upon his return, he hastened to cope with the crisis. The atmosphere had calmed down by that time, but another defeat would have provoked a fresh anti-British outburst. He feared that domestic quandaries, combined with the Legion's shortage of ammunition and the state's empty coffers might force Transjordan out of the war. To rescue the kingdom, and thereby Britain's prestige in the Arab world, Kirkbride demanded that London disregard the embargo. Glubb went to London to explain Transjordan's requirements in person. His absence from Amman nourished a new wave of rumours about an imminent upheaval in British-Transjordanian relations.⁵

In the face of growing criticism of Transjordan, Abdullah endeavoured to restore the spirit of his Palestinian confidants.⁶ His Hussayni opponents maintained that the king was trying to mobilize Palestinian dignitaries' support for a new policy — reaching an understanding with the Jews, annexing Arab Palestine to Transjordan, and sending the refugees back to their homes.⁷ Seeking to undermine Abdullah's predominance in Palestine, Hajj Amin's partisans quickly manipulated the refugees' plight for anti-Hashemite propaganda. One of Abdullah's most urgent problems, therefore, was breaking the organization of the Mufti's followers in the West Bank.⁸

In the absence of an authoritative leadership, and owing to the AHC financial difficulties, the Palestinians' prospects of building an independent military force seemed negligible. The *Jihad al-Muqadas*' significance was mainly political — symbolizing Hajj Amin's foothold in Palestine.

After the fall of Lydda and Ramle, the Palestinian combatants assembled north-west of Ramallah. Lacking funds to sustain his men, their leader — Qassim Rimawi — asked the Mufti's permission to tax the villagers. This initiative provoked the inhabitants as well as the Transjordanian administration, and he soon dropped the idea.⁹

Another contingent of *Mujahidin* garrisoned several villages south-west of Jerusalem under Egyptian supervision. Their leader — Sheikh Yassin Al-Bakri — notified Hajj Amin that thousands of armed peasants were waiting to rally to his banner and asked if he might expect the money, munitions and food supplies necessary to enrol them.¹⁰ A third Palestinian group appeared in Galilee and ultimately merged with the ALA (see p. 170).

During the summer of 1948, Abdullah and the Mufti competed with one another for the loyalty of the Palestinians. The king would have liked to attract as many Palestinians as possible to his side regardless of their previous allegiance. By promising to pay the Palestinian combatants' long delayed salaries, the Legion crippled the AHC's control of its own troops.¹¹ Assisted by Palestinian loyalists, the Transjordanian administration closely watched the Hussaynis' moves and thwarted enlistment into the *Jihad al-Muqadas*.¹²

Transjordan's posture toward the Hussaynis hardened after learning that apart from inciting the Palestinians against the king, they were also trying to drive a wedge between Transjordan and Iraq. Furthermore, the AHC office in Damascus and its envoys in Baghdad were broaching with Iraqi officials a possible transfer of Samaria's civil administration to AHC hands.¹³

Trying to assist Hajj Amin's efforts to mobilize funds on their behalf, the *Mujahidin* portrayed the enormous potential of *fallahin* ready to enlist into their ranks. They also invented imaginary victories in battles that had never taken place.¹⁴ Equipped with the *Mujahidin*'s bogus reports, the Mufti prevailed on the League to multiply its grant to support Palestinian combatants. His first priority was obtaining war matériel for the armed Palestinian bands. Evidently, he required them not only for combating the Jews, but also for obstructing an attempt by Abdullah to impose his rule upon the Palestinians of Mount Hebron and Samaria.¹⁵

The Mufti's attempts to revive the Palestinians' war effort and secure his share of Arab Palestine came too late. Since the beginning of the second truce, most Palestinian recruits served under the Arab armies' command and obeyed their orders. Only the *Jihad al-Muqadas* remained loyal to the AHC and enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy.

Having placed their people's destiny in the hands of the Arab armies, Palestinian leaders lost all contact with military and political realities. In Despair by the invasion's failure, they put forward wild ideas of violating

the cease-fire and taking up arms to achieve totally unfounded whimsical results. Afraid of Jerusalem's possible demilitarization, and its eventual partition between Israel and Transjordan, the Mufti encouraged his followers to act in that city.¹⁶

Ahmad Hilmi, Jerusalem's Palestinian governor on behalf of Transjordan and the only AHC member to stay in the country, prevailed on Premier Abu al-Huda to alleviate the refugees' plight and restore collapsing morale. He suggested attacking Jerusalem, capturing the Jewish population and settling Palestinians in their homes. Transjordan's government evaded this peculiar proposition, of course.¹⁷

On 17 August 1948, an abortive IDF assault on Government House generated a fresh wave of escapees from Jerusalem and adjoining villages. Unaware of the true situation, in the midst of the battle, the British consul sent London alarming reports about renewal of the war. He warned of the city's impending downfall and the likely consequences for Britain's relations with the Arab states.¹⁸ Hilmi considered the time ripe to reiterate his rather bizarre proposal, and asked to be relieved of his post if the government rejected it. Abdullah willingly accepted his resignation and Glubb's Bedouin deputy, Ahmad Sidki al-Jundi, hastened to pacify the population of Jerusalem and avoid any breach of the truce.

Reassured by Abdullah al-Tal — the Legion's unruly commanding officer in Jerusalem — the Hussaynis were still hopeful that Transjordan's government might endorse their proposition and order al-Tal to implement it.¹⁹ Word of this plot reached Amman as well as Tel Aviv. Yadin briefed Ben-Gurion and Kirkbride reported it to London. He also admonished Transjordan's Minister of Defence, Fauzi al-Mulqi, stressing that should this attack take place the Jews would welcome it as "God's unexpected direct response to their prayers". Campbell sent a similar warning to Egypt's Foreign Minister.²⁰

Exploring means to strengthen his position in Samaria and secure the Legion's northern flank, Abdullah suggested uniting his army and the Iraqi expeditionary force. This expedition had tripled since the invasion, but Abu al-Huda complained that its appetite for combat had waned considerably. The Iraqi government's main concern, he added, was finding a way to withdraw its expedition without provoking agitation at home.²¹ Arab politicians alluded to the proposed command as a first step towards establishing an all-Arab headquarters under an Egyptian general. Israel's Foreign Ministry speculated on Britain's role in this scheme and pondered whether it was a genuine concerted effort or just another piece of propaganda.²² Despite a host of articles and news items in the Arab press about the need for uniting the military endeavours, and intensive inter-Arab activity around this issue, the second alternative — that this was mere hyperbole — proved correct.²³

An Iraqi delegation arrived at Amman to discuss the king's proposal. Abdullah sought to kill three birds with one stone. First, to obtain financial assistance from Iraq. Second, to share responsibility with Iraq for future debacles if there were any. Third, to commit the Iraqi army to extend assistance should the Legion be in distress. Grasping the king's intention, the Iraqi envoys stressed their own country's tough circumstance owing to the cost of the war and dwindling oil production, and rejected his request for financial aid. The parties agreed to establish a joint military command, but simultaneously resolved that each army would retain its operational independence. Practically, nothing changed in the wake of this conference.²⁴

To placate touchy public opinion in Iraq, the government put on a show of urging the other Arab states to storm Jerusalem. Premier Salih Jaber went to Cairo, where disillusionment about the military prospects of the Palestine campaign was spreading — ostensibly to persuade Premier Noqrashi to back the idea.²⁵ The AHC was hopeful, but the Iraqis' efforts proved futile, and the British warned them of any brash move whose only motive was the government's fear of telling the truth to the Baghdad mobs.²⁶ Having listened to denials from the Regent and Jaber, Kirkbride did not take the rumours seriously and explained that talk of conquering Jerusalem was no more than wishful thinking.²⁷

Since Abdullah had vetoed any action in Jerusalem, the Hussayni activists in Palestine urged Iraqi junior officers to let the *Mujahidin* capture Ras al-Ain at the southern end of their sector. If they were successful, the expeditionary force might exploit their accomplishment to liberate Lydda and Ramle.²⁸ Still preferring to break the truce in Jerusalem, Hajj Amin's position on this proposition was reserved. His followers in Palestine had different calculations. Anticipating an imminent announcement on the impending Transjordanian–Iraqi joint command and unsure of Iraqi backing in the future, the *Mujahidin* in Samaria wanted to act swiftly. An action in Jerusalem required detailed and lengthy preparations, they explained to the Mufti, and meanwhile the Palestinians might face an irrevocable *fait accompli*. Hajj Amin's authorisation, if he had sanctioned the incursion, had not been intercepted. He inquired, however, as to the attack's objective and asked if the Iraqi army had undertaken to repel counterattacks. Rimawi replied:

The ultimate goal is restoring morale and returning the refugees to Lydda and Ramle. The Iraqi army is ready to contest any counterattack with its troops and artillery.²⁹

Having co-ordinated the onslaught with local Iraqi commanders, the Palestinian combatants prepared to assault the IDF along Ras al-Ain–Bet Naballah road. At the last moment, Iraqi HQ intervened and ordered

cancellation of the raid. Subsequently, the frustrated Palestinians rioted and exchanged fire with Iraqi troops. Disappointed, Rimawi informed the Mufti: "Our troops were ordered to stop the assault . . . We could disobey the Iraqis, but we need them."³⁰

Following this frustration, the *Mujahidin* contented themselves with successfully sabotaging a pumping station near Latrun and other minor infringements of the cease-fire.³¹ They mainly endeavoured to strengthen their hold on the population and frequently updated the AHC on real and imaginary gains in recruiting village youth to their ranks.³²

Raising an army was far beyond the capabilities of the Palestinians. Rafiq al-Tmimi informed the Mufti that the AHC office at Damascus had exhausted its resources. Hajj Amin approached the Iraqi government, requesting that its army participate in maintaining and training Palestinian recruits. Following the Regent's visit to Samaria at the beginning of September 1948, Iraqi HQ sanctioned enrolment of Palestinians into auxiliary units under its control.³³

Jihad al-Muqadas had already registered young refugees in preparation for their enlistment.³⁴ During September 1948, several hundred Palestinians signed up and drilled in an Iraqi army camp in Samaria. The Iraqis organized them into two regiments: *Salah al-Din* and *al-Carmil*. They held the front-line positions, relieving the Iraqi troops to assemble in the rear for counter-attacks. Upon Iraq's demand, the Arab League paid the salaries of the new recruits while the AHC continued to support the veteran Palestinian combatants.³⁵

Concurrent with attempts to build up a military organization in Palestine, the AHC asked the Arab League to establish a Palestinian government. Already at the end of the first truce, Azzam announced the League's intention to form a provisional administration in Palestine for conducting civil affairs and appointed Ahmad Hilmi to preside over this body.³⁶ However, none of the Palestinian administration's nominated members appeared in Palestine. The League's plan seemed to have been still-born, and the British consul in Jerusalem remarked that this was due largely "to there being too many midwives in attendance".³⁷

Aspiring for more than an impotent bureaucracy, the AHC mobilized public opinion in the Arab countries in favour of formation of a genuine Palestinian government. Several newspapers called for creating an effective administration to relieve the invading armies of the necessity of dealing with non-military matters. Egypt took the lead and the League decided on forming an "All Palestine" government in Gaza, under Egyptian protection.³⁸

This was too little and too late for the Palestinians. By the time the League implemented this decision, the occupying Arab armies had left no executive role for a Palestinian administration, and its main function was

political and symbolic. Nevertheless, remembering the Mufti's meteoric recovery after his return from exile in Germany in 1946, the Israelis were careful not to completely wipe him off the slate. In their eyes, the Gaza government was likely to become a bastion for Hajj Amin's influence.³⁹

From the viewpoint of the League and Egypt, the Palestinian government's primary aim was thwarting Abdullah's ambition to annex Arab parts of Palestine to his kingdom. However, the other states' backing did not appear to be wholehearted. Soon, this quasi-government became a source of friction that rendered any joint Arab political or military action in Palestine impossible.

The Gaza government's likely impact on Transjordan's status in Palestine bothered the British. At the last moment they tried to delay its proclamation, but their intervention came too late to be effective.⁴⁰ Abdullah utterly and totally repudiated Gaza government. When news of its imminent establishment multiplied, he informed its designated head, Hilmi, that he would forbid any Palestinian administration to function in that part of Palestine occupied by the Arab Legion.⁴¹ Abdullah's protests notwithstanding, a congress of indigenous and refugee notables convened at Gaza on 22 September 1948 under the auspices of the League. They reaffirmed *Filastin's* independence within the mandate boundaries and declared Jerusalem its capital. Jimal Hussayni, Chairman of the AHC, failed to convince the king that Iraq had approved of the Gaza government and Transjordan should also recognize it. On the contrary, Jimal succeeded in arousing all the king's old grievances against the Mufti.⁴²

Abdullah met the challenge by activating his Palestinian supporters and summoning a similar congress of dignitaries at Amman. His proxies proclaimed their opposition to the Gaza government, declaring that the League had imposed it on the Palestinians without previously asking their opinion. They also deemed the new government responsible for any future calamity that might befall *Filastin* because of its establishment. The insinuations were obvious and friction was open.⁴³

Azzam urged the Arab states to recognize the League's new creation. Hajj Amin's election to the presidency of the Arab Palestine National Assembly, another body on paper only, dampened enthusiasm towards the Palestinian government. However, except for Iraq, the Arab states finally complied. Even the Iraqis faltered for a while, trying to find the middle road between defying the League and annoying the Palestinians, and provoking Abdullah.

Kirkbride warned London of the likely consequences, should Iraq recognize the Palestinian regime or should the UN sanction it. Reiterating the king's threat to withdraw the Legion from Palestine, he cautioned that its pull-out would enable the IDF to crush the other armies and occupy the entire country. To forestall such a contingency, he wanted the UN to

abstain from any pledge to the Mufti's administration. He and Abdullah were relieved when they learned that Iraq had gone back on its intention to recognize Hajj Amin's government.⁴⁴

With the tacit backing of the Regent, Iraq's Premier Salah Jaber did his utmost to persuade the king to recognize the Gaza government "temporarily". Abdullah bluntly refused, and reciprocated by delaying an order placing the Legion under Iraqi supreme command according to the earlier agreement on a unified headquarters for the two armies. Abdullah's vigorous objection — combined with British pressure — convinced Iraq to withhold its support for the Palestinian government.⁴⁵

Long ago, Glubb had anticipated that leaving the Arabs to decide the fate of Arab Palestine, or holding a plebiscite, might lead to an inter-Arab war.⁴⁶ After establishment of the Gaza government, he was preoccupied with the Legion's approaching problems with the Arabs, not the conflict with the Jews. Appraising the situation in Palestine, Glubb devoted a single paragraph of his memorandum to the Arab-Israeli encounter. In the other six pages, he analysed inter-Arab relations and the controversy over the domination of Palestine's Arab parts. Earnestly evaluating the prospects of a clash between the Legion and the Egyptian army, he ruled out this contingency except for Hebron. Next, he speculated if and how the Iraqis could depart from Palestine and at the same time repress riots likely to break out in Baghdad. He especially feared that before their departure they might impose the Hussaynis on Nablus and Jenin.

Instead of seeking a comprehensive Jewish-Arab solution, Glubb wished the UN to focus on devising an arrangement for Palestine's Arab parts, based on their merger with Transjordan. He seemed eager to end the war with Israel and revert to Transjordan's original plan of occupying the province between Jenin and Hebron. Contrary to Glubb's conclusions, Kirkbride doubted that the IDF would acquiesce to a takeover by the Legion of the regions presently under Egyptian and Iraqi domination.⁴⁷

Israel watched the disputes among the Arab states and emerging cracks in their coalition with growing interest. The controversies were still of a political nature, but they were prone to also impact on the military situation.⁴⁸ Commenting on the commotion surrounding the Palestinian administration, Israeli officials remarked that after having temporarily united the Arab League, Palestine turned into its main source of discord. A conspicuous sign of deteriorating inter-Arab relations was adjournment of the League's political committee that convened in Alexandria in September 1948, without adopting any resolutions. A second clue was the abortive attempt to unify Arab military headquarters. Finally, the Foreign Ministry's "Arabists" pointed to the growing rivalry between Egypt and Transjordan over the future regime in Arab Palestine.⁴⁹

In response to the League's challenge to his ambitions in Palestine,

Abdullah cultivated his Palestinian supporters and tempted his opponents into switching sides. His veteran partisans in Samaria worked for linking the West Bank with Transjordan and for restoring the king's status in the eyes of the Palestinians, which had degenerated after the fall of Lydda and Ramle. Nablus dignitaries declared their opposition to the "All Palestine" government and even tried to persuade Rushdi al-Shawa, Gaza's most prominent notable, to join them.⁵⁰

Palestinians outside the West Bank were also active in promoting the king's ambitions among their brethren. In Lebanon, Ahmad Al-Khalil organized a delegation whose members were refugees from various towns in Palestine. The delegates travelled to Arab countries, conferred with their rulers and lobbied for the king's enthronement over Arab parts of Palestine. In addition, they enlisted signatures on petitions endorsing Abdullah's claims to Arab Palestine. Among the signatories were members of prominent families from all over the country.⁵¹

Military developments, not political intrigues, determined the Gaza government's ill fate. Following operation YOAV in October 1948 (see chapter 13), the Palestinian ministers fled to Egypt and the Mufti's status in Palestine deteriorated. Abdullah's sphere of influence in the West Bank extended to Bethlehem and Hebron. Now, the king had a clear advantage in this region over the defeated Egyptians. They were totally dependent on Transjordan for their supplies and did not try to contest its domination. Although sporadic conflicts continued, the Egyptians respected Transjordan's cease-fire agreement with Israel and paid all due honours to the king upon his visit to Hebron. *Jihad al-Muqadas'* leaders attempted to check growing support of Abdullah among the Palestinian dignitaries, but in vain.⁵²

Abdullah persisted with his drive to attract the Palestinians to his side. Arab officers replaced British commanders of garrison units in the cities, and a civilian municipal council was appointed in Jerusalem.⁵³ Stabler, the new American consul at Amman, described the king's tour of the West Bank as a great success, emphasizing the crowd's apparently genuine enthusiasm.⁵⁴

Reassured by the Palestinians' orchestrated expressions of sympathy, and by the cease-fire agreement that he had signed with Israel on 30 November (see p. 242), Abdullah convened his Palestinian followers in Jericho on 1 December 1948. His principal proxies were Hebron's Mayor al-Ja'abri and Sulayman Tuqan of Nablus. Several prominent refugees, such as Ahmad al-Khalil from Haifa and Mayor Yussuf Haikal from Jaffa, also attended.

The Jericho congress proclaimed Abdullah "King of United Palestine", authorizing him to resolve the Palestine problem "by war or peace". Expressing distrust of the AHC, the congress labelled the Gaza govern-

ment "a faked regime". According to Kirkbride, the debates exhibited "the personal and party jealousies, which have done so much harm to the Palestinian's case in the past". He also noticed a struggle between the new and old generations of politicians in which the former were successful.⁵⁵

Da'at (the *Mossad*'s predecessor) linked the assembly with anti-government riots that broke out in Syria a few days later. Both events appeared to symbolize Abdullah's ambition to implement his Greater Syria plan. By contrast, the Mufti's partisans inferred from the Jericho congress that the king aspired for a peaceful settlement with Israel.⁵⁶

Disturbing already strained relations between Abdullah and his allies, the Jericho congress made the League — and Egypt in particular — even more suspicious of the king's designs in Palestine. To balance growing discontent across the Arab world, the king's partisans convened a third congress at Nablus on 28 December 1948. Led by Sulayman Tuqan, the assembly upheld the previous congress' resolutions in support of a union between Transjordan and Palestine.⁵⁷

To secure his grip on the West Bank, Abdullah sought to break up the Mufti's armed organization, the *Jihad al-Muqadas*. Several hundred *Mujahidin* were in Bir Zeit under the Iraqis where they had their depot and training centre, and 1,200 held a sector of the front south-west of Bethlehem, under the Egyptians.⁵⁸ Other armed Palestinians served in a 1,400-strong rural militia in Jerusalem and Ramallah districts, most of them under the Legion's supervision. Palestinian regiments also held front line positions along the Iraqi sector.⁵⁹

The Egyptians' retreat from Bethlehem cut off the Palestinian combatants from their sources of supply. Like the remaining Egyptian troops, they were totally dependent on the Legion that firmly restricted their freedom of action. To extricate themselves from such a predicament, some Palestinian combatants wished to join the Legion's auxiliaries. The AHC preferred to discharge as many troopers as possible to save the cost of their wages and maintenance.⁶⁰

Hajj Amin tried hard to bolster his partisans' morale. Urging them to dissociate themselves from Abdullah's intrigues, the Mufti told them that Egypt opposed Jericho's resolutions and promised: "With *Allah*'s help the general situation is about to improve." Meanwhile, his adherents reported to him daily on growing support for the king among the Palestinian populace. They described Abdullah's triumphal visits to the West Bank, the arrest of opponents to the king and the emergence of factions favouring a merger with Transjordan. Moreover, the Mufti's adherents slandered one another for leaning to the king and indulged in mutual accusations of corruption.⁶¹

The Legion's tight supervision of the cease-fire prevented the *Mujahidin* from violating it. Forced inaction and logistic hardships

prompted the *Jihad al-Muqadas*' leaders to withdraw some of their men from Bethlehem to Bir Zeit, despite Egyptian objections.⁶² Tensions between the Legion and the Palestinian combatants increased. The Legion restricted their freedom of action and movement, arrested their supporters in the villages, confiscated their supplies and drove the Hussayni warriors out of Jerusalem.⁶³ Ultimately, Glubb strove to get rid of the autonomous Palestinian combatants and disarm them. He appointed an officer to examine the *Jihad al-Muqadas* problem; the officer concluded his report stressing that the organization constituted "a government within a government . . . and its dispersal is preferable to its existence".⁶⁴

Discerning between Bethlehem and Bir Zeit, Hajj Amin endeavoured to prevent demobilization of his partisans. On the one hand, he ordered his followers in Bethlehem to insist on their autonomous status, prevailing upon them to resist temptations to join the Legion and promising that the League had undertaken their maintenance — providing they remain independent. On the other hand, he directed his adherents in Bir Zeit to accept the Iraqis' conditions to avoid their dispersal. However, Palestinian commanders on the spot were disillusioned. They recognized the Legion's determination to disarm them and the Iraqis' inability to obstruct this move.⁶⁵

Impatient with the Hussaynis' feuds with the Legion, the Iraqis suggested transferring responsibility for the Bir Zeit sector to the Legion.⁶⁶ On 16 January 1949, Transjordan police arrived in Bir Zeit and demanded details of *Jihad al-Muqadas*' manpower, arms and equipment. The Palestinians refused to comply and the policemen withdrew. Two days later a Legion unit surrounded the barracks, confiscated weapons as well as other war matériel and arrested several dozens Palestinian combatants. The rest fled to Nablus, and the Legion pursued them into the city and arrested them. Following this decisive blow, *Jihad al-Muqadas* vanished from Samaria.⁶⁷

Events at Bir Zeit aroused apprehension among the *Mujahidin* in Bethlehem that the Egyptians might depart soon and leave their Palestinian auxiliaries to become the Legion's next prey.⁶⁸ The leaders Ariqat, Abu Daya and Abu Fadel, decided to reconcile with the king and demobilize their men. By the end of February 1949, all the combatants were discharged. *Jihad al-Muqadas* in Bethlehem ceased to exist and wireless communications with the AHC office in Cairo stopped.⁶⁹

The Palestinian irregulars became a nuisance the moment their employers decided to seek an outlet from the war. Hajj Amin and the AHC did their best to frustrate or at least delay armistice negotiations. Egypt's readiness for an armistice disappointed the Mufti's partisans. Growing tension between Britain and Israel during and after operation *HOREV* in December 1948 remained their last ray of hope. After the British landed

at Aqaba on 8 January 1949, Nuri Sa'id, Iraq's new premier, ventured to build up a common Hashimite stance backed by Britain, in face of the progressing Israeli-Egyptian negotiations at Rhodes. The Hussaynis in Palestine were again hopeful of the war's renewal and reported to Hajj Amin:

If Rhodes talks fail, the British will encourage Iraq and Transjordan to fight. If the negotiations succeed, the British will occupy Um Rashrash [Eilat] . . . to provoke the Jews and bring about the resumption of fighting.⁷⁰

This was a patent dream. Britain's steps in Transjordan aimed at defending it from another Israeli offensive, not conquering the Negev or resuming the war. Precisely at that moment, Britain despaired of enforcing her conditions on an Arab-Israeli settlement. Nuri Sa'id's initiative led to nil and the Palestinians were the Arab states' last concern when each of them sought its own way out of the war.

The Palestinian activists despaired of the war's conduct by the League, the Arab states and their own institutions and leadership. A characteristic illustration of their glum mood is the following letter from Rafiq al-Tmimi, chief of the AHC office in Damascus, to Hajj Amin:

The Arab League is dying out . . . There is no reason to regret its downfall, since it has never been a true friend of the Palestinians . . . the All-Palestine Government should firmly control our affairs or disintegrate . . . The AHC's situation is lamentable. It has bequeathed us only troubles.⁷¹

Even Egypt's authorities stiffened their attitude towards the Palestinians. They forbade the Mufti to go to Gaza and in February 1949 police searched several houses in Cairo where members of the Hussayni clan lived, apparently looking for hidden weapons.⁷² Financial difficulties forced the AHC to discharge most of its employees, Palestinians who had arrived in Egypt before 15 May 1948. In face of Israel's military victories and the strengthening of Abdullah's grip on the West Bank, Hajj Amin lost confidence in the AHC future. Rumours spread among Palestinian exiles about his despair and alleged wish to retire from political life and resettle in Jerusalem.⁷³

No wonder, therefore, that most Palestinians turned their back on the Mufti and pinned their hopes on the king. Parallel to the disintegration of the *Jihad al-Muqadas*, Palestinian independent politics dwindled until it disappeared completely. Jumping on Abdullah's bandwagon and marginal attempts to arrive at a settlement with Israel remained the only manifestations of Palestinian political activity. The Hussaynis tried in vain to incite Iraqi officers against the Transjordanian administration and to defame the king, claiming that the rallies in support of his policy were staged.⁷⁴

On 1 February 1949, a group of notables convened in Jerusalem under the auspices of Abdullah al-Tal. Excluding Anuar al-Khatib, Aref al-Aref and Nimr al-Hauari, their names were unknown. This conference formulated a programme for continuing the Palestinians' struggle to counterbalance the armistice negotiations and subsequent talks under the auspices of the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) appointed by the UN. The participants committed themselves to preserving Palestine's Arab character, rejecting any solution incompatible with this principle or with Arab sovereignty in Jerusalem. They demanded the Arab governments refuse to co-operate with the PCC before the problem of "dispossessed Arabs" (the refugees) was resolved. Finally, they paid tribute to Abdullah and his Legion, urging them "to persist with defending Jerusalem until the ultimate triumph".

Hauari insisted on declaring a Palestinian "general mobilization" and on taxing all luxuries for its funding. Furthermore, he demanded that the Arab states take their hands off Palestine and let the Palestinians decide their own destiny.⁷⁵ These resolutions reflected the Palestinians' deep disappointment in the Arab states. Britain, however, remained the principal scapegoat for the Arab failure in Palestine.⁷⁶

The AHC, Hauari and other Palestinian activists wished to secure an autonomous Palestinian representation before the PCC — expected to arrive soon in the Middle East. Their efforts were doomed to failure because of Abdullah's unyielding objection to the presence of any Palestinian delegation other than Transjordan's mission. He made it clear that the League's support of any other Palestinian representation might cause its dismemberment.

The war's outcomes paralyzed the Arab League. Egypt, Transjordan and Lebanon were negotiating separate armistice agreements with Israel, and Syria was preoccupied with domestic instability. Iraq as well, sought a way out of the war, but one that would not imply recognition of Israel. The Palestinians, who had started the hostilities and whose collapse had dragged the Arab states into combat, were abandoned by their presumed saviours. The Arab League's lip service to the Palestinian cause notwithstanding, henceforth the indigenous population of the West Bank and Gaza strip, the Palestinian refugees in neighbouring countries and Israeli Arabs were left alone to confront the consequences of their follies.

Diplomacy and Intrigues

The military attack on the Jewish state failed and the Arab governments reverted to political warfare. Refusing to admit their failure, they strove to achieve by diplomatic means what they had lost on the battlefield. Against the backdrop of an escalating Cold War, the Western Powers almost yielded to their pressures. Anxious to end the war, the British and Americans looked for a solution acceptable to the invading states, based on territorial and other concessions on Israel's part.

Britain was still the dominant power in the Middle East and the Foreign Office led this diplomatic campaign. Bevin feared the impact of the Arab defeat on Britain's position in such a strategically important region. Pulling strings behind the scenes, British diplomats manipulated the UN mediator and surreptitiously positioned themselves between Bernadotte and the Arab governments. Apart from devising an Israeli-Arab comprehensive settlement, the mediator's plan reflected Britain's interests, although British diplomats disagreed over the best means of promoting them. Bevin also tried to mobilize Britain's allies — the United States and France — to support Britain's ambitions. He temporarily accomplished this goal when the three powers stood behind Bernadotte's plan, after the mediator's assassination on 17 September 1948.¹

By persuading the Arab states that they might gain more in the diplomatic arena than by continuing fighting in the field, the British strove to rescue the Arabs from the outcomes of their military débâcle. They underestimated, however, the strength of the Palestinians' emotions and the might of domestic pressures on the Arab governments. The Arabs expected Britain to extend military and financial assistance, not diplomatic advice, and the arguments of the British diplomats failed to convince them. Luck for Israel, Britain's diplomacy in the Middle East ultimately proved ineffective. Had the Foreign Office's schemes materialized, they might have been no less dangerous for Israel than the military Arab onslaught.

The Arabs' main grievance against Britain concerned the withholding of armaments. Realizing the ban's role in alienating the Arabs, British legations in the Middle East, the War Office and the Chiefs of Staff sought ways to bypass the embargo.² Fearing that the United States would arm Israel if Britain supplied weapons to the Arab states, Bevin insisted on strict observance of the embargo. In the long run, the Foreign Office maintained that an arms race would be to the Arabs' detriment. Only on one occasion Bevin gave in to pressure from the Chiefs of Staff, allowing shipment of spare part to the RAF base at Habanniya, knowing that they were really bound for the Iraqi air force.³

The British generals' position stemmed from the escalating Cold War and the Berlin crisis. Already in January 1948, the JPS had embarked on planning the defence of the Middle East against a Russian invasion. This blueprint did not apply to Israel yet, but the British planners took into account the Arab armies. In their view, the Soviet menace rendered British support for these armies indispensable. The COS repeatedly demanded enhancement of the Arab armies' capacities for the contingency of a third world war.⁴

Apprehending the strategic repercussions of another Arab débâcle, the British sought American acquiescence to dispatching munitions to the RAF bases in Transjordan and Iraq. The Foreign Office promised to withhold them from the Legion and the Iraqi army unless Israel violated the truce. Its officials also wished the Americans to take part in an international force that the UN mediator had proposed be stationed in Jerusalem. This seemed to them the only way to deter Israel from taking over the entire city.⁵

The Americans did not mind if Britain reinforced its bases in Transjordan and in Iraq to protect its own forces and installations. They strongly objected, however, to any breach of the embargo and made it clear that "they did not wish to be put in a position of being made responsible for the assistance which we [the British] might give to the Arabs in Palestine".⁶ During the first truce, officials in London and diplomats in the Middle East cherished hopes that a lengthy cease-fire would eventually consolidate the front lines in a way compatible with Britain's interests. Jaffa, Acre and western Galilee — allocated to the Arab state according to the partition plan — were under Jewish control. The Negev — allocated to the Jewish state — was in the Egyptians' hands (or so the British thought). In return for recognizing Israel *de facto*, the Arabs might demand further border modifications. The sooner they accepted the fact of Israel's existence, the better might be the chances of diminishing their losses. Yet, the British realized that such recognition might spark domestic turmoil and endanger the stability of the Arab states. For the time being, they saw no outlet to this dilemma.⁷

Britain had no formal relations with Israel, but maintained informal contacts through its consulates in Jerusalem and Haifa and Britain's delegation at the UN. Before the first truce, British diplomats explained to their Israeli interlocutors their vision of the war's end: The Arabs would accept Jewish statehood; a Palestinian state would not be established; Arab Palestine, including Jerusalem and the Negev, would merge with Transjordan. In addition, Abdullah would get access to the Mediterranean and free port rights in Haifa. These modifications were essential, they explained, on strategic and prestige grounds as well as for strengthening the king's status in the eyes of his allies.⁸

Four weeks later, towards the end of the first truce, Britain tried to persuade the Arab governments that the Jewish state's existence was irreversible and they should make the best possible deal to contain it. The Arab leaders turned a deaf ear to British counsel and insisted on abolishing Jewish statehood, partition and Jewish immigration as preconditions for any negotiations. Another major obstacle was the Arab states' failure to agree on the future status of Palestine's Arab areas. On this issue, too, British diplomacy failed to convince them.⁹

Bernadotte's original plan for a Jewish-Arab settlement suggested uniting Palestine and Transjordan and creating two states — Jewish and Arab — within this union. He conceived of Jerusalem as part and parcel of the Arab state.¹⁰ Talking in Rhodes with the mediator's assistants, Shiloah believed that they accepted Israel's existence and their principal problem was finding an honourable way for the Arabs to comply with this reality. Shiloah was sure — albeit mistakenly — that the British were not meddling in the mediator's mission, at least not in the Middle East.¹¹

Initially, Britain let the UN mediator test his ideas and did not interfere with his proposals. The Foreign Office waited for Bernadotte to fail; confident that eventually he would ask for British advice. Anticipating his approach, the British formulated their strategic requirements in Palestine to direct Bernadotte's subsequent political initiatives in their own favour.¹²

At the beginning of July 1948, the Arab press indignantly repudiated Bernadotte's proposals following their unofficial publication. Many Arab newspapers demanded they be rejected and hostilities resumed.¹³ After the Arab League had refused to prolong the truce, British diplomacy interfered vigorously in the mediator's mission. This was, however, too late to prevent resumption of fighting on 9 July 1948, but the Arabs' débâcles in the following ten days created a backdrop conducive to resumption of diplomatic activity. The British expected Arab leaders to regain their senses and negotiate on the basis of a Jewish state. Some of them, particularly Brigadier Ilyd Clayton and James Troutbek of the BMEQ, opposed

Bernadotte's preference to annex Arab Palestine to Transjordan and preferred its division among several Arab countries:

The amalgamation of two non-viable territories, far from creating a single viable one, creates a territory still more non-viable than either of its component parts.¹⁴

Nevertheless, Bevin chose the Transjordanian option for Arab Palestine. Yet, he was not keen to include Jerusalem in the Arab state and favoured internationalization. Refusing Abdullah's desperate request for delivery of ammunition, he simultaneously promised the king to work for the acceptance of the UN mediator's plan and guarantee under treaty Transjordan's enlarged borders.

So far, the refugee problem had not bothered Bevin. Mainly interested in Bernadotte's territorial notions, his diplomacy strove to secure the Negev for the Arabs and, indirectly, for Britain. Bevin was therefore especially anxious that Egypt should create an administration in southern Palestine to counterbalance the continuous and dogged endurance of besieged Israeli settlements. He wanted to show thereby that this region was "in fact and not in name only under Arab administration during the truce".¹⁵

The Arabs' defeats in July 1948 made the British even more eager to end the war quickly. Bevin's guidelines defined Britain's aims in relation to Palestine: (1) stopping the hostilities, (2) accepting a Jewish state. (3) separating the delineation of its borders from determining the future of Arab Palestine, (4) basing the solution on Bernadotte's ideas but omitting the proposed union between the Arab and Jewish states and (5) incorporating the Arab parts in Transjordan.¹⁶

During the Ten-Day Campaign, Bernadotte alarmed the British delegation in the UN by raising new ideas. He suggested replacing the collapsing truce with an armistice based on the Arab armies' withdrawal from Palestine, Israel's demobilization and a plebiscite to determine the future of the Arab districts.¹⁷ Uneasy, the British diplomats in the region now openly interfered in Bernadotte's mediation. Contrary to his original plan, the revised scheme that the UN mediator elaborated during the second truce was essentially a British intrigue serving Britain's interest in the region.

What made the British so edgy? On the eve of the second cease-fire, discouraging reports from Middle East capitals portrayed Britain's deteriorating position in the Arab world and the Arabs' feeling that Albion had betrayed them. The Arabs, Consul Beaumont wrote from Jerusalem, were not afraid of Israel becoming an economic menace or turning communist. Their main concern was Israel's expansionism. The insinuation was clear: To placate the Arabs, Britain must reduce Israel to the

smallest possible size. Beaumont's pessimistic assessment of the mediator's prospects concluded:

Palestine problem is still in its infancy. The preface ended with the mandate and the first chapter has begun. Possibly, the mediator's solution will terminate this chapter, but it will not solve the problem.¹⁸

Concurring with Beaumont, Clayton did his best to persuade Bernadotte's aides that dividing Palestine's Arab parts among the Arab states was a preferable solution to establishing a Palestinian entity, independent or within Transjordan.¹⁹

Developments since the beginning of the truce strengthened doubts of the Transjordanian option's feasibility. Indicating the need for augmenting Britain's financial assistance to Transjordan considerably, Troutbek and Clayton asserted that international charity would be insufficient to prevent widespread starvation among the refugees. Emphasizing the growing opposition of the Arab states to Transjordan's enlargement, they warned of imposing such a solution upon the Arab League and suggested leaving to the Arabs the decision of Arab Palestine's future.²⁰

Led by Troutbek and Clayton, BMEC vainly ventured to reduce support for a solution based exclusively on Transjordan. These two diplomats warned that stimulating Abdullah to playing his hand too forcibly might exacerbate the resentment of other Arab states against Abdullah and Britain.²¹ On the other hand, Kirkbride argued that securing the Arab states' approval for incorporating any part of Arab Palestine in Transjordan was almost impossible. The only chance of obtaining this merger was by territorially compensating other states, ostensibly at Israel's expense.²²

Stubbornly opposing any solution providing for the existence of Israel, the Arab League insisted on cantonizing Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab area, return of the refugees and internationalizing Jerusalem, Haifa and Jaffa pending a permanent solution.²³ To make Bernadotte's proposals acceptable to the Arabs, Britain shifted its pressures from the League to the mediator. While Bernadotte drafted at Rhodes his report to the UN assembly, Troutbek went to the island and attached himself to the Count's team. His task was making sure that the final version corresponded with Britain's interests and British advice.²⁴

Increasingly worried by the Arabs' hostility, Bevin prevailed on the Americans to agree on a common stance on Palestine at the forthcoming General Assembly. Joint support of the mediator's plan, he maintained, might enable the Palestinians to enjoy British protection based on an Anglo-Transjordanian treaty. The Americans were not fully responsive to his ideas. While he wished the UN to enforce a solution on the belligerents, the State Department preferred inducing Israel and Transjordan to

negotiate informally but directly with one another. Sometimes, the American stance approached the British, but not to the extent of pressuring Israel to accept it.²⁵

So far, British diplomacy completely ignored Israel. The second truce offered Israel a necessary pause to seek ways to end the war. Militarily, the confrontation appeared to be in a stalemate. On the one hand, the Arabs were incapable of persisting with their offensive. On the other hand, the IDF's abortive attempts to uproot the Syrians from Mishmar Hayarden and the Egyptians from Karatiya crossroads indicated an inability to push the invaders further back. Three courses seemed possible exits from the war: (1) UN mediation, (2) direct negotiations, (3) disruption of the Arab coalition by subversive means, thereby altering the military balance.

Israel's endeavours to align with the Syrian Druze and Kurds, or with the Lebanese Maronites to overthrow the regimes in these countries and break up the Arab League, were abortive. Acknowledging that displacing an Arab government might shorten the war, Sasson doubted its feasibility from the outset and finally concluded: "We lack the essential connections for such an audacious enterprise."²⁶

Up until the second truce, Israel had not defined any political and territorial objectives for the war beyond its very survival. This vacuum left the diplomatic initiative in British and Arab hands. They pressured Bernadotte and he put their exigencies at the door of the Israeli government. The UN mediator aspired to realize three interim goals: (1) consolidate the cease-fire, (2) demilitarize Jerusalem, and (3) devise a final settlement. Israel considered Jerusalem the most urgent problem, fearing that demilitarization might be a prelude to internationalization. Jerusalem symbolized the UN's failure to implement its own part of the partition resolution. Israel's provisional government insisted on including the new city in the Jewish state, but as a fall back position it was prepared to consider partitioning the town between Israel and Jordan. Leo Cohn, Shertok's senior adviser, warned that under an international regime Zionist and secular Jews would probably abandon Jerusalem.²⁷

Bernadotte's designs in regard to Jerusalem exacerbated Israel and Transjordan. By the summer of 1948, conditions in the city were profoundly different — politically, militarily and demographically — from November 1947. Before the war, the Jews had numbered 102,000 and constituted 62 per cent of the town's total population (165,000). In September 1948, only 80,000 Jews and 30,000 Arabs remained in the city.²⁸ The prospects of implementing the mediator's ideas about internationalization appeared slight in view of the objections of both Israel and Transjordan. Britain, too, modified its stance and contemplated an alternative solution based on partition of the city.²⁹

Concurrent to his preliminary talks in Tel Aviv, Amman and Cairo on interim arrangements, Bernadotte's assistants co-ordinated with Troutbek and Clayton a plan for a comprehensive settlement, which the UN mediator presented to the belligerents as his own. This proposition stood on four pillars: (1) annexing Arab Palestine and the Negev to Transjordan, (2) the return of the refugees, (3) internationalization of Jerusalem, and (4) making Haifa a free port. A possible variation might have been dividing the Negev between Transjordan and Egypt. Both versions made "Greater Transjordan" a bulwark of British interests in the region.³⁰

Israel rejected utterly and totally Bernadotte's plan. The Provisional Government insisted on including the new quarters of Jerusalem in the Jewish state. By a narrow majority vote, the ministers agreed to the internationalization of the Old City, on condition that Jews would participate in the governing body. Israel also dismissed the mediator's idea of exchanging western Galilee for the Negev. On the contrary, the government demanded the partition borders "with additions proved necessary as an outgrowth of the war experience". The cabinet also rejected Bernadotte's demand to return the refugees, declaring that Israel would not discuss this issue until the signing of final peace treaties.³¹

Count Bernadotte's assassination on 17 September 1948 did not kill his ideas. The UN published the mediator's report and Israel realized that its content might be taken for a Last Will and Testament and serve as a basis for a joint British-American stance on the preferred solution to the Palestine problem. These fears multiplied when Secretary of State George Marshall announced the United States' support for the UN mediator's report.³²

Arguing against Bernadotte's plan, Israeli diplomats described it as mediation between Britain and the United States, not between Israel and the Arabs. The Foreign Ministry produced UN documents proving that excise of the Negev from Israel had not been originally in the mediator's mind, and Bernadotte had added it in response to British exigencies.³³ The Arab states also repudiated the plan, because it provided for Jewish statehood. Abdullah preferred Bernadotte's plan to any alternative, but he still hesitated to break openly with the Arab common front. Abu al-Huda had told the mediator frankly, that Transjordan could not dissent alone from the League's position.³⁴

After the mediator's death, Britain's delegation to the UN tried in vain to tempt the Arab delegates into accepting the plan, stressing the Arabs' chance of getting a better bargain by diplomatic means. Taking up arms, the British cautioned, might lead to an Israeli occupation of all of Palestine. Only few diplomats in the Middle East disputed the Foreign Office's evaluation of the Jews' invincibility and criticized its political

conclusions.³⁵ Deriving from the appraisal of military experts, this assumption was sound. What Troutbek and his associates really meant to say was that had Britain violated the embargo, the Arabs might have had a better chance militarily. In the face of Bevin's firm adherence to the embargo, they did not dare say it in so many words.

Bernadotte's plan dissipated after Israel's possession of northern Negev in operation YOAV and President Truman's re-election on 2 November 1948. Marshall eventually resigned, and the President instructed his delegation to the UN to veto sanctions against Israel, even if it ignored the UN demand for withdrawal from the Negev. Ralph Bunch, the new mediator, confined his activity to achieving armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states, and abandoned any hope of devising a comprehensive settlement.

Concurrent with UN mediation efforts, Israel strove to negotiate directly with the Arab states. As early as March 1948, Sasson had expressed his desire to go to Europe to resume communications with potential Arab middlemen. Under the circumstances, he had to delay his departure for several months. Arriving in Paris early in July 1948, Sasson immediately sought links to the Arab governments.

Sasson wanted his errand to be secret, but did not mean to conceal it from Bernadotte. On the contrary, he considered the mission supplementary to UN peace efforts. Yet, Shertok — regarding the mediator as a British puppet — objected to any linkage between Sasson's overtures to the Arabs and the UN mediation.³⁶

Initially, Sasson's colleagues in Tel Aviv held little hope for his mission. Walter Eitan, the Foreign Ministry's Director General, did not believe in secret diplomacy and wanted to supplement it with an open initiative to convene a peace conference. He obviously preferred the latter course. Leo Cohn maintained that by no means would the Arabs respond to an open Israeli approach. Covert contacts with Abdullah and the Palestinians had, therefore, better chances of success. Since Sasson could handle such endeavours from Israel, Cohn saw no sense in Sasson staying in Paris.³⁷

Sasson's main objective was resuming contacts with Abdullah. He preferred to embark on this project from France and invited Shaukat Seti, the king's private doctor and former liaison with the Jewish Agency, to Paris. Through intermediaries, Sasson also revived an old acquaintance with Transjordan's ambassador to London, Abd al-Majid Haidar, who also might have been a channel to the king.³⁸

Early in August 1948, Sasson's gambit yielded first results. In response to his overtures, Abdullah ordered Haidar to meet with the Israeli envoy. Assuming that the ambassador would report the contents of their talk to the king and to his British advisers, Sasson asked for instructions. Shertok authorized him to mention possible modifications in the partition lines

but cautioned Sasson to formulate his words carefully, and avoid any explicit consent to merging Palestine's Arab parts with Transjordan.³⁹

Kirkbride reported to London on Israel's approach, but doubted the outcome. Apparently, he underestimated Abdullah's determination to quit the war.⁴⁰ According to Shertok's guidelines, Sasson formulated Israel's position in writing and sent it to Haidar and Seti. Concurrently, he requested further instructions — whether to persist in his efforts to communicate with other Arab countries or suspend them until he could evaluate the outcome of preliminary discussions with the king's emissaries. He also wanted a directive for talks with other partners: "We could give a lot to the Transjordanians, but what could we concede to the Egyptians, Syrians etc.?" Shertok advised him to proceed with overtures to other Arab states, regardless of the exchange with Transjordan's delegates.⁴¹

While Sasson corresponded with Haidar, Abdullah informed Shertok through the Belgian Consul in Jerusalem, Jean Nieuwenhuys, of his preference for holding the dialogue in Cyprus.⁴² Haidar and Seti proposed to Sasson that they continue their talks on that island, where Abdullah could closely supervise his envoys and they might benefit from British advice and support. Sasson objected, claiming that Israel had no interest "in arousing the Soviets' suspicions by speaking with Britain's *protégé* on British territory and under British supervision". Shertok concurred and rejected the king's proposal.⁴³

Bernadotte was aware of Israel's attempts to bypass him and establish direct contacts with the Arab states, but did not believe in their feasibility. In his opinion, the Arabs favoured a decision by the UN that they would neither accept nor fight.⁴⁴ Sasson knew that Abdullah, too, wanted the UN to enforce a solution previously agreed upon by Israel and Transjordan. In this manner, the king hoped to persuade his allies that Transjordan had been forced to capitulate to an international dictate and had not violated the League's resolutions on its own volition. Haidar listed Abdullah's claims, including Jerusalem's integration with Palestine's Arab part. The king did not mention the Negev, and asked for Israel's help in securing American recognition of Transjordan and in solving the refugee problem. Sasson thought that the king's demands, leaving out Jerusalem, could be a basis for negotiations. Jerusalem should be negotiated unofficially in a parallel attempt to reach an acceptable solution.⁴⁵

Sasson prevailed on Seti and Haidar to convince their monarch that starting formal talks was urgent. To lure the ambassador, he noted Transjordan's prospects in the United States following an accord with Israel. He also implied that Syria might comply with Arab Palestine's annexation to Transjordan. Substantiating this argument, he quoted

Syrian politicians whose names he refused to put in writing, but promised to reveal orally.⁴⁶

The reference to these Syrians aroused the king's apprehensions that other Arabs shared the secret of his dialogue with Israel. Abdullah also suspected Sasson had leaked the story about the talks in Paris to British and American journalists. When Nieuwenhuys remarked that the leak might have occurred in Tel Aviv, the king interrupted him: "This is not true. I know Sasson very well. He comes from Damascus [where Sasson was, indeed, born and educated], and no one is more talkative than the Syrians."⁴⁷ Believing that Abdullah was deliberately playing for time — seeking political or territorial gains before commencement of formal negotiations — Sasson admonished Seti that his master risked missing an opportunity. Israel might revise its attitude and wait for more conducive circumstances unless Haidar or another delegate received explicit orders to resume the dialogue.⁴⁸ Contrary to Sasson's suspicions, the king had no intention of breaking the new link with Israel. He notified Shertok through Nieuwenhuys that the leaks had forced him to freeze the Haidar channel. As a substitute he suggested dispatching his Foreign Minister, Fauzi al-Mulqi, to France. Sasson ceased courting Haidar and patiently waited for his new partner to arrive in Paris.⁴⁹

Abdullah still fluctuated between promptly starting negotiations with Israel and awaiting the outcome of the UN's mediation. Endorsing Bernadotte's proposals might have fulfilled most of his ambitions. During August and September 1948, Abdullah still expected the UN to approve the proposals mentioned in the mediator's report, and this was probably the principal reason for the delay. Promising that UN recommendations would meet most of the monarch's demands, the British encouraged Abdullah to wait for the UN mediator's report.⁵⁰ Yet, the king did not trust the UN's capability to enforce its solution on either the Jews or the Arabs, and particularly resented Bernadotte's ideas about Jerusalem.⁵¹ Strenuous objections among both his Arab allies and Israel to the mediator's proposals, the impending establishment of a Palestinian government and, finally, Bernadotte's assassination convinced the king that he could expect nothing from the UN. This conviction hastened his action, though not all the obstacles were removed.

Creating an "All Palestine Government" appeared to Abdullah to be a plot designed to frustrate attainment of his main war goal — Arab Palestine's incorporation into his kingdom.⁵² Israel's silence regarding his territorial claims worried him. Again, Abdullah used the Belgian Consul's services to deliver a message of goodwill to Shertok. Impatient, he dispatched messengers to wait in Jerusalem for the response. Nieuwenhuys passed the note, and told his Israeli contact that Abdullah sincerely wished to conclude the negotiations. "It is possible," he added,

"that in the not-so-distant future . . . the Legion will fight alongside Israel's army to drive the foreign invaders out of Palestine."⁵³

After Bernadotte's assassination, Abdullah seemed more anxious than ever to end the war. Yet, he had to think of his image in the Arab world and had to show substantial gains at the negotiation table in order to justify such a move. His message asked for an Israeli gesture to enhance his position in the eyes of Palestinians: allow the return of refugees to Lydda and Ramle, provided they were not Hajj Amin's followers. Shertok firmly replied that escapees' return at that stage was out of question.⁵⁴

Abdullah's scruples were not the only cause for delay in the Israeli-Transjordanian dialogue. Israel, too, weighed its options. What appeared to be an imperative to choose between a Transjordanian and a Palestinian option concerned policy makers. Reservations about the king and domestic differences within Israel over the desirable solution for Palestine's Arab part, delayed the decision. Based on experience with Abdullah over time, Israel's leaders distrusted the king and deeply suspected his British sponsors' aims. This was the main reason for deferring responses to his messages.⁵⁵

Early in August, Shertok still favoured the Palestinians over the king. He and his advisers doubted Abdullah's capability for delivering the goods. They thought that the king's status in the Palestinians' eyes had ebbed because of Lydda and Ramle's downfall. Various signs indicated an apparent breach between Abdullah and his Iraqi allies who presumably did not share the king's readiness for a compromise. Furthermore, the Mufti — backed by Egypt — seemed to be strengthening his grip on the Palestinians in Arab-controlled Palestine.⁵⁶

Israel's Foreign Ministry embarked, therefore, on examining the Palestinian option. Concurrent with making overtures to Transjordan, the ministry looked for candidates "to make up a Palestinian government for the country's Arab sector". This administration should recognize Israel while leaving the problem of borders open.⁵⁷ While Sasson was cultivating new contacts with Abdullah's emissaries in Paris, the Foreign Ministry in Tel Aviv was conducting covert propaganda against the king in the name of an alleged organization of "Free Refugees", taking advantage of the agitation on the West Bank after the fall of Lydda and Ramle.

Astounded by his colleagues' attitude, Sasson openly expressed his dismay, and Shimoni explained to him:

We have to abide by Moshe's [Shertok] guidelines to promote, both in propaganda and in action, an independent state in the Arab part over annexation to Transjordan. In addition to our sincere preference for [Palestinian] independence over incorporation, our alternative connections may serve as a whip to prompt Abdullah. He should not think that we are dependent on him exclusively.⁵⁸

Dissatisfied, Sasson demanded to review the arguments in favour of the Palestinian option, claiming that it meant a return to the partition borders. Extending Israel's frontiers beyond those fixed by the UN was possible only by integrating the rest of the country with an adjacent state such as Transjordan. Danin placated Sasson, reassuring him that the Palestinian option was by no means near at hand.⁵⁹

Ben-Gurion was probably unaware of examination of the Palestinian option. Early in October 1948, Ahmad al-Khalil invited Ya'acov Salomon to meet him in Cyprus. Salomon reported the proposition to Ben-Gurion, requesting his approval. Ben-Gurion asked whether al-Khalil spoke for the Syrians or the Lebanese. When Salomon replied that he had approached him on behalf of the Palestinian refugees, Ben-Gurion promptly "advised" him not to go.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, the efforts to establish direct contacts with Palestinian notables in Samaria yielded results. Returning messengers described a favourable atmosphere for such connections. Particularly enthusiastic were activists who had been the traditional opposition to the Hussaynis, such as Sulayman Tuqan of Nablus and Hafiz Hamdullah of Anabta: "They are prepared to get in touch with us, to see what we want and on which basis they might reach an understanding and co-operate with us."

Israeli officials contemplated what they should demand from the Palestinians: "Establishing an open Palestinian government? With the king or against him? A government-in-exile in Israel? A resistance movement against the Legion and the Iraqis? Open rebellion against them? Preparing the ground for an Israeli occupation?" Above all loomed the problem of the future borders between Israel and a prospective Palestinian state.

Early in November 1948, Shertok and Shimoni discussed these issues. The Jewish Agency's long experience with Tuqan and Hamdullah had demonstrated their ineffectiveness in underground affairs. Their capability for establishing a Palestinian government in defiance of the League, Abdullah and the Mufti was inconceivable. Shimoni proposed first coming to terms with an Arab state and subsequently activating Palestinian proxies within the framework of this accord. He was a tenacious supporter of an agreement with Abdullah, but Shertok was still apprehensive. He feared that Iraq might swallow Transjordan "and in case of *Filastin's* annexation to Transjordan, we shall have the Iraqis on our border in Qalqilia and Wadi Ara". Nonetheless, he considered the Palestinian option primarily as means of enhancing Israel's bargaining power *vis-à-vis* Transjordan and Egypt. Pending a definitive decision by Israel's political leaders, the Foreign Ministry's officials suspended the link with the Palestinian notables of Samaria.⁶¹

In August–September 1948, the pending establishment of the Gaza

Government drove Israel and Abdullah to look, separately, for Palestinian proxies to dispute its legitimacy. Although the Palestinian administration was formally the Arab League's creation, Egypt was the motivating power behind its establishment. The Egyptians held a large portion of Palestine's Arab area. Their army had not yet sustained any major blow, and no diplomatic efforts could ignore them.

Sasson made some progress in establishing contacts with Egyptian personalities. In August 1948, he met with Egypt's former Premier 'Isma'il Sidqi, who had objected to his country's involvement in the war; Sidqi assured Sasson that he still advocated partition.⁶² A week later, Egyptian journalists approached Sasson and inquired about Israel's stances and intentions. Promising to publish his responses, the gist of their questions uncovered apprehensions of Israel's alleged expansionism and economic domination. Sasson considered their address an informal Egyptian overture and reported on it to Tel Aviv. Shertok formulated the replies personally, aiming primarily to mitigate the Arabs' fears of Israel's expansionism and explaining that they emanated from ignorance of Zionism's essence.⁶³

Following these preliminaries, an Egyptian envoy, Kemal Riad of the Palace's bureau, arrived in Paris to clarify Israel's proposals. Sasson met him on 21 September 1948 and subsequently prepared a draft for an Israeli–Egyptian agreement. Riad transmitted it to the Palace, but Sasson was still uncertain: "I can hardly believe that Egypt may agree to a separate pact."⁶⁴ Sasson's main clauses were:

- 1 Egypt should stop the war and recognize Israel *de facto*.
- 2 Israel pledges to refrain from acting, or assisting actions, against the Egyptian regime.
- 3 The Egyptian army should withdraw from Palestine, handing over the Jewish state's occupied area to the IDF and the Arab territory to local inhabitants' control.
- 4 As long as other troops will not enter the evacuated region to harass Jewish settlements, Israel will not capture it.
- 5 Israel will respect any Palestinian decision on the future of the country's Arab part.
- 6 Egypt should resettle refugees presently under its domination, either in Palestine's Arab part or in an adjacent country.
- 7 Israel will help Egypt to raise the necessary funds for this resettlement.
- 8 Both countries will vouch mutually to abstain from expanding at the expense of each other, and will develop patterns of peaceful life and co-operation.

Describing Israel's concept of peace, Sasson elaborated on the last para-

graph. His description covered the Cold War, global policy, bilateral relations, Israel's incorporation into the Arab League, economic relations and the status of Israeli Arabs and Egyptian Jews.⁶⁵ The Egyptians responded at once. A special team of advisers attached to Egypt's delegation to the UN Assembly in Paris formulated the response according to the Palace's guidelines. They were ready to pull back from occupied Jewish areas but not from Arab territories. Egypt, Riad told Sasson, wanted to annex them. Its army and administration should, therefore, stay in these regions and propagate the merger. The Egyptians agreed to resettle refugees in Palestine's Arab part provided Israel compensated them.

Sasson's ideas about the future relations between Israel and Egypt provoked a reserved response. Moreover, the Egyptians had several questions on matters that Sasson had avoided: Would Israel consent to a free port in Haifa? What would be the scope of Jewish immigration? Where was Israel's limit to future expansion? What would be the fate of Jerusalem and the holy places? In addition, Egypt asked about a possible secret agreement on a joint war against communism. Riad met again with Sasson to broach these issues orally. Finally, he assured his partner: "The matter has assumed a more serious character."

Attending the UN Assembly in Paris, Shertok drafted Israel's reply in consultation with Sasson and other officials. He noticed the absence of any reference in the Egyptians' queries to issues such as recognition of Israel, the refugees' return or Israel's admission into the Arab League. Presuming that on these matters Egypt had accepted Israel's proposals, he still contemplated "how far the negotiators' acquiescence amounts to an explicit preparedness on the part of their government". Shertok particularly hesitated to endorse Egypt's ambition to annex the Arab state's occupied territory. Since a blunt refusal probably would have terminated the negotiations, while approval might complicate Israel's relations with Transjordan and Britain, he evaded this issue. Before giving the Egyptians an official reply, he asked for Ben-Gurion's approval.⁶⁶

Considering this breakthrough more significant than an accord with Abdullah, Sasson's colleagues at the Foreign Ministry welcomed his apparent success. Ben-Gurion, by contrast, was reserved and ordered Shertok to overrule the annexation of any territory to Egypt. He wanted Sinai to be a barrier between Israel and Egypt. Moreover, complying with Egypt's claim might encourage Lebanon to demand western Galilee. Furthermore, a positive response might unnecessarily irritate Britain and Transjordan.⁶⁷

Operation YOAV in mid-October 1948 interrupted the fledgling Israeli-Egyptian dialogue. Although contact did not stop immediately, a defeated Egypt preferred UN mediation to being left alone at the negoti-

ation table to face Israeli negotiators backed by IDF superiority. Probably, considerations of prestige also played a part in this decision.

After operation YOAV, Sasson proposed to Riad that they discuss the military problems that emerged in the wake of the operation. Early in November 1948, Riad announced Egypt's consent to a full armistice, pending attainment of a political solution, provided Israel accepted three principles: (1) withdrawing from territories allotted to the Arab state by the partition resolution, (2) annexing this area to Egypt, and (3) handing over part of southern Negev to Egypt. Riad suggested initiating talks between military commanders. If these talks yielded results, political negotiations might follow. Finally, he advised Sasson to meet with Mahmud Fauzi, Egypt's ambassador to the UN.

Sasson asked for Shertok's instructions. Meanwhile, he demanded Riad pull Egyptian troops out from Jerusalem's southern front and recognize Israel's right to the Negev, including Eilat. Moreover, Egypt should publicly declare its preference for direct talks with Israel over UN mediation. A special cabinet meeting discussed the Egyptian proposition and Israel's response. In the aftermath, Shertok endorsed Sasson's interview with Fauzi to obtain the Egyptian proposals officially and continue the exchange, despite Israel's reservations concerning the stipulations.⁶⁸

On the same day — 4 November 1948 — the Security Council took the wind out of the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations' sails. Calling for Israel's retreat to pre-YOAV lines of the 14 October, the Security Council gave Egypt hope of a better compromise through the UN. Confident of its diplomatic ability to achieve more without the interference of outside parties, Israel preferred continuation of direct dialogue with the Arabs. Stressing the UN incapability to enforce a withdrawal, Shertok instructed Sasson and Eban to inform Riad of Israel's determination to stick to the present lines. They should also tell the Egyptian envoy that any delay would strain conditions in the Faluja enclave where the IDF surrounded an Egyptian brigade; the sooner the commanders in the field began talking, the better.⁶⁹

Ben-Gurion regarded the besieged Egyptian brigade as Israel's trump card in the forthcoming negotiations and refused to ease the pressure on the encircled Egyptian troops by allowing in food convoys. He underestimated, however, their capacity for survival. The beleaguered Egyptian troops held on until the armistice agreement in February 1949. Israel launched another major offensive in December, threatening to create a second "pocket" in the Gaza strip, before Egypt agreed to discuss an armistice. Being militarily inferior, the Egyptians felt too insecure to confront Israel directly across the negotiation table and insisted on United Nation's mediation.

Operations in the Negev

Following what was in effect Transjordan's retirement from the war, the Egyptian army replaced the Legion as the IDF's principal enemy. The Negev and the roads leading to this area became the main operational theatre until the end of the war. At the close of the Ten-Day Campaign, fierce but inconclusive clashes took place around Karatiya crossroads, near Faluja. After declaration of the cease-fire, the Egyptians seized several hills controlling this intersection, thus blocking passage of Israeli vehicles to and from the Negev.¹

Attempts to organize convoys to the besieged region under UN supervision proved fruitless. At the end of July 1948, Ben-Gurion sanctioned the use of force to open the road. Twice the IDF embarked on occupying the crossroads, but both attacks failed, and the siege continued. In view of Britain's diplomatic manipulation designed to detach the Negev from the Jewish state, at this juncture lifting the blockade became the IDF's primary task, should fighting resume. Difficulties in replacing battle casualties compelled Egypt to recruit reservists and volunteers. Muslim Brethren detachments that had preceded the invasion and later held the southern sector of Jerusalem front were integrated in the regular army.² Consequently, Egypt's expedition consisted of five categories of forces:

- 1 One regular infantry division composed of nine battalions; three artillery regiments; one armoured car regiment and ancillary units.
- 2 The "light troops" — nine small battalions without support arms, of reservists and Muslim Brethren, that garrisoned the cities and the lines of communications.
- 3 Three Saudi battalions that fulfilled guard duties along the coast between Rafah and Gaza.
- 4 Palestinian auxiliaries in various secondary roles.
- 5 Palestinian combatants loyal to the AHC that held the front line south-west of Jerusalem, under Egyptian operational command.

All forces came under the division's command in its role as the expedition's GHQ.³

The British military and air attachés in Cairo expected this expedition to collapse within a few days, should fighting resume. Relying on sources inside the General Staff in Cairo, they cited several deficiencies, such as acute shortage of ammunition and trained pilots. They also took note of the Egyptian army's more sober attitude, disillusion of a quick triumph, and the growing criticism of the king and his government among the rank-and-file.⁴

Israeli intelligence exaggerated the Egyptian army's fighting spirit and strength. On 8 September, Yadin presented to the provisional government inflated figures of tanks, other AFV and field guns at the Egyptians' disposal. Moreover, he erroneously defined the Saudi and Palestinian auxiliaries as first-line troops, doubling thereby the enemy's fighting manpower.⁵

A principal lesson of the Ten-Day Campaign was the IDF's inability to launch simultaneous offensives on several fronts. Lack of reserves rendered exploitation of initial successes impossible and prevented a decisive military outcome. Ben-Gurion and the army's commanders agreed, therefore, that should it be necessary to take up arms again, the IDF would discharge its main effort against the Egyptians. Throughout the truce, they argued if and where to project a secondary thrust.⁶

The deployment of the Egyptian army — an extremely spread out array of forces — presented plenty of opportunities to bisect Egyptian army units and isolate them. Identifying this vulnerability, Yadin defined four objectives for the next campaign:

- 1 Annihilating the enemy's troops along the coast from Isdud in the north to Rafah in the south by a combined land, air and naval attack.
- 2 Dismantling the units along the Majdal–Beit-Jubrin road.
- 3 Separating the troops in Hebron from those in the coastal plain.
- 4 Conquering Birsaba.⁷

Operation YOAV in October 1948 accomplished all four tasks.

Early in August 1948, Yadin set a timetable for preparations, anticipating resumption of fighting in mid-September. This schedule was unattainable, and the troops could not be readied in time. Realizing the obstacles, Yadin postponed D-Day to late September.⁸

A week after the murder of Bernadotte on 17 September 1948, Ben-Gurion suddenly changed his priorities and proposed to retaliate against a *Jihad al-Muqadas*' raid near Latrun by launching a major IDF operation against the Legion. He was ready to risk full-scale renewal of hostilities, but under the political atmosphere created in the wake of the

assassination, the government refused to endorse Ben-Gurion's proposal. Denouncing this resolution as "a cause for an endless trouble", Ben-Gurion regretted the missed opportunity to occupy Samaria and East Jerusalem. According to the prevailing mood at the time, the Arab civilian population probably would have fled to Transjordan in the Legion's footsteps, leaving behind empty towns and villages.⁹

Thereafter, Israel's attention turned again to the Egyptian front. Ben-Gurion decided to wait until the Jewish holidays before breaking the truce. Weighing the international situation, and contemplating where to launch the offensive, he weighed whether a general renewal of the war was possible.¹⁰ After visiting the fronts' HQs and talking with their commanding officers, Ben-Gurion finally made up his mind to attack the Egyptians and open the road to the Negev. He also wanted to unleash a secondary operation south of Jerusalem against Egyptian and Palestinian troops at Bethlehem and adjacent villages. Speaking before his comrades among the *MAPAI* leadership, Ben-Gurion explained:

Our chances of victory are good because the Arabs have not changed . . . Perpetuating the truce without resolving the issues is more risky. For the moment, we should not fear sanctions. Britain alone cannot help the Arabs openly.¹¹

On 7 October, Ben-Gurion proposed to the provisional government to attack the Egyptian army in the Negev. He cited the Egyptians' weakness, the General Staff and the Southern Front commanders' self-confidence and the breakdown of the Arab coalition in the wake of the establishment of the Gaza government. This last crisis gave room for hope that the other armies, but for the Iraqis, might stay immobile.

In the midst of the General Assembly session, Ben-Gurion asked the ministers in his cabinet to decide on a cold, premeditated violation of a truce declared by the UN. After the government had approved operation YOAV, Ben-Gurion noted in his diary: "Today, we have taken the most formidable decision since we declared statehood." Ben-Gurion scheduled D-Day for 14 October, a day after Yom Kippur. Yet, he was not sure that the fighting could be confined to the Negev and indicated the possibility of an Iraqi reaction that might also drag the Legion into battle.¹²

Several ministers and senior officials still feared resumption of hostilities and likely political complications. They hoped to avoid them if Shertok — in Paris — voiced strong objection to the government's decision. This time, however, Shertok concurred with Ben-Gurion.¹³

Ben-Gurion anticipated that the Security Council would succumb under British pressure and dictate a cease-fire, perhaps threatening Israel with sanctions if it defied the call. Therefore, he directed Dori and Yadin that owing to political constraints they should prepare for a short

campaign lasting no more than a week, to achieve maximum results.¹⁴ Four brigades (Giv'ati, Yiftah, Negev and 8th armoured) assembled for YOAV, while two more brigades (Harel and Oded) reinforced the southern front in the course of the operation. The IDF's entire air and naval order of battle also participated. This concentration of forces in the Negev was possible only if the contingency of an Iraqi action was excluded. Leaving only one brigade opposite the Iraqis was risky, in light of the Iraqis' potential capacity of breaking through to the Mediterranean coast and splitting the country. Nonetheless, the frictions among the Arab states convinced Ben-Gurion that he could take this calculated risk.

Egypt's expedition, numbering about 22,000 troops of all types, displayed a growing flurry of activity. Convoys moved from Majdal and Hebron to Faluja. IDF intelligence listening to enemy wireless communication identified new units near Bethlehem. Reservists and volunteers — Egyptians and North Africans — had come from Egypt. Trains arrived at Isdud almost daily. Ships offloaded supplies at Gaza port and the IDF interpreted these movements in terms of preparation for the approaching winter.¹⁵

Suspecting something might be in the air, a few days before YOAV the Egyptian headquarters cancelled all leaves. Nonetheless, the attack took the Egyptians by surprise. On 15 October 1948, an Israeli convoy ostensibly bound for the Negev arrived at Karatiya crossroads. This move was intended to provoke the Egyptians to open fire and provide an excuse for the assault. They, indeed, swallowed the bait and shot at the vehicles, which promptly turned back and retreated to their base.

On the same night, the IAF unleashed its preparatory strike against Egyptian ground forces. Air raids continued the next day. Throughout the operation, the IAF performed 250 bombing sorties, dropping 150 tons of bombs on 21 targets, among them Al-Arish, Gaza, Majdal, Faluja and Birsaba.¹⁶ Land operations commenced on 16 October. The Egyptians repelled an attack on 'Iraq al-Manshiya, near Faluja, but Yiftah brigade broke through Egyptian lines north of Gaza moving towards the seacoast, thus breaking the main line of communication of Majdal and Isdud with Gaza and Rafah.¹⁷

Cairo's broadcasts still belittled the significance of these moves.¹⁸ Nonetheless, Egyptian wireless communications demonstrated their surprise and quandaries. IDF listeners intercepted calls for help and demands for reinforcements from various quarters. The failure at 'Iraq al-Manshiya notwithstanding, Ben-Gurion felt that the offensive had overwhelmed the Egyptians and was in pace with preplanning. Encouraged by the other Arab armies' passivity, he urged Yadin to dispatch another brigade to the Negev in order to exploit the only chance of inflicting a decisive blow to the Egyptian army.

On the next day, 17 October, the Egyptians ostensibly recovered from their initial shock. IDF patrols and observation posts spotted troop movements from Isdud and reinforcements arriving at Faluja. The Egyptian airforce reappeared in the skies and a convoy of 60 vehicles set out from Bethlehem southbound. IDF intelligence estimated that this was an armoured column that the Egyptians presumably wanted to engage in a counter-attack. In fact, this convoy was evacuating troops from Bethlehem.

In view of the stubborn Egyptian resistance at Faluja's sector, the Southern Front's commanding officer, Yigal Alon, modified his plan and shifted the attack to the western sector. His objective was to break through the Egyptian lines east of Majdal to open the road to Jewish settlements in the western Negev and link Giv'ati with Yiftah.¹⁹

Fearing an Egyptian swing from Hebron towards Bet Jubrin and Faluja, Yadin ordered the IDF Central Front to preclude this threat by throwing Harel brigade into the battle. This brigade's mission was to proceed from Hartuv to Bet Jubrin and drive a wedge between Faluja and Hebron. Concurrently, Etzioni brigade should attack the Egyptian positions south of Jerusalem and occupy Bet Jala. Both operations commenced on the night of 18–19 October. Harel captured several villages on the western slopes of the Judea Mountains and arrived at Bet Jubrin in time to close the Egyptian pocket at Faluja from the east. Etzioni's thrust towards Bet Jala lost its momentum. The remnants of the Egyptian forces and their Palestinian auxiliaries successfully checked the brigade's advance.

Giv'ati's first attack on Egyptian positions east of Majdal failed to achieve its goal. Another assault on the former police fortress at 'Iraq Suydan also miscarried. On the following night, 19–20 October, Giv'ati again stormed Huliqat and finally captured the crossroads' positions. This conquest opened the western approach to Jewish settlements in the Negev and cut Egyptian forces at 'Iraq Suydan and Faluja off from Majdal and Gaza.

Ben-Gurion anticipated an imminent Security Council resolution that would impose a cease-fire before the IDF could achieve two of its major objectives: opening the eastern gate to the Negev and occupying Birsaba and/or Gaza. Meanwhile, IDF listeners and cryptographers intercepted and deciphered telegrams from the Egyptian expedition's HQ in Rafah to the General Staff in Cairo, which proved that the Egyptians were more desperate than the IDF command had previously imagined.²⁰

Contrary to the Egyptian soldiers who fought back wherever challenged, the IDF offensive paralyzed their HQ whose reactions were limited to artillery shelling and attempts to supply the isolated units in Majdal and Faluja.²¹ Following the breakthrough at Huliqat, the Egyptians feared

that the IDF had poured more troops into the Negev to threaten their flanks and rear. This manoeuvre would have rendered the line 'Iraq Suydan–Bet Jubrin useless. The Egyptian commander-in-chief, General Mu'awi, therefore requested permission to retreat to Birsaba, pull the Muslim Brethren out from Bethlehem and withdraw from Isdud and Majdal to Gaza. The new front line should have extended from Gaza through Birsaba to Hebron. Later that night, IDF intelligence intercepted and decoded Cairo's reply, authorizing Mu'awi to make any adjustments rendered necessary by tactical conditions.²²

Successful decoding of the Egyptian telegrams delayed Israel's response to the Security Council's call for a cease-fire and hastened the attack on Birsaba before the Egyptians assembled troops to defend it. On 21 October, the IDF stormed the town and the Egyptian army appeared to be on the verge of a total collapse. Yadin judged that the expedition's HQ was about to order a general retreat to Gaza.

Refusing to admit defeat, staff officers in Cairo told the British air attaché that the Egyptian army had regained Birsaba and repelled a massive attack on Al-Arish. Summing up the situation, they claimed that after having sustained a severe blow at the outset of the campaign, the expeditionary force ultimately succeeded in stabilizing the front and partly recovered ground that it had lost earlier.²³

The Egyptians did not fool their allies and friends for long. Legion liaison officers in Hebron reported the panic in the town following the IDF advance to Bet Jubrin. Their superiors at Ramallah and Amman noted the vagueness and confusion permeating Egypt's official releases on the situation and mistrusted them. In the absence of reliable information from Egyptian sources, Kirkbride's daily reports to London derived mainly from Israeli broadcasts. First and foremost Kirkbride feared a flow of fresh refugees into Legion-controlled territory.²⁴

Following the Egyptians' retreat from Bethlehem and the IDF's futile attack south of Jerusalem, the Legion improvised a task force to fill the vacuum in Mount Hebron. This force entered Bethlehem on 21 October and forwarded detachments to Hebron. Its purpose, however, was not threatening Jerusalem from the south as the IDF feared, but blocking any Jewish thrust from Bet Jubrin to Hebron, that might subsequently proceed to Bethlehem and Jerusalem.²⁵

Intercepted wireless communications indicated that the Legion did not intend to interfere in combat between Israelis and Egyptians and would respond only if attacked. The only incident between Israeli soldiers and Legionnaires took place on 28 October, almost a week after the cease-fire. A small Israeli armoured unit travelling from Bet Jubrin eastward encountered a Legion's patrol on its way from Hebron to pinpoint the location of the IDF's advanced posts. Both sides stopped and exchanged fire. After

two of his armoured cars had been hit, the patrol's commander decided that he had fulfilled his mission, and withdrew to Hebron.²⁶

The Egyptians' retreat from Majdal, and another futile attempt to storm 'Iraq Suydan, persuaded Ben-Gurion to stop playing for time and announce Israel's acceptance of the cease-fire. He might have expected an Egyptian rejection out of a desire to reoccupy Birsaba — thus giving the IDF time to achieve its objectives without political damage. Explaining his decision to Yadin and Shiloah, Ben-Gurion said that he preferred consolidating the IDF occupation of Birsaba to an attack on Gaza — a move that might provoke the UN against Israel.²⁷

Ordering the IDF to respect the cease-fire, Ben-Gurion made one exception: completing the encirclement of besieged Egyptian troops in the Faluja-'Iraq Suydan pocket. He also overruled a request by Etzioni's commanding officer, Moshe Dayan, to resume the attack on Bet Jala.²⁸

In most sectors all fire ceased on 23 October. Egypt lost 500 officers and other ranks in this campaign, and the IDF took hundreds of POWs. The 4th Egyptian brigade sustained heavy casualties and its remnants were besieged in Faluja, while the 2nd brigade retreated from Isdud and Majdal to Gaza. Birsaba's occupation obstructed General Mu'awi's intent to muster his troops in a new line from Gaza through Birsaba to Hebron. Egypt could either ask for UN intervention or persuade its allies to relieve the pressure on its army by pinning the IDF down on other fronts. Otherwise, its expedition might be compelled to withdraw from Palestine.²⁹

Creation of the Gaza Government in September 1948 exposed the political feuds among the Arab states. Shortly afterwards, operation YOAV symbolized the coalition's dissolution as a military alliance. No Arab army attempted in earnest to assist the Egyptians. The Legion was busy replacing Egyptian forces in Bethlehem and Hebron. Ostensibly, the Iraqis put on a show of solidarity. Both armies exchanged information on the whereabouts of the IAF, and Iraq loaned Egypt three new Sea Fury aircraft for which the Iraqi air force lacked trained pilots. The Iraqi HQ also put certain units on alert and moved them forward to the front line to reinforce the Palestinian auxiliaries.³⁰

Despite the apparent bond with the fighting Egyptians, the Iraqi expedition's HQ hesitated to break the truce openly and preferred to employ Palestinian auxiliaries to demonstrate its solidarity. Most actions were limited in scope and the Palestinians selected their targets according to local considerations: IDF positions that denied the peasants access to their fields or wells. Sometimes an assault was motivated by a desire to reoccupy a village whose former residents were still lingering nearby.³¹

Moreover, a *Jihad al-Muqadas*' detachment arrived in Kafr Qassim and came under command of the Iraqi battalion in this sector.³² The

Mufti's zealous partisans prevailed on the Iraqi officers to let them act. As in August 1948 (see p. 176), they proposed to carry out local attacks. Should they prove successful, the Iraqis might exploit the initial success to then proceed to Lydda and Ramle. With Iraqi approval, the *Mujahidin* raided an IDF position but were repelled. Following this fiasco, the Iraqis removed them to Wadi Ara.³³

Beyond a few symbolic gestures, the Iraqis were reluctant to fight and their HQ forbade local commanders to assist in the Palestinians' assaults. The Iraqis also dodged the Legion's request to extend their front to Latrun. Glubb wanted to pull his brigade out of Latrun to strengthen the Legion's hold on Mount Hebron. The Iraqis refused to assume responsibility for Latrun, fearing that holding this sensitive sector might embroil them in battle. As a substitute, they sent a battalion to Bet Sahur east of Bethlehem, to back the Legion in this newly occupied area.³⁴

Trying to preserve an image of Arab partnership, Azzam summoned representatives of the Arab general staffs for consultations in Cairo. However, disputes over Arab Palestine's future frustrated any chance of co-operation. Preferring to co-ordinate a common stance with Iraq before meeting the other armies' representatives, Transjordan refused to send a deputy. Kirkbride reported to London that the king and his ministers had begun to realize how grave the Arabs' military situation was.³⁵

Following the failure of Azzam's initiative, Premiers Noqrashi and Mardam arrived in Amman to confer with Abdullah and Abd al-Ilah. Egypt's Premier astonished his partners by declaring that the Egyptian army was in excellent condition and progressing towards more victories. On the next day, however, he complained about the allies' idleness while Egypt was fighting against the Jews tooth-and-nail. Noqrashi insisted on preparing plans to avoid a repetition of this disgrace. In response, Mardam volunteered to capture Nazareth and Safed, provided the Iraqis conquered Afula. The Regent evaded the proposition, claiming that his army should be ready to assist the Legion, and the conference dispersed without any tangible results.³⁶

The belated efforts to organize a common Arab action came too late to have an impact on operation YOAV. They focused, therefore, on rescuing the besieged Egyptian brigade in the Faluja "pocket". After their withdrawal from Majdal and the Legion's entrance to Hebron, this enclave remained the Egyptian army's principal quandary. Distrusting the sincerity of their allies' endeavours to help the besieged troops, the Egyptians even feared possible betrayal by the Legion that would lead the troops breaking out from the "pocket" into a Jewish trap. Ultimately, they decided to give up any attempt to break out of the siege and to rely on diplomacy in solving this problem.³⁷

Following the Egyptians' débâcle, the other Arab states were afraid of

another IDF offensive against one or more of their own expeditions. Outwardly, they were belligerent, uttering all sorts of threats. The sceptic Kirkbride reported to London that the only purpose of this militancy was prevailing on Britain to restrain Israel. The Arab armies, he added, were incapable of any aggressive moves. In Cairo, the political committee of the League could not agree on any common stance in respect to Palestine. On the one hand, Iraq's delegate promised action to alleviate the pressure on besieged Egyptian troops at Faluja. On the other hand, the Iraqi chief-of-staff, General Juburi, made it clear that by no means would he remove a single soldier from his present position since he — and not the politicians — was responsible for the army's well-being.³⁸

As the Arab coalition disintegrated, the Palestinians' ordeal continued. The fighting in the Negev and along the western slopes of Judea Mountains spurred a fresh wave of refugees. Two days after the battles resumed, Ben-Gurion received reports on mass flight of Arab inhabitants. Most escapees fled to Gaza and others headed for Hebron. Rumours of the Egyptians' defeats prompted flight even from Hebron itself. Driving a wedge between Gaza and Hebron, YOAV separated the refugees' in the Gaza strip from Palestinians in the rest of the country.³⁹

Waiting for the campaign's outcome, the escapees at first went only a short distance from their hamlets. Realizing that the Egyptians had been defeated and would not return, they later followed the retreating soldiers from Isdud to Majdal and many continued to Gaza. IDF patrols on the front's eastern sector encountered refugees fleeing from Bet Jubrin and neighbouring villages. Harel brigade raided several hamlets in no-man's-land and demolished their houses to prevent the enemy from recapturing them.⁴⁰ Most refugees flocked to Gaza, while this town's indigenous residents began to exodus the town fearing the Egyptian army would pull out at any moment. Attempting to stop their flight, the military governor distributed leaflets promising to defend the city. To alleviate the refugee burden, the mayor of Gaza Rushdi al-Shawa, encouraged escapees from Majdal to go back home, but in vain. IDF patrols found fugitives that had infiltrated into the deserted hamlets north of Gaza strip, but they had come to collect their belongings, not to resettle.⁴¹

Contrary to the war's previous stages, in October 1948 the IDF actively pressed to prod flight. The *fallahin* frequently clung to their villages or stayed close to them and IDF soldiers resolutely drove them beyond the enemy's lines. Harel's patrols encountered escapees that refused to distance themselves from their villages and expressed their wish to live under "Shertok's rule". Only when the soldiers took prisoners and did not release them, did the dogged peasants wander with their herds further to the east — under duress. Still, the patrols found many fugitives hiding in abandoned villages or prowling around in the orchards.⁴²

After the cease-fire, rumours of a massacre that had taken place at Duwaima, near Bet Jubrin, spread among the IDF troops. Chief-of-staff Dori ordered an investigation. Iser Beer, head of military intelligence, and the Southern Front's judge advocate, interrogated officers of the units that had taken part in the conquest of Duwaima and garrisoned the village after its occupation. In an interim report, Beer reported that the villagers had refused to surrender. The attacking unit had stormed the hamlet in face of resistance, and this fact accounted for the heavy casualties among the residents: 80 killed, or 2 per cent of the population.

Still, the investigators found no satisfactory explanation for the disappearance of 22 persons two days after the conquest and suspected that an atrocity had been committed. Finally, a platoon commander confessed that he had been in charge of killing the missing persons. Beer recommended a field trial, since the evidence was insufficient for a court martial and the officer's superiors and subordinates would not testify against him.⁴³

Beer's conclusion might have been taken for a cover-up attempt had it not been corroborated by Palestinian authentic sources. At first, the refugees from Duwaima spread horror tales about the slaughter in their hamlet, comparing it to Dir Yassin. *Jihad al-Muqadas'* leaders in Bethlehem reported to the AHC office in Cairo:

In Duwaima, the Jews repeated the Dir Yassin massacre. They killed 1,000 women, children and men, maltreating the females. Running over the bodies, the Jews' armoured cars mutilated them.⁴⁴

Shocked, the Mufti asked his confidants in Bethlehem if the incident was really so monstrous. This time, the answer was sober: "The Jews have killed in Duwaima 27 members of the same clan and are still demolishing the houses." A survivor of the alleged massacre arrived in Damascus, where Rafiq al-Tmimi questioned him and reported to Hajj Amin: "I have learnt today from an eyewitness that the information on the slaughter in Duwaima was exaggerated." He added a few recommendations bound to avoid similar pitfalls in the future.⁴⁵

The conquests in the Negev increased Israel's Arab population. Military governors were appointed in Majdal, where 3,000 residents stayed after the Egyptians' withdrawal, and in Birsaba. Ben-Gurion even suggested nominating an Arab deputy-governor in the Negev, but did not pursue this idea.⁴⁶ A principal dilemma was whether to let the Bedouin stay in Israeli-occupied Negev or drive them beyond IDF lines. Harassment of hostile Bedouin had begun before the resumption of fighting in mid-October. Following the uncovering of several mines near Jewish settlements, the IDF encircled encampments, confiscated livestock and ordered the Bedouins to move with their camels to the Hebron Mountains.⁴⁷

No one knew how many of the nomadic population — estimated at 15,000 — remained living in Israeli territory, lingered on the front lines or crossed them to live under the Egyptians. Several sheikhs met with a low-level Israeli delegation composed of intelligence officers, Ministry for Minority Affairs' officials and representatives of the Foreign Ministry, and asked Israel to admit their tribes. The Israelis promised to bring their appeal to the "authorities", but informally advised them to sell their lands and move across the front lines to the Arab side.⁴⁸

Weighing the political developments at the UN Assembly in Paris, and military conditions on the various fronts, Ben-Gurion had yet to make up his mind regarding the IDF's next step. He fluctuated between Jerusalem and the Triangle Nablus-Jenin-Tulkarm in Samaria as alternative objectives. Finally, he opted for a "wait and see" approach — see what the international reactions to the October campaign would be before launching another offensive.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the General Staff planned operation *DINA* against the Iraqis in Samaria. The goal was to destroy the expeditionary force, occupy the Triangle and stabilize a defence line along Jordan River. At this juncture, the IDF considered the Iraqi army its strongest opponent, particularly since the Iraqis had not sustained any serious setback since the fiasco at Gesher immediately after the invasion and all their units were intact. Nonetheless, the Iraqi commanders were in a hesitant mood. They mistrusted their troops' fighting capacity and spirit, and knew well that no reserves were left in Iraq should they be defeated.⁵⁰

As a possible substitute for *DINA*, Ben-Gurion contemplated jolting and cracking the Legion by occupying Jerusalem and its vicinity. Anxious lest the UN deny the IDF the time essential for completing occupation of the Triangle, Ben-Gurion instructed Yadin to examine the feasibility of a shorter offensive, directed solely against the Legion. Before making a final choice between these options, he waited to see how far the United States would go in backing Israel after Truman's re-election.⁵¹

While the Foreign Ministry was speculating on the Palestinian and Transjordanian options for a political solution, the IDF planned the conquest of Jerusalem and Samaria, regardless of the political consequences. Shimoni concluded that Ben-Gurion distrusted the diplomats' schemes and viewed them almost contemptuously: "According to my impression, he wants to solve most problems militarily, rendering any political negotiations worthless."

Planning the occupation of Samaria, the General Staff asked for the Foreign Ministry's advice on the appropriate policy vis-à-vis the Arab civilian population. This was a lesson of operation *HIRAM* in Galilee (see pp. 223–5), but in Shertok and Shiloah's absence, disagreements between *Da'at* and the Middle East department obstructed formulation of an

agreed-upon policy and its co-ordination with the army. The episode was another example of Israel's inconsistent disposition towards Transjordan and the Palestinians.⁵²

To a large extent, the feasibility of occupying the West Bank depended on the probable reaction of the local population. Ben-Gurion and his advisors pondered whether the inhabitants would run away as their predecessors had done before the invasion, or stay put and encumber Israel with countless political, economic and administrative problems. YOAV and HIRAM's consequences implied that in the next encounter, the Palestinians might not exit by their own free will. Mass flight meant, therefore, either an abundance of atrocities — provoking domestic and possibly international repercussions, or hundreds of thousands of Palestinians under Israeli domination — an equally dreadful option.

After Shertok reported from the UN Assembly on his efforts to retain the October operations' accomplishments, Israel suspended its plans to attack either Samaria or Jerusalem. The Security Council's resolution of 4 November 1948 demanded Israel withdraw to the lines of 14 October, under threat of sanctions. Fearing that another blunt infringement of UN authority might provoke the United States, Shertok insisted on abstaining from any further offensives. Intelligence assessments based on hearsay among UN observers also warned of a possible Anglo-American military action to enforce the UN resolution.⁵³

According to the government's decision, Yadin and Shiloah went to Paris to consult with Shertok on the military-political situation. Pending their return, Ben-Gurion suspended preparations for both operations. However, he had at his disposal a report from the *Da'at* station in Paris relating that Truman had instructed the American delegation to oppose sanctions even should Israel refuse to withdraw. Truman was not impressed by Marshall's threats of resignation and insisted that by no means should sanctions be imposed on Israel.⁵⁴

Suspending major operations did not bar the IDF from extending its domination to empty areas where the prospects of clashing with enemy troops were slight. Ben-Gurion ordered Dori to seize three sites between Birsaba and Wadi Araba and establish land communications with the isolated Jewish garrison at Sodom on the southern end of the Dead Sea. Alon wanted to proceed at once to Aqaba and asked for additional forces to execute this move. Ben-Gurion told him that the advance to Aqaba required several stages and would not take place in one fell swoop. A week later, the Southern Front launched operation *LOT* and in 24 hours took control of Wadi Araba between Sodom and Ain Husub.⁵⁵

Realizing the menace to the Legion's only external line of communications, Glubb cautioned that the IDF was heading for Um Rashrash (Eilat). He suggested landing British troops in Aqaba to deter the IDF from

infringing Transjordan's territory. Accepting this proposal, on 11 December MELF issued an operational order for the landing at Aqaba and put the participating units on alert.⁵⁶ This operation materialized only in early January 1949 (see p. 218). Meanwhile, the Legion reinforced Aqaba and Wadi Araba. Occasional skirmishes took place in this area between Israeli and Transjordanian patrols.⁵⁷

New operations against the Egyptian army delayed a further advance in Wadi Araba. Upon their return from Paris, Shiloah and Yadin reported growing British support for the Arabs, to the point of even considering resumption of arms supplies to the Arab armies. The State Department backed the British — concurring with the necessity of stopping the Israeli advance, but not going so far as to turn a blind eye to British infringement of the embargo. Truman's support of Israel, however, was resolute and unwavering. Hence, both Shiloah and Yadin recommended ignoring the demand of the new UN mediator, Ralph Bunch, to comply with the Security Council's call for withdrawal. In their opinion, Israel should inform him that a retreat was out of question until peace talks began. Furthermore, they clarified, with the President's tacit acquiescence, Israel could exploit YOAV's achievements and take over the rest of the Negev while insisting on its demand that the Arabs enter into peace negotiations, directly or through UN mediation.⁵⁸

Encouraged by Shiloah and Yadin's report — and especially by Truman's disposition — Ben-Gurion decided to direct the IDF's next strike once more against the Egyptian army. After YOAV, the Egyptians reinforced their expedition and deployed most of their army at the Israeli front. IDF intelligence warned of probable attempts to regain the territories that they had lost in October, by force. Early in December, Golani and the 8th brigade seized several hills east of Gaza (operation ASSAF) and held them against artillery bombardments and counter-attacks. Following ASSAF, more signs of Egyptian fatigue were apparent. *Da'at* learned that Egyptian officers had prevailed upon the king and the Minister of Defence to withdraw the army from Palestine in view of its deficiencies. In an interview with Egypt's head of intelligence, the British military attaché in Cairo heard similar rumours.⁵⁹

Ben-Gurion deemed another showdown essential for pushing the Arab governments to end the war. Preparations for the new campaign, code-named *AIN* or *HOREV*, started immediately in the wake of ASSAF. Southern Front HQ planned the main thrust against the Egyptians. Elsewhere, the IDF was ready to exploit possible reactions by the Arab armies, to improve its positions. The Egyptians took note of intensive activity and identified the assembling forces, but owing to deceptive movements by the IDF to deliberately throw the Egyptians off the trail, the latter expected an attack on Faluja.⁶⁰ *HOREV*'s political goal was forcing

Egypt to start peace, or at least armistice, negotiations. Despite information from various quarters that Egypt contemplated quitting the war, no signs of actualizing this intention were visible. UN mediation of conditions for the trapped Egyptian brigade's withdrawal from Faluja proceeded painstakingly. Another military defeat seemed essential to persuade Egypt to take the crucial step that probably had been delayed owing to arguments between the Palace and the government. Shiloah informally briefed the UN chief-of-staff, General William Reiley, on Israel's designs. Simultaneous to launching the attack, Eitan announced officially that "Israel must retain freedom of action to defend its territory and facilitate the peace".⁶¹

Drawing lessons from the October campaign, Ben-Gurion defined a clear policy towards the civilian Arab population in the operational zone. He ordered chief military governor, Elimelech Avner, to defend the citizens of Gaza, if the IDF would occupy it, and avoid their expulsion. "My directive", he said, "is to let the inhabitants stay in their places and prevent any looting." Avner prepared a team to take over the city's administration upon its conquest and even appointed a prospective governor, but Gaza remained in Egypt's hands.⁶²

On the night of 22–23 December, *HOREV* was launched. For two days, the IAF bombed targets along the coast and in the Faluja enclave, the navy bombarded Gaza and Rafah, and Golani raided and occupied positions in Gaza strip. These deceptive moves were designed to convince the enemy that the IDF main objective was Gaza. Swallowing the bait, the Egyptians reinforced Gaza area. The successful diversion prepared the ground for the principal strike along the Birsaba–Uja and Rafah–Uja routes. The Negev and 8th brigades razed Egyptian positions along the first road and Harel along the second. After Uja's conquest, the Egyptians made some abortive attempts to counter-attack. Having failed, they concentrated on defending the southern approaches to Rafah and Al-Arish.

Encouraged by *HOREV*'s early achievements, Ben-Gurion and Yadin decided to assault the beleaguered Egyptian brigade at Faluja enclave. However, Alexandroni's attack on 28 December ended in a fiasco. With the exception of the battle of *Gush Etzion* on 12–14 May 1948, this was the IDF's bloodiest battle in the entire war, and Alexandroni sustained on that night more than 90 fatal casualties.⁶³ Thereafter, the IDF relinquished the idea of storming the entrenched "pocket" and henceforth confined its operations to systematic air and artillery bombardments. As long as the campaign in Sinai lasted, the Egyptian HQ was incapable of extending any air support to its besieged brigade.⁶⁴

In the midst of the campaign, an assassin killed Egypt's Premier, Noqrashi Pasha. The murder was not directly linked to the war and had

no immediate effect on the battlefield. *HOREV* continued without interruption. Having accomplished the first stage by securing control of Birsaba-Uja road, Yadin ordered the Southern Front command to proceed with the second step: Driving a wedge between Gaza and Rafah and dragging Egyptian troops southwards by raiding Abu Ageila and Al-Qutzaïma beyond the border.⁶⁵

On 28 December, the IDF's Negev brigade crossed the international border into the Sinai Peninsula and occupied both positions. The Egyptian units collapsed and dispersed. In three days, the IDF captured 30 officers and 500 soldiers of other ranks.⁶⁶ The Negev brigade turned north towards Al-Arish, occupying Bir Lahfan's landing strip and surprising an Egyptian battalion that had hastily deployed to check the IDF's advance. This Egyptian battalion disbanded and some of its soldiers fled as far away as Isma'ilia on the banks of the Suez Canal. A raid on Bir Khasna in Sinai's interior dissolve another enemy's battalion. Fearing a total collapse, the Egyptians evacuated various installations from Al-Arish to the Canal Zone. All their aircraft vacated the airport and unserviceable machines were demolished.⁶⁷

As during *YOAV*, all attempts at organizing assistance to the Egyptian army led to nil. The offset of the offensive caused intensive activity within the inter-Arab theatre. A senior Egyptian liaison officer who had previously co-ordinated the abortive attempts to rescue Faluja pocket after *YOAV*, went to Amman and Beirut to stir the other Arab armies into action. This time, the Iraqis' response was even more ambiguous than in October. They promised to fulfil their commitments but blamed the lack of inter-Arab co-operation for hindering implementation of any ambitious operation.⁶⁸

British diplomats at Baghdad reported frictions among the Iraqi politicians and between the government and the army's commanders over this issue. Contrary to the Arab press and radio broadcasts, intelligence taps on Iraqi wireless communications showed that they did not intend to act.⁶⁹ IDF intelligence concluded that as in October 1948, the Iraqis would only give their auxiliaries more freedom of action in executing local forays and might at most support them with artillery fire. This estimate proved correct. Early in January 1949, several clashes occurred along the Iraqi front. A few skirmishes were sparked by IDF moves that provoked reprisals and counter-attacks by the Iraqis or their auxiliaries, but mostly they stemmed from Palestinian combatants' initiatives.⁷⁰

All in all, Arab support for the Egyptian army was limited to these local contests. Syria claimed to be incapable of independent action and the Legion was busy strengthening its grip on Mount Hebron. The Egyptian liaison officer met in Amman with the Iraqi commanding officer and with Glubb's deputy, al-Jundi, to discuss alternative courses of action. They

agreed that only a large-scale operation of division strength might compel the IDF to ease its pressure on the Egyptians. Al-Jundi proposed a peculiar contribution to the common effort: replacing 3,000 Egyptian troops in Mount Hebron with legionnaires to relieve them for combat elsewhere. Grasping the ulterior motive behind this proposition, his Egyptian partner replied that Transjordan should present a written proposal to this effect. He added that Egypt and the League would regard it as an action aimed at dislodging the Egyptian army from this region.⁷¹

As the days passed, the state of the Egyptian army deteriorated. Still, the Arab allies had no intention of coming to its rescue. According to Palestinian sources, Transjordan not only refused to take up arms for Egypt's sake, but also prevailed upon the Egyptians to enter negotiations with Israel. Egyptian wireless networks displayed the Egyptians' disillusion with the sincerity of their allies.⁷²

Contrary to the general indifference to the Egyptians' lot, the Mufti's partisans did their best to stir up public agitation in the Arab countries. Fearing that another defeat might force Egypt to quit the war, Hajj Amin encouraged his adherents to intensify their pressure on the Arab governments. The Palestinians' endeavours notwithstanding, effective assistance was impossible so long as Transjordan refused to resume fighting on behalf of those who sponsored the Gaza government. Transjordan's refusal was also an impediment to a major Iraqi move.⁷³

Much to Egypt's dismay, Britain remained its last hope. Warning the Foreign Office of the Egyptian army's impending ruin, Campbell stressed that it was impossible to avoid the defeat becoming public knowledge. The inevitable political consequences might have a severe impact on Egypt's domestic politics and on Anglo-Egyptian relations. He suggested his country either violate the embargo by supplying the Egyptian army with war matériel from Canal Zone depots, or take direct military action against the IDF should Israel ignore an ultimatum to withdraw to the international border. Campbell advocated the second alternative and urged swift action. Dismissing the argument that provision of arms could not ease their critical military situation in time, the Egyptians disapproved of British action and demanded armaments.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Britain admonished Israel through the United States and threatened to intervene in accordance with the Anglo-Egyptian treaty. Under combined American and British pressure, Ben-Gurion ordered a retreat from Sinai to the international border.⁷⁵

Henceforth, the IDF focused on capturing Rafah's crossroads to cut off the Egyptian troops in Gaza strip from Al-Arish. The Egyptians hastily mustered all conceivable reinforcements to avoid the trap, but available forces were meagre. The British counted 2,500 troops, 100 vehicles and a few pieces of artillery that crossed the canal into Sinai. Concurrently,

about 500 deserters and fugitives arrived in the Canal Zone. Fearing that they might spread word of the scope of the defeat and jeopardize domestic stability, the authorities took extraordinary steps and detained them in the desert to prevent their arrival in the Nile's delta.⁷⁶

During *HOREV*'s last days, Egyptian units tenaciously defended their positions around Rafah's crossroads to prevent the creation of another "pocket" such as Faluja. They succeeded in holding their own and were still in possession of the crossroads when the cease-fire was declared. However, all their attempts to uproot an IDF roadblock west of Rafah on the road to Al-Arish were futile.⁷⁷

The heavy pressure on Rafah bore fruit. On 5 January 1949, Egypt announced its readiness to discuss with Israel means of implementing the Security Council's resolutions of 4 and 16 November 1948 calling for a cease-fire and talks. Israel consented and all fire ceased on 7 January 1949. On the same day, the antagonists concluded provisions for supervision of the truce and agreed to open negotiations at Rhodes, under UN auspices.⁷⁸

Alon wished to seize the crossroads before the cease-fire went into effect. In view of Israel's tense relations with Britain and the United States, Ben-Gurion vetoed additional conquests and ordered Alon to pull out the IDF roadblock on the Rafah-Al-Arish road. His decision derived from a new crisis that befell Israel's troubled relations with Britain owing to an incident in the air, in the last day of fighting.

Having no confidence in Egypt's official announcements, the British had long ago dispatched aerial photo sorties over Israel's territory. These flights ceased in November, after the IAF shot down a British Mosquito aircraft. Before *HOREV*, the RAF asked permission of their government to resume the sorties, claiming that they were indispensable for obtaining intelligence.⁷⁹ When the Egyptian army's defeat seemed inevitable, Bevin approved the sorties, provided fighter aircraft would escort the Mosquito. Attlee, however, restricted the RAF to tactical reconnaissance over the border area and objected to long-range aerial photographing missions over Israel's interior.⁸⁰

The RAF promptly embarked on this task, and on 30 December, the IAF identified British planes over the battle zone in Sinai and the Negev. On the same day, the RAF and the REAF held two joint reconnaissance sorties, but later the Egyptians refused to cooperate with the RAF. After Egypt had requested a cease-fire, the British continued to fly over the front lines.⁸¹

On 7 January 1949, the RAF dispatched to Sinai and the Negev a Mosquito escorted by four Tempest fighters and the same number of Spitfires. All four Spitfires were shot down — three by IAF aircraft and one by anti-aircraft fire from the ground. Another sortie of 19 Spitfires and Tempests later set out to look for the missing planes and one aircraft

was shot down from the ground — probably by the Egyptians. Two British airmen were killed in these battles. The IDF captured two others and Bedouin rescued one pilot and handed him over to the Egyptians.⁸² A British inquiry found out that before this air battle, Egyptian Spitfires had attacked an IDF force. The Israeli unit summoned air support. IAF planes arrived at the scene precisely when the Egyptian aircraft left the area and British aeroplanes arrived.⁸³

Britain's animosity towards Israel reached its height. British journalists spread word that the RAF had shot down three Israeli Spitfires flown by Russian pilots.⁸⁴ The Air Officer Commanding Mediterranean informed London that the RAF was incapable of continuing reconnaissance and photographing flights unless it could act against the IAF. Pending London's ruling, he ordered a halt of the sorties. In view of the cease-fire and Egypt's readiness to negotiate with Israel, Campbell recommended cancelling them completely. In his opinion, recovery of RAF prestige did not justify jeopardizing the chance of Israeli-Egyptian talks. The Foreign Office concurred, but suggested reacting to the humiliation by lifting the embargo. The defence committee approved this proposition, but the government turned it down.⁸⁵

Ben-Gurion pondered over Britain's intentions. The air battle convinced him to cease fire and give up the attempt to drive a wedge between Rafah and Al-Arish for the sake of political advantages:

Obviously, Egypt does not co-operate now with Britain. It is very important for us . . . to start a dialogue with Egypt and keep the truce. This will dismember the Arab coalition and may weaken Britain's influence in the [Middle] East.⁸⁶

British intervention did not help the Egyptian army. During *HOREV*, 27 Egyptian officers and 432 soldiers of other ranks were killed. The IDF captured 30 officers and 535 POWs of other ranks, as well as large quantities of war materials including tanks, armoured cars, half-trucks, AT guns and even one aircraft. Egyptian casualty figures as reported to the British did not distinguish between killed and wounded. Throughout the operation's second phase, from 28 December 1948 to 7 January 1949, Egyptian land forces lost 170 officers and 3,800 troops of other ranks that were killed, injured or captured. The REAF lost 18 aircrew and 44 ground crew and the navy lost 58 sailors.⁸⁷ Under such circumstances, Egypt could not endure more fighting. *HOREV* achieved its political goal by forcing Egypt to quit the war and consent to a political agreement. The unavoidable alternative was total destruction of the army and a flow of refugees from the Gaza strip into Sinai.

Immediately after the cease-fire, and before the talks at Rhodes commenced, Ben-Gurion ordered Alon to march on Eilat, provided this

would not lead to encounters with the Egyptians or the Legion. Soon it was evident that an advance to Eilat might entangle the IDF in battles with British troops and not only with Arabs.⁸⁸

One day after the five British aircraft were shot down, a British task force landed in Aqaba. Campbell and his colleagues feared a total collapse of Britain's relations with the Arab states, causing tremendous damage to British interests in the region. They urged their government to assist the Arabs immediately with supplies of arms and by forcing Israel's retreat to the pre-YOAV lines. The British indeed took certain steps to bolster the Arab states, such as violating the embargo by supplying ammunition to the Iraqi air force. Yet, despite the pressures on the Foreign Office exerted by British legations in the Arab states, Britain did not intend to intervene militarily in the war.⁸⁹

Israel's fears of direct British interference grew and led the IDF General Staff to plan operation *YEFET* for this contingency. Britain's ulterior motive behind all these wily ruses remained extracting the Negev — or at least its southern part — from Israeli hands. Visiting Washington at that time, Bevin unsuccessfully tried to persuade the Americans to pressure Israel to comply with the Security Council's resolution of 4 November 1948. Upon his departure from the United States, he instructed Ambassador Oliver Franks to approach the State Department again, and request America's support for tough measures against Israel. The United States, the ambassador asserted, should choose between backing the Security Council and assisting Soviet anti-British strategy in the Middle East.

The Americans were unimpressed. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Lovett frankly told Franks that the United States did not consider the Arab world's territorial continuity a significant matter and preferred a friendly Israel to dominate the Negev. He added that precisely Britain's explicit pro-Arab policy might push Israel into the Soviets' hands.⁹⁰

Despaired of obtaining American support for coercing Israel to withdraw, the British eventually admitted their inability to impose their terms of an Israeli-Arab settlement and to make the settlement compatible with British interests.⁹¹ With Britain's clout neutralized by the United States and the Negev's Egyptian flank secure after signing the armistice agreement in Rhodes, the road was open for the IDF to resume the advance to Eilat and to secure an outlet to the Red Sea. Ben-Gurion was still apprehensive that Bevin sought an excuse for clashing with the IDF, and carefully examined alternate routes to Eilat in a studied effort to reduce chances of encountering British and Legion forces. He was prepared to take the risk of confronting the Legion for Eilat's sake, but "provided it will not develop into a real war (in which the British will take part)".⁹²

The march began on 5 March. Six days later, the Israeli flag fluttered

over Eilat. The Legion and the British force in Aqaba watched the IDF movements carefully, but did not attempt to stop them. This thrust was the last in the course of the war and secured Israel's dominion over the Negev according to the partition resolution.

The End of the War with Lebanon and Syria

After the Ten-Day Campaign, the IDF diverted its attention to the southern and central sectors and the northern front became secondary. Nonetheless, in case hostilities resumed, Yadin wanted to launch a secondary effort in the north. He regarded the Syrians as the most dangerous of the enemies facing the IDF in this part of the country, followed by the Iraqis and finally the ALA. Accordingly, Yadin strove to inflict a blow to the Syrians or the Iraqis, supplementing this strategy with eliminating the ALA from Galilee. Other members of the General Staff disagreed with him, preferring that the secondary effort be assigned to the central front against either the Legion or the Iraqis. Ben-Gurion accepted their view. Having been overruled, Yadin was contented with a smaller operation against Qawuqji's troops designed to occupy Galilee.¹

In the wake of operation *DEKEL* and the occupation of Nazareth, the defeated ALA re-deployed in the Arab enclave of central Galilee. This defensive deployment of forces rested on the main villages and the mountainous roads crossing the region and leading to south Lebanon. Various rumours spread in Galilee about Qawuqji's fate after the ALA débâcle in the Ten-Day Campaign, ranging from his resignation through his discharge to his arrest.²

Protesting against the League's neglect of his army, Qawuqji did resign shortly after the Ten-Day Campaign. AHC activists in Damascus and Beirut backed him and prevailed upon the Mufti to prevent his resignation because of the bad impression it might make. Consequently, the League refused to accept it.³ Behind the rumours about Qawuqji being relieved or having retired from his post stood Za'im's ultimatum to incorporate the ALA into the Syrian army. Contrary to the stories, this demand derived primarily from military considerations; personal rivalry was a marginal argument. The Syrian army had to fill vacancies owing to battle

casualties and dismissal of officers for inadequacy, and as an outgrowth of the introduction of conscription. Za'im ordered officers on leave from the regular Syrian army to quit the ALA and return to their posts.⁴

IDF intelligence judged the League's influence on the disintegrating ALA had diminished and it was coming increasingly under Hajj Amin's authority. This was a hasty and inaccurate assessment. Clearly the ALA was not disintegrating and doubts concerning the Mufti's alleged success in winning over the League's army soon emerged. Nonetheless, after the declaration of the Gaza government, Arab radio stations claimed that the ALA would become the nucleus of its army.⁵

Estimates of ALA strength ranged between 1,500 and 2,000 troops organized in two partial-strength brigades and supported by a few pieces of artillery and several home-made armoured vehicles.⁶ Although the IDF assumed that the Syrians commanded all the Arab forces in the north, the ALA relations with the Syrian and Lebanese armies remained ambiguous. The links between the ALA and Lebanon's army seemed similar to the auxiliaries' affiliation with the regular armies on other fronts. Presumably, the Lebanese assisted the ALA logistically and lend it support arms. Syrian troops in Lebanon might also extend help, should battles resumed.⁷

This erroneous conception rested on an abundance of information from south Lebanon. The sources, however, could hardly distinguish between the different troops around them, and their intelligence in this respect was unreliable. The ALA spread from Galilee into south Lebanon to safeguard its lines of communications. But the Israelis, who had come to the conclusion that it came under the Lebanese army's command, interpreted the ALA's deployment as a Lebanese occupation of Galilee. According to this perception, Lebanon's army was supervising ALA activities, Lebanon had allegedly introduced a civil administration in Galilee, the ALA held forward positions, and the Lebanese army was concentrated behind it as a reserve force.⁸ Taking what appeared to Israel to be an "annexation of Galilee" in all seriousness, Eitan alerted Shertok and Sasson in Paris that Riad al-Sulh was merging Galilee with Lebanon.⁹ These baseless assumptions also impacted on planning of the next campaign against the ALA. Believing the border had dissipated at the hands of the Lebanese, IDF planners, too, ignored it.

Early in September, a Druze officer arrived from Tarshikha — the site of an ALA's brigade HQ, in the IDF lines in western Galilee. It is uncertain whether he was a defector from the ALA or belonged to the IDF Druze unit and had been sent to Tarshikha on an espionage errand. He described the ALA deployment, identified its units and portrayed the soldiers' poor conditions and low self-esteem. Later reports verified his information. Captured ALA documents containing lists of soldiers' names, personal

data, serial numbers on weaponry and even reports of “shoe parades” — indicated that this was a barefooted army: More than half of the troopers lacked shoes and the shoes of many of those who did possess footwear were worn out. Reports from intelligence taps of communications revealed a shortage of blankets and the spread of epidemics. Informers reported on growing desertions due to meagre salaries and delayed payment.¹⁰

Incapable of properly looking after its own soldiers, the ALA could hardly handle the problems of the civil population. Several villages in central Galilee strove to preclude their conquest by the IDF by negotiating accords with the Jews. Qawuqji stationed troops in strategically unimportant villages with the sole purpose of frustrating their defection.¹¹

This tendency to surrender reached the Lebanese border. The Shi'ite inhabitants of Hunin declared their desire “to live as loyal citizens in Israel, fulfil all the duties imposed by the state and enjoy all the rights”. Shitrit favoured their admittance, believing that this precedent might attract other villages to follow Hunin's model.¹² The advisory committee to the chief military governor broached the request, but owing to disagreements among its members decided to delay its ruling until the situation along the Lebanese border clarified.¹³ Meanwhile, Hunin was involved in a skirmish between an Israeli patrol and Lebanese soldiers. In retaliation, the IDF raided the village and destroyed 24 houses. The residents fled and the issue of annexation became a mute question.¹⁴

Hesitation to annex Hunin was understandable. Israel had yet to “digest” Arab villages in Galilee that had capitulated during the Ten-Day Campaign. Under the exigencies of battle, the occupying forces had neither the time nor the manpower to check if residents had turned-in their weapons and all foreign combatants, following their surrender. Throughout the truce, the IDF combed villages in western Galilee looking for arms and disguised ALA soldiers.¹⁵

Concurrently, armed gangs from the ALA-held parts of the Galilee penetrated through the front lines to harass Arab peasants that had stayed put in their villages under Israeli rule. The IDF was unable to protect all these sites, and government officials suggested transferring Arab civilians from small hamlets to larger villages for their own safety. A possible alternative was registering local *ghaffirs* and equipping them with licensed arms to defend themselves against marauders.¹⁶

When fighting broke out in the Negev in October 1948, Galilee was quiet and the truce in this region remained in force.¹⁷ However, signs that this relatively peaceful atmosphere was approaching an end were soon apparent. At first, Damascus radio's tone changed, becoming increasingly militant. Its broadcasts detailed imaginary ALA accomplishments in battles against the IDF, ostensibly to demonstrate the League and Syria's

solidarity with the Egyptians. Qawuqji put more than words on the line, and previous reports on his idleness proved to be false. On 22 October, the ALA occupied an IDF position near kibbutz Manara, apparently threatening to cut off Hula valley from the rest of the country. Furthermore, the Lebanese army seemed to be preparing to exploit the ALA success to crush the border colony Metula.¹⁸

Collapse of the cease-fire prompted the Northern Front's commanding officer Moshe Carmel to activate a pre-prepared contingency plan for occupying the Arab enclave in Galilee. Initially, Ben-Gurion and Yadin objected to launching a major operation immediately after having responded to the Security Council's call to cease fire in the Negev. They approved only a limited attack to recapture the lost position near Manara. This assault failed and Carmeli brigade sustained heavy losses: 33 dead and 40 wounded. Ben-Gurion changed his mind, and after reviewing the situation in the Negev ordered Yadin to reinforce the Northern Front Command with one brigade and occupy the entire Galilee by the end of the month.¹⁹

On the eve of this offensive, the ALA consisted on paper of three brigades — two in Galilee and one in Lebanon. Each equalled a little more than battalion strength. A few hundreds of combatants loyal to the Mufti supplemented the League's army. Lebanon's army remained beyond the border and showed no signs of militancy. Although the ALA was the principal adversary, Syrian intervention could not be ruled out.²⁰

Operation *HIRAM* to occupy the entire Galilee — code-named by the General Staff after the biblical king of Tyre — opened on 28 October 1948. The IAF bombed villages in Galilee and in south Lebanon suspected of being ALA bases. On the following night, two brigades, 7th and Oded, moved in a pincer movement from east and west. Encountering feeble resistance, they met 48 hours later at Sasa crossroads. This manoeuvre separated Arab Galilee from Lebanon. Concurrently, Golani advanced from Lubia's crossroads northwards, occupying 'Ilabun and Mughar on its way, and halting at Miron. Advancing from Hula valley up the Ramim (Manara) ridge, Carmeli crossed the border and captured 11 villages in southern Lebanon. The IDF accomplished the conquest of Galilee in 60 hours.²¹

The IDF penetration into south Lebanon should have safeguarded the approaches to Galilee and cut off the ALA's main lines of communication. Israel justified the border violation by stressing Lebanon's previous declarations about fostering and sustaining the ALA.²²

As in YOAV, once again Arab disunity was patently plain. At first, AHC communications from Damascus revealed that it expected a prompt Syrian action to assist the ALA. Agents and POWs conveyed similar information about a state of alert in the Syrian army and an imminent attack

on Hula valley. Most news proved false. Syria dispatched a token force — one battalion composed of newly arrived North African volunteers — to assist the ALA. This expedition encountered the 7th brigade before the invaders were properly organized for action; after sustaining heavy casualties, the battalion withdrew across the Lebanese border. Lebanon's army did not intervene and ignored Qawuqji's appeals for artillery support to cover his troops' retreat. The Lebanese also made no attempt to defend their own territory against the IDF incursion. Leaflets scattered by the IAF guaranteed the Lebanese army's immunity, as long as it remained idle, but at the same time warned of grave ramifications should it intervene in combat.²³

Following *HIRAM*, a Syrian brigade had entered south Lebanon to secure the Syrian army's flank against a possible Israeli thrust through Lebanon into Golan Heights in order to encircle the Syrian bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden. Elements of this brigade remained on Lebanese territory for several months despite Lebanon's appeals to remove them. The last battalion returned to Syria after the Israeli-Lebanese armistice agreement was concluded, on the eve of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations and Za'im's *putsch* in Damascus.²⁴

At the time of *HIRAM*, Galilee's Arab population consisted of indigenous inhabitants and refugees. Many escapees had come from Haifa, Acre, Shafa'amr and Nazareth. Practically, no administration functioned in this area throughout the summer of 1948. Nonetheless, the refugees' conditions were better in Galilee than in Transjordan, Lebanon, Samaria or Gaza.

Ethnically and religiously heterogeneous, Galilee's populace was comprised of a Sunni Muslim majority and a variety of minorities: Shi'ite Muslims near the Lebanese border; Christian Arabs of several denominations — Greek Catholic, Maronite and Greek Orthodox; Druze; Circassians and Bedouin. With the opening of the *HIRAM* campaign, a mass flight to Lebanon ensued. At first, Lebanese authorities refused to receive the escapees and they wandered about between the lines. Later, Lebanon modified its policy and admitted them into villages adjacent to the border. Thousands were still hiding in the wadis on both sides of the front line. The IDF feared possible attempts by escapees to infiltrate into abandoned and unguarded villages, not necessarily their own.²⁵

Before, throughout and after the operation, the IDF lacked a clear policy towards the civilian population. The officers were unfamiliar with the ethnic and religious diversity or its political substance. Ignorant of sensitive ethnic issues, lower echelons arbitrarily determined the villagers' fate without understanding the broader implications of their decisions. Northern Front's HQ had directed the units in general terms to push the Arabs towards Lebanon. In practice, each brigade drove the refugees as

far as the adjacent brigade's sector where they were left to fend for themselves. No one had the faintest idea how many Arabs had escaped or had been banished from their villages, where they had gone and how many remained in Galilee.²⁶

In certain cases, officers expelled residents from their hamlets and instructed them to move to the Galilee's interior. Carmel explained to Ben-Gurion that military considerations required imposing a curfew along the border and removing all Arab inhabitants. This, he explained, was the background for the expulsion of Arab villagers from Iqrit, Bir'am and Tarbikha. Ben-Gurion had qualms and Carmel suggested freezing the situation: to halt the deportations but prevent the return of those who had already been expelled. Approving this compromise, Ben-Gurion directed that henceforth no one would be removed from his locality.²⁷

Danin and Shimoni set out on a reconnaissance tour of the newly-occupied territory in Galilee and south Lebanon and witnessed the confusion and chaos that characterized the handling of the civilian population:

In various hamlets, the Arab residents remained . . . and refugees lingered nearby. The time has come to decide on a policy: should we drive them beyond the border; let them stay where they are; permit their return to their original villages or allocate them deserted villages where they should concentrate? For this decision we need accurate and detailed information on their numbers, origin, whereabouts, dependants, lands and other property. We tried in vain to obtain this information through the [front] commander. Then we approached the Ministry of Minorities' Affairs and the JNF — and failed again.

The commanders asserted that they had not been instructed about what to do with the population: whether to expel Arabs or let them stay; to use a strong arm or not; to favour the Christians or to treat them on an equal basis; to grant the Shi'ites special treatment or not.²⁸

In the wake of *HIRAM*, several Shi'ite villages in south Lebanon added to the confusion by offering to surrender to the IDF. Probably they did so on the instructions of their leader, Ahmad Bek al-As'ad, Lebanon's Minister of Public Works. Possibly some hamlets did so to relieve themselves of the ALA yoke. In the absence of definite guidelines, local IDF commanders did not know how to handle these appeals.²⁹

Among other political complexities, Galilee's occupation raised the issue of the status of the Druze in the state. Israel ruled over 18 Druze villages numbering more than 13,000 residents. On the one hand, this community had a long tradition dating back to the 1930s of co-operation with the *Yishuv*. On the other hand, they outwardly displayed submission to the AHC and the Arab League, until the Jews' victory became clearly evident. Now it was imperative to define their standing in relation to other minority groups.³⁰

In view of the political, ethnic and religious matters created by the conquest of the Galilee, the Foreign Ministry suggested appointing a political officer at Northern Front's HQ, based on the British model. Its Middle East Department maintained that the commanders were unqualified to take care of these politically significant problems that were not ordinary issues of military administration. Yadin objected, and in Shertok and Shiloah's absence it was impossible to implement this idea. Ben-Gurion, however, insisted on differentiating between Galilee's various communities and directed the IDF to favour the Druze, Maronites and Circassians.³¹

Amidst arbitrary handling of the civilian population's affairs, several massacres occurred during the *HIRAM* campaign in Galilee and in south Lebanon, accompanied by raping and looting. Returning from his visit to the region, Shimoni ascribed them to the absence of policy and clear directives.³² Unlike previous occasions, soldiers in various units protested against their comrades' behaviour and, sometimes, against conduct of their superiors. The officers on the spot took immediate steps to stop the outrages and prevent their recurrence, threatening potential perpetrators with court martial on manslaughter charges if similar cases would occur in the future.³³

Word of *HIRAM*'s atrocities spread rapidly among the troops and reached the General Staff and the Provisional Government. Initially, the stories ascribed the outrages to the Druze unit and a certain company composed of former *IZL* members. These allegations, as well as similar accusations ascribing the slaughter in Duwaima (see p. 209) to former *LHI* members, were false. Several sub-units of two brigades were involved in these killings and none of them had any unique social or political characteristics.³⁴

Following consultations with the Minister of Justice and the General Prosecutor, Ben-Gurion ordered an investigation into the massacres at four villages: Salakhiya, Safsaf and Jish in Galilee and Hula in Lebanon. Ben-Gurion wanted the General Prosecutor to conduct it, but chief-of-staff Dori preferred a military commission of inquiry.³⁵ Finally Dori was contented with appointing investigating officers. The investigation did not yield unequivocal findings. The investigating officer, Emmanuel Vilensky (Yalan), visited the sites and questioned commanders and staff officers. They claimed that the events took place in the midst of combat, while expecting enemy's counter-attacks, or due to the troops' difficulties in discerning between *ALA* soldiers and civilians. Senior commanders fully backed their subordinates and denied that undisciplined behaviour on the troops' part had been the cause for these outrages. Nonetheless, at least in one case an officer was court-martialed and sentenced to several years' imprisonment.³⁶

UN observers insisted on investigating other stories that had come to their attention. IDF liaison officers tried hard to dissuade them from holding investigations or contradicted the accusations. One UN team arrived in 'Ilabun to investigate the local priest's charge that 13 villagers had been murdered. The accompanying liaison officer ultimately reported: "I have proved to them that the army was not in the village at the specified time." Nonetheless, the executions in 'Ilabun did take place. They were a reprisal for an incident that had happened in September, when two IDF soldiers were killed and beheaded near the village. ALA combatants carried the dead soldiers' heads in a procession along village streets and a crowd of villagers had followed them to demonstrate their loyalty to the ALA.

In other instances, UN teams demanded to investigate alleged massacres in Faradiya (Parod) and Majd al-kurum. The liaison officers deliberately delayed the observers while asking Northern Front's HQ to disguise any traces of any atrocity if it had been committed.³⁷

The relatively numerous number of atrocities of October 1948 in the Negev and in Galilee — more than in all the former campaigns throughout the entire country — deserves explication. They could hardly result from poor discipline, since the IDF standards in this respect had only improved with the passage of time. They also could not be the consequence of a new policy, in light of their sporadic nature, virtual isolation and the lack of any definitive directive to this effect followed by clear guidelines to the troops. In the absence of authoritative instructions to the contrary, unruly behaviour by some IDF troops might have added fuel to the fire, but it had not ignited it.

Hard feelings towards the Palestinians — blaming them for the lasting war — grew more and more bitter as the fighting continued. At this stage of the campaign, a larger part of the IDF consisted of Holocaust survivors who had recently arrived in the country and enlisted. For many soldiers who came from Europe after the Second World War, the brutal treatment of German civilians by the Red army that they themselves had witnessed or, at least, heard about was taken as a model for treating the populace of an enemy that had been responsible for a war.

The principal novelty of the October campaigns, however, was the different pattern of response among the Arabs. Either because *HIRAM*'s swift military moves had not given them enough time to flee before the IDF's arrival in their villages, or because they drew lessons from their predecessors' experience, the inhabitants did not rush to escape. Contrary to earlier escapees, they knew that flight would not be a temporary affair, and would not save them distress. They were also familiar with the refugees' living conditions in their own area and beyond the front lines. Aware of conditions in Nazareth, they were less frightened by the thought

of a repetition of Dir Yassin. The outcome was numerous confrontations between soldiers and civilians. Had this number of encounters taken place in the war's previous stages, the consequences probably would have been far more serious.

Without a formal cease-fire, the ALA withdrew to Nabatiya in southern Lebanon. This was the third time since the beginning of the war that the League's army collapsed. Although it managed to rescue the bulk of its personnel and armaments, the units disintegrated and their future military utility was doubtful. At first, they held the road from Bint al-Jbail to Tibnin to prevent a possible Israeli thrust towards Nabatiya and Saida. From late November they gradually moved to Qatana for reorganization. The League had already decided to dissolve its army, and the troops were either absorbed in the Syrian army or discharged.³⁸ The AHC still refused to demobilize the paramilitary units that it had raised among the refugees in Syria and Lebanon during the summer of 1948. However, having no resources for their maintenance, it had to discharge them, as well.³⁹

After a short interval for training, ALA veterans that had joined the Syrian army returned to Lebanon to relieve regular Syrian troops. Syria's government undertook their upkeep and expenses. They came back to their old positions near Tibnin, but this time under command of the Syrian brigade in Lebanon. Za'im dismissed Qawuqji, and Anuar Mahmud succeeded him in command.⁴⁰

Lebanon's army did not take part in *HIRAM*'s battles and made no attempt to frustrate the IDF advance. By the same token it was careful to avoid clashes with the Syrians and the ALA. After the operation, Lebanese units took up positions to block further Israeli (or other?) advance along the main routes leading to the country's interior.⁴¹

The IDF presence in south Lebanon was a thorn in the Lebanese government's side and put pressure on Lebanese leaders to seek an outlet from a war in which the Lebanese army had not taken part but the country had paid a heavy price. A month after *HIRAM*, Premier Riad al-Sulh met with Sasson in Paris to broach the war situation in general and ways of ending it. Before opening peace talks, al-Sulh proposed working jointly behind the scenes at the UN assembly to avoid a new resolution on Palestine and leave partition in force. In his view, a neutral power should have addressed the belligerents to commence peace talks and then the UN might endorse their conclusions by a formal resolution.⁴²

On 9 December 1948, Sasson arrived in Tel Aviv and optimistically reported to Ben-Gurion: "Riad al-Sulh is ready to work for us. Lebanon has no territorial claims. The war's burden is too heavy for them, but they do not want to quit alone and therefore he [Riad] wants all [Arab states] to quit." Ben-Gurion approved accelerating the dialogue with Lebanon, and Sasson told Arazi to inform al-Sulh of Israel's consent in principle to

evacuate the occupied villages in south Lebanon.⁴³ Following further talks with al-Sulh in Paris, UN observers assisted in organizing a parley between military commanders from both sides, which took place at Ras al-Naqura on the Israeli-Lebanese border. The Lebanese delegate intended to discuss the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon's territory and means of supervising the truce. Representing Israel, Northern Front's chief of operations Mordechai Maklef declared that he came to broach an armistice in keeping with the Security Council's resolution of 16 November 1948. In the course of the negotiations, he added, Israel might be ready to retreat from several hamlets. Declaring that his mandate did not include raising of political issues, the Lebanese officer undertook to deliver the message to his government and convey its answer.⁴⁴

Lebanon's government had aspired for an Israeli withdrawal before negotiations opened. In view of Maklef's blunt statement, Riad al-Sulh modified this stance and was prepared to sign an armistice before the withdrawal, as the Lebanese ambassador in Amman told Kirkbride.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, several weeks had elapsed before the preliminary talks matured into negotiations. The Syrian army's presence on Lebanese and Israeli territory was the principal hindrance. Israel rapidly dropped endeavours to utilize armistice negotiations with Lebanon to enforce a Syrian retreat from Mishmar Hayarden. Yet, the IDF considered a Syrian withdrawal from southern Lebanon an essential prerequisite for its own retreat. Although the Syrian brigade's mission was defensive, the IDF deemed it a threat to Israel's control of Galilee and was sure that Lebanon could not guarantee the Syrians' evacuation from its territory after an IDF withdrawal.⁴⁶

To a large extent, this estimate stemmed from another meeting that Maklef had held with Lebanon's delegates on 14 January 1949. The Lebanese were ready to discuss an armistice and asked for the evacuation of several villages in return. Maklef mentioned the names of five hamlets and asked about the foreign forces on Lebanese soil. His partners retorted that all troops in Lebanon were under Lebanese command and would abide by Lebanon's commitments. Their reply implied that Lebanon was unwilling or unable to deliver a Syrian withdrawal.

Apart from linking the IDF evacuation with a parallel Syrian move, Maklef insisted on the participation of civilian representatives in the next meeting to symbolize the talks' political essence. He also asked whether Lebanon intended to discuss an armistice lines or borders of a full peace. His Lebanese partner replied that he was unauthorized to broach territorial changes. Maklef summed up the meeting: "Truly, they are ready for a final settlement, but they may hesitate to admit it openly in the early stages." A few days later another conference took place at Ras al-Naqura. This time Sasson joined Maklef. He gathered that the Lebanese were

inclined to negotiate, and he predicted that formal talks would commence shortly.⁴⁷

Lebanon could not be the first Arab state to sign an armistice and dragged its feet, waiting for Israeli–Egyptian talks in Rhodes to close before commencing official negotiations.⁴⁸ On the eve of signing the Israeli–Egyptian armistice agreement, Bunch called upon all Arab states to come to Rhodes and talk with the Israelis. Lebanon promptly responded and resumed the talks.

At the official opening of negotiations at Ras al-Naqla, Bunch suggested the international border as the armistice line. As a point of departure, Israel demanded a Syrian withdrawal from both Lebanon and Palestine in return for an IDF evacuation of Lebanese territory, and a joint discussion of the Lebanese and Syrian issues pertaining to the armistice. Arguing that the Syrian–Lebanese front was one-and-the-same, Israel wanted trilateral talks. The Lebanese insisted on bilateral negotiations. Although Bunch was prepared to accept Israel's demand for the Syrian army's withdrawal from Lebanon, he definitely rejected the Israeli call for border modifications and linkage with a Syrian withdrawal from Mishmar Hayarden.⁴⁹ Eventually, a dispute broke out within the Israeli delegation. Officials in the Foreign Ministry wanted to conclude talks quickly and could not fathom Maklef's insistence on a Syrian withdrawal from the bridgehead as a precondition for the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon. Arguing that contrary to the negotiations with Egypt, in the Lebanese case military issues were predominant, Yadin backed Maklef. In his opinion, signing an agreement with Lebanon before achieving a settlement with Syria was undesirable.⁵⁰

A week after negotiations began, a diplomatic incident almost terminated talks. An aeroplane on its way from Israel to the United States had to make an emergency landing in Beirut. The passengers, including Ben-Gurion's close aide and future Prime Minister of Israel, Levy Eshkol, were arrested. Ben-Gurion demanded from Bunch their immediate release with all their belongings and documents. Any delay, he threatened, might break up the talks. The incident was swiftly resolved after Sasson approached Lebanon's ambassador to France, who promptly intervened in Beirut and secured release of the detainees.⁵¹

Linking all withdrawals on the northern fronts was unacceptable to the UN and the United States. To avoid a looming crisis and draw out the talks, Israel suggested accepting its border with Lebanon as the armistice's line while postponing withdrawal to new positions pending an agreement with Syria. General Reiley and Henri Vigier who represented the UN at the talks rejected this proposal forthwith and refused to deliver it to the Lebanese. Talks were adjourned and Israel found itself under growing international pressure to withdraw from Lebanon.⁵²

Urging Ben-Gurion to stop stalling for time, Shiloah and Sasson recommended handling settlements with Lebanon and Syria separately. Shiloah argued that consummation of an agreement would help Israel in the Security Council's forthcoming meeting. Sasson maintained that delay might push Lebanon into Syria's hands, preventing Lebanon from signing a peace treaty with Israel in the future, without Damascus' approval.⁵³

Eager to achieve another armistice agreement, Ben-Gurion was inclined to accept their opinion despite the General Staff's persistent objections. Ultimately, he decided to drop the linkage between a pact with Lebanon and a Syrian withdrawal, in order to ratify the accord and pull out from occupied Lebanese villages. In return, he demanded Ras al-Naqura and the adding of a paragraph to the draft agreement guaranteeing departure of all Syrian forces from Lebanon.

Disclosing his calculations to the new cabinet, the first elected Israeli government after independence, Ben-Gurion explained that an understanding with Lebanon might fortify Israel's diplomatic position, particularly after operation UVDA and the occupation of Eilat. This pact might also increase the pressure on Syria to follow suit. Moreover, Israel should not encourage linkage between an agreement with one Arab state and the positions of another.⁵⁴

The road to an Israeli-Lebanese agreement appeared open but last moment difficulties arose, particularly in regard to removal of the Syrians from Lebanon. At last, Reiley mediated a compromise, securing the Syrians' immediate withdrawal northward as a first step towards a complete evacuation.⁵⁵ Sasson asked to be the first to inform the Lebanese of Israel's decision to endorse the agreement, so he could appear in al-Sulh's eyes as having a significant role in facilitating it. This was important, he maintained, for enhancing his position in peace talks with Lebanon, which Sasson believed to be near at hand.⁵⁶

The agreement with Lebanon paved the road for talks with Syria. Already in February 1949, the Syrians informed Bunch of their readiness for armistice negotiations as a prelude to a peace treaty. Bunch preferred concluding the Lebanese accord before embarking on a dialogue with Syria, which he correctly anticipated, would be long and arduous.⁵⁷

Syria's refusal to accept the international border with mandatory Palestine was the principal obstacle. Britain and France had set this border in 1920. Upon Britain's insistence — prompted among other things by Zionist exigencies — the line included two of the Jordan River's three tributaries within Palestine's boundaries and a considerable part of the present Golan Heights east of the river. Pressed by local landowners whose lands had been divided by this demarcation between two separate countries, the French demanded modifications. Three years later, a common British-French team marked the final borderline. The Golan

Heights remained in Syria and the Jordan River as well as Lake Kinnereth, with a narrow strip on their eastern bank, remained within Palestine's boundary.

Grumbling that France had betrayed them, the Syrians repudiated this compromise. They asserted that the natural frontier — the waterline — should also be Syria's international border with Palestine. Independent Syria adhered to this position and the armistice negotiations seemed to offer an opportunity for settling the demarcation issue. Insisting on the mandatory border as the armistice line, Israel demanded the Syrians withdraw beyond this line. The Syrians agreed to withdraw, but only to the waterline along the Jordan River. This difference — ranging between a few meters to a few kilometres, depending on the exact location — delayed the negotiations for more than three months and almost brought about renewal of the war.

Having concluded the pact with Lebanon, Bunch expected the Syrians to enter negotiations and promised to endorse the Israeli demand for a Syrian withdrawal from Palestine's territory. Shiloah, too, expected the beginning of a dialogue with Syria and judged an early conclusion of armistice negotiations to be near at hand. UN officials did not share his optimism. They cautioned the Israelis to lower their expectations since the talks would probably be difficult and slow.⁵⁸

On 29 March 1949, a *putsch* took place in Damascus. Backed by the army, Za'im seized power and the leaders of the republican regime fled to Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. This was the first military coup in the Arab world after the Second World War and the creation of the Arab League. For several weeks, Israel speculated about Za'im's sponsors, his political orientation and his relations with the Arab states.

Za'im promptly informed Bunch of his desire to embark on talks with Israel, but requested a short break until the situation in Syria stabilized. Reluctant to be the first state to legitimize Za'im's government by holding the talks, Israel was satisfied with the delay and waited for the Arab world and the Great Powers' reactions to the new regime. Rosen even warned Bunch that if no state would recognize the new regime, Israel might be compelled to quit the negotiations.⁵⁹

On 1 April 1949, Za'im appointed Colonel Fauzi Selo to head the Syrian delegation and authorized him to conclude an armistice.⁶⁰ The talks began a few days later and Israel demanded that the Syrian army withdraw to the international border. Syria proposed a preliminary cease-fire pact based on the existing front line. Israel weighed whether to accept it or not. The Syrians did not show any signs of readiness to change their stance or to withdraw. Blaming the UN representative, Henri Vigier, for the deadlock, Israel complained that he had acted as the Syrians' counsellor, not in the role of a neutral mediator. Israel surreptitiously sought

to bring about his replacement by General Reiley.⁶¹ In mid-April, the Syrian delegates asked to confer with their Israeli partners, Maklef and Palmon, without UN observers' presence. Demanding in return half of Lake Kinnereth, they offered a separate peace treaty and expressed their willingness to co-operate with Israel. Ben-Gurion directed the Israeli delegation to insist on the international border as the armistice line. Thereafter, both countries might discuss a peace treaty and an alliance. Although he strove to conclude an armistice with Syria, Ben-Gurion adamantly refused to surrender any territory in order to attain it. In the event that negotiations broke down, he contemplated an offensive on the Golan Heights to drive the Syrian army out of the bridgehead at Mishmar Hayarden.⁶²

Briefing Ben-Gurion, Maklef estimated that such a military operation might last five to six days. Despite the stalemate, he suggested persisting with the talks to disguise the preparations. On that occasion, Maklef disclosed to Ben-Gurion his Syrian interlocutor's bizarre proposal to launch a military *putsch* in Israel, in the manner of Syria, thus paving the road for an accord between the two states.⁶³

After the next meeting with the Syrians on 29 April, a member of the Syrian delegation, Colonel Muhammad Nasser, asked to confer in private with Palmon. In a face-to-face conversation, he revealed that Syria might agree to the international borderline, but only in the framework of a peace treaty and not as part of the armistice agreement. This was a second hint of Za'im's desire for peace and Nasser proposed Palmon hold a summit meeting between Za'im and Ben-Gurion or Shertok.⁶⁴

Za'im conveyed his desire for a settlement with Israel to the American ambassador in Damascus, James Keeley. He also stated his readiness to absorb 250,000 Palestinian refugees, if he received financial aid to resettle them as a supplement to their own compensation. Identifying himself with the Syrians' stance, Keeley asserted that Israel's insistence on the international border while retaining western Galilee beyond the partition line amounted to hypocrisy.⁶⁵

Unmoved by Za'im's messages, Ben-Gurion contemplated a military campaign against Syria to occupy the Golan Heights, eject the Syrians from the bridgehead and hasten conclusion of the armistice agreement. Probably, Ben-Gurion was thinking in terms of the impact of a military threat two months earlier on Abdullah's rush to conclude the Shune agreement (see p. 253). By May 1949, however, the IDF was in the midst of demobilization and such an operation might seriously disrupt this process. Moreover, an offensive against Syria might drag the Iraqis back into the war and hostilities were likely to spread across the other fronts. Yet, the very preparations for a military action might press the UN and the Syrians to accelerate negotiations.⁶⁶

Refusing a summit with Za'im without a prior agreement, Ben-Gurion nevertheless accepted the mediator's proposal to raise the level of talks and suggested dispatching Shiloah and Yadin to meet senior Syrian envoys. Za'im wanted them to confer with his permanent delegates but proposed he himself be present nearby, in case his decision would be required.⁶⁷ At that meeting on 5 May, and at a subsequent parley on the next day, the Syrians insisted on the Jordan River as an armistice line and essentially as the final border when peace was achieved. The Israelis dismissed this demand forthwith, and the deadlock continued.⁶⁸

In the wake of this setback, the American ambassador and the UN representative conveyed to Ben-Gurion Za'im's desire to meet him and urged Ben-Gurion to respond favourably. Ben-Gurion, however, insisted on receiving a Syrian pledge to withdraw from all Israeli territories as a precondition for meeting Syria's ruler.⁶⁹

Following another abortive parley with the Syrians on 13 May 1949, Ben-Gurion ordered a halt in the talks should the Syrians refuse to accept the principle of a complete withdrawal to the international border. In a last moment effort to persuade Israel to continue the negotiations, the UN conveyed to the Israeli delegation Za'im's readiness to resettle Palestinian refugees in Syria, and suggested deciding the territorial issues at the Lausanne conference. Israel rejected this proposal and the talks were adjourned without setting a date for their resumption.⁷⁰

Ben-Gurion wanted to launch the offensive against the Syrians right away. Shertok maintained that Israel should first prepare the diplomatic ground for the military action by addressing a complaint to the Security Council. A premature action, he feared, might jeopardize the durability of the armistice along all Israel's borders. The likely damage to Israel's status in the UN centre, at Lausanne and in Washington, seemed to him greater than the operation's benefits. An appeal to the Security Council, he argued, would not delay the attack long enough to justify avoiding it.⁷¹

The Israeli government hesitated, particularly after Shertok warned the ministers of the likely international repercussions and the military risks entailed. He reiterated his idea of appealing to the Security Council and concurrently examining a possible direct channel to Za'im, despite the failure of the previous attempt. Although no political decision had been taken yet, the IDF prepared operation OREN for the conquest of the Golan Heights. This manoeuvre should have brought the Syrians to their knees, and the General Staff set 15 June 1949 as D-day for the operation.⁷²

During the lull in the talks, Bunch devised a compromise proposition, based on a Syrian withdrawal from the disputed terrain within ten weeks, return of the local inhabitants to their homes and demilitarization of the area.⁷³ Learning unofficially of Bunch's new concept, Israel consented to a parley between Shertok and Za'im or his foreign minister, Adil Arsalan.

Bunch waited for the meeting to take place while Shertok expected Bunch to present his proposal officially before the conference. This misunderstanding caused a week-long delay and irritated Shertok who feared the continuing stalemate might play into the hands of his more militant colleagues and facilitate a decision to launch OREN.⁷⁴

An interview with the Syrian leaders appeared to Shertok to be a convenient avenue for exploring the sincerity of Za'im's proposition to resettle refugees. In view of American pressure on Israel at that time to admit a large number of refugees, the significance of this issue seemed paramount. However, Arsalan cancelled the meeting and proposed to dispatch a delegation headed by his deputy, a proposition Shertok indignantly dismissed.⁷⁵

Bunch continued to exert pressure on Za'im to hold the parley, but the Syrian ruler encountered growing domestic opposition to his policy in regard to Israel, of which Arsalan's ploy was but one example. Arsalan warned him of a trap and tried to mobilize British support to avoid the proposed meeting.⁷⁶

For the time being, Bunch refrained from officially presenting his compromise proposals to the parties, probably because he expected the Syrians to reject them. Instead, he repeated the suggestion to organize a parley between Shertok and Arsalan, or a summit meeting between Ben-Gurion and Za'im. Meanwhile, Israel's resoluteness appeared to bear fruits, and both the United States and France prevailed on Za'im to withdraw to the international border.⁷⁷

Ben-Gurion had not changed his mind about the proposed parley. Although he allowed the Foreign Ministry time for diplomatic action before launching an offensive against the Syrians, he became increasingly impatient in face of the protracted deadlock.⁷⁸ The indefatigable Bunch contemplated a meeting between Za'im and Shertok, instead of Ben-Gurion. Disillusioned, Shertok did not place much stock in this interview and informed the government: "We may have to act directly, but before any action, the government will hold a discussion [of the proposed military operation] if the Minister of Defence [Ben-Gurion] will deem it appropriate."⁷⁹

Several Israeli diplomats urged Shertok to relinquish the uncompromising demand for a Syrian withdrawal to the international border. They hoped thereby to facilitate the transition from armistice to peace negotiations. Shertok, however, made it clear that "by no means should we give Za'im what Britain refused to concede to her ally France". He instructed Eban to demand Bunch "break the ice" by presenting his compromise scheme to the Syrians officially.⁸⁰

The only alternative for Bunch's scheme was a military operation. Noticing the preparations for OREN, the Americans summoned the

Israeli ambassador Eilat to the State Department to caution him from embarking on this course, delivering a similar warning through the American embassy in Tel Aviv.⁸¹ Under growing American pressure, the chances of implementing OREN diminished and on 22 June the IDF cancelled the state of alert. Nonetheless, Israel's threat of a military operation bore fruits. Syria accepted Bunch's compromise and low-level talks resumed on 16 June 1949. Both delegations split into subcommittees that discussed the military problems and formulated a draft for the agreement and the mixed armistice commission's jurisdiction.⁸²

Ben-Gurion reflected on what had caused Syria to modify its attitude and his opinion of Za'im improved: "The first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab state might be concluded with Syria, and Za'im has an ambition to be the first Arab statesman to confer with us."⁸³ Anticipating a rapid conclusion of the armistice negotiations, Ben-Gurion contemplated dispatching Sasson to Damascus to prepare the ground for the next stage. Concurrently, Israel requested the *Qai D'Orsay's* assistance in organizing a conference of Israeli and Syrian envoys in Paris.⁸⁴

After the signing of the Israeli-Syrian armistice agreement on 20 July 1949 and activation of the mixed armistice commission, the road seemed open to move forward to peace talks. Sasson wrote to Syria's Premier, Husni Barazi, and suggested holding informal talks in Europe, at the border or in Syria if he were allowed to come to Damascus.⁸⁵

Nonetheless, the change came too late to be effective. Apparently, Ben-Gurion doubted Za'im's prospects of survival and these doubts were the principal reason for his restrained attitude to the Syrian ruler's overtures. Just after Ben-Gurion changed his disposition towards Za'im, his original mistrust proved correct: On 13 August 1949 another *coup d'état* took place in Syria and reshuffled the cards. The conspirators killed Za'im and his premier, Hussni Barazi, and although the new regime under Sami al-Hinawi honoured the armistice agreement and proceeded to implement it, the prospects of developing the armistice into a peace treaty promptly vanished. Syria joined the uncompromising stance of the other Arab states at the Lausanne conference and for many years quarrelled with Israel over control of the demilitarized zones devised by Bunch.

Ending the War with Egypt and Transjordan

The campaigns of October and December 1948 forced Egypt to quit the war and leave the Arab coalition that had failed to relieve the Egyptian army from its distress. In response to the Security Council's call, Egypt and Israel ceased fire on 7 January 1949. Egypt declared her readiness to negotiate an armistice agreement, based on the Security Council's resolution of 16 November 1948 that had encouraged the parties to seek agreement by negotiations. Talks were scheduled to begin at Rhodes within a week. Under American pressure, the Egyptian government overcame the psychological barrier emanating from the necessity of negotiating with the Jews and agreed to participate. Concurrently, Israel consented to the provisions of the cease-fire and relinquished the encirclement of Egyptian troops in Gaza strip.¹

Arrogantly, Bevin ascribed the opening of negotiations to the landing of British troops in Aqaba and Britain's recognition of Israel, which ostensibly had helped the belligerents overcome their scruples. Shertok attributed Egypt's decision to battle fatigue and anxiety lest prolonging the war would increase its dependence on Britain. He expected this change also to influence the stances of other Arab states *vis-à-vis* negotiating with Israel.²

Ben-Gurion expected the Rhodes talks to last a few weeks. Meanwhile, elections for the constituent assembly would take place and an elected government would conclude the armistice agreement. Contrary to his disposition at the beginning of the talks with Egypt in the summer of 1948, in January 1949 Ben-Gurion considered Egyptian rule in Gaza preferable to granting Transjordan access to the Mediterranean.³

Egypt conceived a three-step dialogue: a cease-fire, an armistice and a solution to the future status of the Negev. Urging his Egyptian partners at Rhodes to conclude a rapid settlement, Sasson hinted that Abdullah had

already reached an understanding with Israel. The British advised the Egyptians to take Sasson's portrayal of Transjordan's stance with a grain of salt and ask the Transjordanians directly what was their position. Britain still hoped to mediate between Egypt and Transjordan and co-ordinate their stance *vis-à-vis* Israel.⁴

Anxiety over the fate of the besieged brigade in Faluja was Egypt's principal reason for arriving in Rhodes. To facilitate its release, the Egyptians hastily agreed to the talks' agenda and the parties undertook to refrain from attacking each other as long as negotiations continued. Under pressure from Bunch, the Israeli delegation agreed to the evacuation of half the besieged Egyptian troops provided they would go to Egypt and not to Gaza. The rest would be released after Egypt signed an armistice. Wishing to exploit the siege to coerce Egypt on other issues, Ben-Gurion disapproved of this understanding and ordered the delegates to renege on their consent.⁵

Suspecting that Egypt was indifferent to an armistice, and interested only in releasing the brigade, Shertok feared that should Egypt gain its salvation, the Egyptians might resume hostilities thereafter. After tough bargaining, Israel agreed to the release of wounded and sick soldiers, but rejected Reiley's demand to evacuate a considerable portion — half or a third — of the besieged troops.⁶

Following lengthy and unproductive debate, on 24 January 1949 Israel and Egypt signed a cease-fire accord providing for a weekly convoy to bring food and medical supplies to Faluja, as well. This was Egypt's only accomplishment at this juncture. Encouraging Colonel Saiyed Taha, the besieged brigade commanding officer, Egyptian headquarters at Rafah assured him that a final settlement was impending. They also cautioned Taha to meticulously observe all previous arrangements and deny the Israelis any excuse for delaying the release.⁷

Defining the armistice lines was the next obstacle since Israel insisted on fixing the lines as a precondition for an Egyptian withdrawal from Faluja. Presenting both sides with a draft of his own, Bunch sought to break the stalemate — suggesting that a deadline be set to either reach an agreement on armistice lines or break off the talks if no agreement could be reached by that time. Concurrently, the State Department latched on to the belligerents' diplomatic missions in Washington as another avenue, raising various propositions. Disenchanted, Shertok instructed Eilat to caution the Americans against parallel mediation, which might merely complicate negotiations.⁸

Combined pressure from both Bunch and the State Department produced only minor progress. The Egyptians demanded Birsaba, an ultimatum that the Israelis did not take seriously and promptly rejected. Egypt's claim to Uja, which Israel adamantly rebuffed, was the main

hindrance. On the verge of a breakdown in negotiations, Reiley suggested a compromise: demilitarizing Uja and making it the site of the mixed armistice commission under UN supervision. After some additional bargaining, both Egypt and Israel accepted this proposition.⁹

The desire to embark on operation *UVDA* and complete occupation of the Negev forced Israel to accelerate talks and reach an understanding regarding the armistice lines and demilitarized zones. This was a prerequisite for marching on Eilat. Displaying toughness at the last moment, Egypt's government twice summoned its delegates to Cairo for consultations. Yet, this was only a show, and the envoys returned on 23 February 1949 with authorization to sign the agreement.

The ceremony took place the next day, and subsequently the Egyptian brigade left Faluja for Egypt. Lasting three days, this evacuation embraced 2,753 troops and 1,015 civilians, livestock, 260 tons of general equipment, 42 tons of ammunitions and explosives, armoured fighting vehicles, guns, mortars and large quantities of small arms.¹⁰ Thereafter, the Egyptian army handed three strongholds in Gaza strip over to Israel and transferred military units and installations from Gaza to Sinai and across the Suez Canal. The Saudi volunteers moved to Al-Arish on their way back to Saudi Arabia. Only one brigade remained in the Gaza strip and eastern Sinai facing the IDF.¹¹

Egypt's differences with the Arab military coalition rendered any thought of continuing the fighting impractical. Already in October 1948, the Egyptian army's defeat pushed Abdullah to overcome his misgivings about quitting the coalition and negotiating a separate settlement with Israel. After the Egyptians had pulled back most of their troops from Bethlehem and Hebron, the king secured his grip on this area, but the Legion extended its front beyond any capacity to hold it against an Israeli offensive. Transjordan could hardly expect any aid from the other Arab states. Realizing the precariousness of his situation, Abdullah was anxious to preserve the Legion intact and refused to risk another *débâcle*.

In the midst of the battles of the IDF's *YOAV* campaign, the king summoned Nieuwenhuys to Amman and asked him to carry an urgent message to Sasson in Paris. Simultaneously, he asked the American consul at Amman, Wells Stabler, to inform Israel's government of his desire to arrive at a reasonable settlement of the Palestine question when conditions rendered this possible.

Stabler telegraphed the king's message to Washington. He also divulged its contents to Kirkbride, who urged London to persuade the Americans to abstain from mediating between Israel and Transjordan. Despite Britain's misgivings, the State Department conveyed Abdullah's note to Abba (Aubrie) Eban, head of the Israeli delegation at the UN centre, and encouraged Israel to respond positively.¹²

Appalled by the thought that his Legion might be the IDF's next prey, Abdullah hastened to deliver another message to Israel through the United States, pledging that he had no aggressive intentions and asking Israel to refrain from attacking his army. Israel assured the State Department that it would not assault the Legion unless it opened fire first, but indicated that the Iraqis' presence in Samaria was a complicating factor. Shertok wanted to know whether the king's pledge committed the expeditionary force or not.¹³

A week later, Sasson signalled Amman that the parties should re-establish their direct link urgently. Meanwhile, Nieuwenhuys arrived in Paris. Afraid of a possible leak, the king avoided dispatching an Arab envoy. He did not trust even his own prime minister, but finally divulged the consul's errand to Kirkbride, adding that he had already contacted Israeli representatives. Kirkbride reported to London that he sensed a fundamental transformation in the inclinations of both the public and the Legion's towards the war. They felt, he wrote, that the Arabs should try to obtain the best possible bargain before the military situation deteriorated. Nonetheless, Kirkbride still doubted that any Arab statesman could openly advocate this course.¹⁴

Parallel to this, Abdullah prepared his ministers for the inevitable dialogue with Israel. Glubb briefed the government about the Legion's vulnerable deployment following the Egyptian retreat. In view of the IDF's enormous superiority, he said, even lifting the embargo would not enable Transjordan to withstand an Israeli attack. The chances of getting help from Iraq were slight, and Transjordan's only chance hung on British intervention, which was unlikely. Abu al-Huda told Kirkbride that if Britain considered the Anglo-Transjordanian agreement valid east of the river only, Transjordan must choose between withdrawing to the East Bank or negotiating with Israel. The final decision, he said, rested with the king.¹⁵

Sensing a crisis, Kirkbride reassured the prime minister of the Security Council's forthcoming resolution that would probably save Transjordan the necessity of choosing either of these equally perilous alternatives. Abu al-Huda, however, had little trust in the UN action and asked for an urgent reply. In his next report to London, the ambassador emphasized Transjordan's lack of any option, except to negotiate with Israel — unless the UN acted swiftly.

Under different circumstances, Kirkbride might have recommended the Legion's retreat from Palestine. Yet, he expected the withdrawal to drag the Iraqis in its wake, provoking another mass flight of refugees to Transjordan — refugees whom the country was clearly incapable of absorbing. Conscious of Abdullah's appeals to Israel, Kirkbride feared that the Arab world's indignation at the king's unilateral action would

turn against Britain. The League might even expel Transjordan. Nonetheless, these evils were minor compared to risking an Israeli offensive that would probably lead to a military defeat and the kingdom's vanishing.¹⁶

Finally, Abdullah gathered the courage to tell his government that a dialogue with the Jews was crucial. All his precautions notwithstanding, the reaction of his ministers was furious. Abu al-Huda refused to conduct the talks and offered to resign. Kirkbride advised the king to avoid any hasty measures and decline Abu al-Huda's gambit. He thought, however, that the premier's proposed resignation might indicate a possible outlet from the crisis. Being committed to Palestine's liberation, the present Arab governments should step down and let their successors accept Bernadotte's plan, which the Arab states had so far rejected. However, no Arab statesman was prepared to follow this course, and Abu al-Huda himself soon withdrew his proposal.¹⁷

Despite his government's misgivings, Abdullah was bent on resuming direct contact with Israel. Haidar was instructed to inform Sasson of the king's readiness to grant Israel free passage to Jerusalem through the Legion-held wedge at Latrun. Abdullah also proposed a cease-fire in Jerusalem and asked the IDF to display restraint along the Iraqi front and moderate the tone of Israeli propaganda broadcasts in Arabic. The king did not oppose an Israeli-Egyptian dialogue, but insisted on having an outlet to the Mediterranean in Gaza. Back in Paris for the UN Assembly, Shertok endorsed Abdullah's requests. Before responding to the king's approach, he asked Ben-Gurion's approval.¹⁸

Ben-Gurion approved, and Sasson notified Abu al-Huda of Israel's concurrence to abstain from hostilities in Jerusalem. He suggested a direct exchange between Abdullah al-Tal and Moshe Dayan, the local commanders at the city. In addition, he urged the premier to impose the Legion's discipline on the Palestinian irregulars who were responsible for most incidents. Determined to deny the Jews any excuse to strike at the Legion, Transjordan's government armed al-Tal with appropriate instructions.¹⁹

Another special envoy, Abd al-Ghani al-Karmi ("*Hayogev*"), arrived in Paris carrying a message from the king for Sasson. Abdullah, he said, authorized him and Haidar to start talking. The messenger also conveyed the tense relations prevailing between the king and his ministers, predicting that Abu al-Huda and al-Mulqi would not survive for long in their posts. Finally, he underscored Transjordan's sincere intention to quit the war and blamed Britain for the delay.²⁰

Haidar also came to Paris, met with Sasson and immediately returned to London to update Abdullah that the Jews insisted on having the Negev, but acquiesced to the king's rule in Hebron, Ramallah and Nablus.²¹ Asking for advice, the ambassador also reported the contents of his talks

with the Foreign Office. He explained to British officials the double nature of the Transjordan-Israel link: In the military sphere, both sides discussed cease-fire arrangements in Jerusalem, having made considerable progress. Simultaneously, he and Sasson broached the future borders between Israel and greater Transjordan.

The British could promise Haidar very little. Assuring him of the viability of Bernadotte's plan and claiming that Britain was doing its best to facilitate approval of the plan, Foreign Office officials advised the ambassador to wait for the outcome of the discussions at the UN assembly. Finally, they encouraged him to probe how far Israel was ready to concede. Concurrently, Haidar should slow the pace of talks, avoiding committing himself and limit his role to delivering messages to Amman.²²

Still hopeful of implementing Bernadotte's plan, the Foreign Office objected to the re-emerging Transjordanian-Israeli bond. Obviously, the only alternative was a British commitment to rescue the Legion from an Israeli attack, an unlikely contingency in view of the American position. The British saw no way out from this dilemma. Meanwhile, the United States abandoned the UN mediator's plan and drove home to Bevin that they would not impose it on Israel. This transformation in American policy ultimately led Britain to acquiesce reluctantly to Israeli-Transjordanian negotiations.

Pending Haidar's return from London, Paris talks were suspended for three weeks. Always suspicious of the British, Sasson ascribed the delay to their ploys, but Britain's role in the adjournment in negotiations was less crucial than he imagined.²³ Abdullah's main quandary was his government. Abu al-Huda was furious when he learned of the talks, although he admitted his consent to dispatching a delegate to France. He instantly ordered Haidar to halt the exchange and insisted on al-Karmi's prompt recall to Amman. Kirkbride predicted that the premier's opposition might slow the pace of negotiations, but Abdullah would persist — with or without his knowledge and concurrence. He suggested suspending the talks until the domestic situation in Amman cleared.²⁴

The dialogue in Paris was indeed suspended, but military talks in Jerusalem continued. On 28 November 1948, Dayan and al-Tal met at Government House under the old Consuls' Committee and the UN auspices. In a cordial atmosphere, they instantly agreed to a cease-fire in Jerusalem. The only difficulty stemmed from Dayan's insistence on the Legion's responsibility for preserving the cease-fire along the entire front, including sectors held by Egyptian troops and Palestinian auxiliaries. Al-Tal concurred, but Kirkbride feared that the Palestinians might deliberately provoke incidents to embarrass the Legion. In a second meeting on 30 November, the two commanders signed the accord.²⁵

The cease-fire pact was the first official agreement between Israel and

any Arab state. Kirkbride's assessment that the king was determined to continue the dialogue with Israel proved correct. For Abdullah, the accord was a beginning that should have led to the war's end. The creation of the Gaza government had convinced him that the Mufti and the Arab countries menaced his territorial gains in Palestine more than Israel did. This conviction prompted Abdullah to pursue contacts with the Jews.

Despite the intrigue surrounding the secret parleys, they leaked to the press. Israeli censorship banned any publications about the dialogue, but the rumour spread via the grapevine. Members of the State Council's Foreign Affairs Committee asked Ben-Gurion about the alleged talks. He replied that the commanders' first meeting had taken place on UN initiative and disclosed its contents. Future parleys, he added, would convene in the presence of UN observers, but not under UN auspices. Referring in general terms to Sasson's talks at Paris, Ben-Gurion belittled their significance: "Undoubtedly, even if we shall reach an understanding with Abdullah, the British will prevent him from acting independently."²⁶

Dayan and al-Tal conferred sporadically, ostensibly to discuss implementation of the cease-fire. Their intercourse disguised both sides' preparations for full-scale negotiations of a comprehensive armistice.²⁷ Resuming his talks with Haidar and al-Karmi in Paris, Sasson demanded to know whether the British approved of the dialogue, what was Iraq's disposition, and would Transjordan let the Iraqis use its territory as a base to attack Israel. The king's envoys replied that they were not authorized to discuss matters of high policy. They came to discuss Jaffa, Lydda, Ramle, the refugees and an outlet to the Mediterranean. In response, Sasson suggested to halt the dialogue in France and broach these territorial issues in Jerusalem.²⁸

On the threshold of the new phase of talks, Abu al-Huda sought Kirkbride's counsel about the terms of negotiations. Britain would have liked Transjordan to have the Negev. Since this might infuriate Egypt, the British recommended Abdullah relinquish any claims to Gaza. They still regarded the fate of Gaza and the Negev as a matter pertaining to Egyptian-Transjordanian bilateral relations, rather than to their position vis-à-vis Israel. The Foreign Office assumed that Abdullah would brave Arab criticism more easily if Egypt, too, benefited from parcelling out Arab Palestine.²⁹

Britain's backing was essential for progress in the negotiations. The fact that negotiations were taking place leaked out and had become common knowledge. The leakage worried the British who feared the impact of the talks on Abdullah's position in the Arab world. So far, the Arab states' reaction had been surprisingly moderate. In Kirkbride's opinion, however, the king and his government were too optimistic in taking for granted Israel's compliance with Arab Palestine annexation to

Transjordan. Estimating that Israel preferred a small and weak Palestinian state as its neighbour, he concluded that the Arab states' opposition to the West Bank's integration with Transjordan would play right into Israel's hands. Recommending to Bevin a revision of Britain's attitude towards the talks, Kirkbride proposed Britain cease discouraging Transjordan and let the king advance as far as he could.³⁰

Still playing with the idea of mediating between Transjordan and Egypt on dividing Arab Palestine and the Negev, several British diplomats suggested a common Egyptian–Transjordanian front towards Israel as a substitute for Israeli–Transjordanian negotiations. Egypt's furious reaction to the Jericho congress and to Abdullah's intention to declare himself King of Palestine took the wind out of this palliative's sails.³¹ In mid-December 1948, Abdullah made up his mind to negotiate in earnest. Kirkbride justified the king's decision by his lack of alternatives. The Foreign Office reluctantly accepted this view and the United States, too, gave its blessing to direct talks.³²

Sasson returned to Tel Aviv and briefed Ben-Gurion on his parleys with Haidar. Citing the likelihood of complications in forthcoming negotiations, he regarded the Gaza strip's fate as the main hindrance. Egypt would refuse to hand it over to Transjordan while Britain would not give it up because "in a few years Egypt shall have the Suez". Following Sasson's report, Ben-Gurion ordered "to inform al-Tal of our assent to dispatch a political envoy for discussing peace provisions".³³

Sasson accompanied Dayan to two conferences with al-Tal and delivered a message to Abu al-Huda, announcing his desire to see him. Insisting on handling the dialogue through army officers only, Transjordan's premier refused to meet Sasson. At the second meeting, Sasson and Dayan adamantly demanded political talks be held, otherwise Israel might break off the contact. Responding to the veiled threat, Abdullah announced his desire to begin negotiations in ten days. Meanwhile, he would try to convince other Arab states to join. Failing that, he would negotiate single-handedly.³⁴ Contrary to Sasson's apprehensions about Gaza being a stumbling block in the negotiations, Abdullah's main concern was the West Bank, and he wanted the armistice to also include the Iraqi sector. Sasson advocated encouraging the king to persist in this course. Ben-Gurion still wavered, pondering whether it was desirable from Israel's perspective. On 18 December 1948, he summoned a consultation to discuss forthcoming negotiation strategy. The consultation took place prior to the cabinet meeting designed to approve operation *HOREV*. Ben-Gurion expected several ministers to oppose the action and suggest an attack on the Legion as a substitute. On the eve of the war's most extensive military campaign, Ben-Gurion was already contemplating the next phase. He told the cabinet:

There is a drunkenness with victory in our midst. Immigration requires ending the war. Our future calls for peace and friendship with the Arabs. For this reason, I favour talks with Abdullah. I doubt, however, Britain's consent to let him make peace.

Ben-Gurion rejected any pre-conditions and directed that discussions should start with a clean slate. Contrary to later accusations of an Israeli-Transjordanian plot to unseat the Palestinians, he hesitated to adopt the 1946 agreement with Abdullah as a point of departure precisely because it provided for merging Palestine's Arab part with Transjordan:

We cannot easily acquiesce to annexation because of: (1) Israel's security. An Arab state in western Palestine is less dangerous than one affiliated with Transjordan and tomorrow, perhaps, with Iraq; (2) We should not provoke the Russians; (3) Why should we do it against the will of the other Arab states?

Having enumerated the controversial issues between Israel and Transjordan, Ben-Gurion attested to Israel's narrow "hips" in Sharon, where the distance between the front-line in Tulkarm and the Mediterranean coast in Netanya was only ten miles, adding: "I am afraid that we shall not be able to change it peacefully." The majority of Israeli ministers approved a military action against Egypt and talks with Transjordan. Ben-Gurion summed up: "We shall launch the operation in the Negev . . . and we shall start peace talks with Abdullah. When problems emerge, they will be brought before the cabinet."³⁵

Ben-Gurion's reservations about annexation of the West Bank to Transjordan disappointed Sasson who mourned the missed opportunity. An ardent proponent of a dialogue with Abdullah, Sasson argued that this was the only way to terminate the war. For this reason probably, Ben-Gurion refused to empower Sasson with conduct of negotiations and assigned Shiloah with that mission.³⁶ Following the cabinet's decision, Shiloah met in Jerusalem with Seti. The king's messenger reiterated his master's demands, claiming that by accepting them Israel would fortify Abdullah's position in the Arab world and expedite consummation of a comprehensive peace.³⁷

Fearing the destructive impact of the Israeli-Transjordanian dialogue on Abdullah and on Britain's status in the Arab world, British misgivings persisted. Prominent diplomats in the Arab countries made in their reports to the Foreign Office last-moment efforts to delay the opening of talks by stressing their perilous effect on Britain's position in the region. Troutbek warned against too close an identification between Britain and Abdullah's policy and ambitions: "Before we nail our flag to king Abdullah's mast . . . a serious endeavour should be made to bring him and at least the Egyptians together."³⁸ Indicating the long-run implications of Abdullah's

cessation from the Arab coalition, Troutbek hardly concealed his anti-Israeli bias:

He will then, if he survives at all, have no option but to throw himself into the arms of the Jews, and the problem will not be one of Greater Syria but of Greater Israel.³⁹

Urging HMG to look for alternatives, Troutbek and other diplomats proposed lifting the embargo and advocated active intervention on behalf of the Arabs under a pretext of enforcing the Security Council resolutions. America's stance balanced their exigencies. The Americans encouraged the dialogue and prevailed upon Britain to back Transjordan's decision.⁴⁰

London had already dismissed an Egyptian-Transjordanian understanding as impractical. Abdullah was reluctant to enter preliminary talks with the Egyptians. Abu al-Huda was ready to conduct them on certain conditions. Kirkbride remarked that Britain's problem was arranging "a meeting to which the Egyptians think that they have been invited by Transjordan and the Transjordanians think they have been invited by Egypt".⁴¹ Kirkbride was given a free hand to pursue his line of letting the king talk with the Jews, while prudently keeping an eye on the dialogue's progress. Simultaneously, Britain tried to induce the United States to agree on a common policy concerning the talks that the American member of the recently appointed PCC would promote.⁴²

Before embarking on the negotiations, Abdullah faced another domestic crisis. Once more, Abu al-Huda resigned in protest but ultimately the king and Kirkbride persuaded him to carry on. Following this confrontation, Abdullah refrained from taking his prime minister into his confidence in matters pertaining to his contacts with Israel. Even Kirkbride learned of the king's steps only in retrospect and not in advance.

Meanwhile, Israel's pressure on Abdullah increased. On 28 December Sasson, Dayan and Shiloah told al-Tal bluntly that Transjordan was not the winning side in this particular war, and it must choose between war and peace. Rejecting any preconditions, they made it clear that the negotiations' sole purpose was peace. They also demanded to know whether the British were aware of the dialogue. Dismissing his colleagues' arguments against the negotiations, Kirkbride warned:

Every delay so far has ended in advantage to the Jews . . . Now they are in a position to dictate. To expect [Abdullah] . . . to sit back and watch this process of deterioration unmoved and inactive is asking too much.

The king succumbed under pressure. Egypt's defeat in operation *HOREV* hinted at the Legion's lot, should the war continue. Appointing al-Tal to represent him in the forthcoming talks, the king added that Seti would rejoin him in due course.⁴³

On 30 December 1948, Dayan and Shiloah met with al-Tal in a small room within the walls of the Old City to discuss the negotiations' agenda and procedure. Al-Tal asked whether the dialogue should proceed on the basis of the UN partition resolution or Bernadotte's plan. Shiloah replied that the point of departure was the present situation, adding that Israel refused to accept the front line as a permanent border and demanded modifications. Abdullah claimed the territories that the Egyptians would evacuate and proposed dividing Jerusalem and the Negev between Israel and Transjordan. Evading this pitfall, Dayan suggested differentiating between bilateral issues and problems pertaining to Israel's relations with all the Arab countries. After presenting their mutual demands, the parties resolved to meet once again the following week.⁴⁴

Ben-Gurion instructed Shiloah to avoid any acquiescence to annexation of the West Bank to Transjordan while at the same time abstaining from opposing the merger. The envoys should insist on including the whole of the Negev in Israel's boundaries. Complaining about the British landing at Aqaba, they should extract the tacit consent of the king to "our marching on Eilat".⁴⁵

On 5 January 1949, the delegates met again and exchanged letters of authorization empowering them to represent their respective states. Al-Tal detailed the king's claims in the Negev and Jerusalem and reiterated Transjordan's consent to border modifications in Samaria. Confirming that the British knew of the negotiations in general terms — but not their details — he also promised that the Iraqis would back Abdullah's steps and would not resume fighting.⁴⁶

Three months of tough dialogue ensued, leading eventually to an Israeli-Transjordanian agreement and the signing of an armistice pact between the two states. Contrary to the armistice agreements between Israel and other Arab states that were mediated by the UN, the accord between Israel and Transjordan was negotiated directly. Parallel talks in Rhodes served only as a camouflage.

Dayan and al-Tal's parleys in Jerusalem did not remain secret for long. Hajj Amin's followers in the city knew of them and warned their leader: "King Abdullah is about to meet with Shertok at a round-table conference."⁴⁷ On 16 January 1949, Israel resumed personal contact with Abdullah for the first time since Golda Meyerson's futile interview with the king on the eve of the Arab invasion. Sasson and Dayan came to his winter palace at Shune. Still waiting to see the Egyptians' accomplishments at Rhodes, he assured the Israeli envoys of his determination to begin official talks as soon as the armistice with Egypt was concluded. Asking Israel to oppose Egypt's claim to Gaza, Abdullah avowed his preference for bilateral talks rather than a conference in which other Arab states would participate. In response to Sasson's complaint about the

landing at Aqaba, the king apologized that he had not invited the British. Abdullah also approved the release of 700 Jewish POWs that were detained by the Legion.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Ben-Gurion still doubted the utility of the talks. His scepticism increased after Sasson and Dayan's next audience with the king and he noted in his diary: "Obviously, the man [Abdullah] is worthless." Apparently, this unsympathetic judgement was provoked by Abdullah's evasiveness in the matter of an IDF advance to Eilat. In that meeting, the king also declared his inability to oust the Iraqis from Palestine. Pledging to remove them after signing the peace, he asked the Israelis to stop pressuring him on this issue.⁴⁹ The presence of the Iraqi expeditionary force in Samaria was the main obstacle hindering an Israeli-Transjordanian understanding. The Iraqis' intentions, and particularly their readiness to abide by an agreement to which they had not been partners, were uncertain. The cease-fire agreement had temporarily undermined the Legion's relations with the Iraqi expeditionary force, or at least the Israelis thought so. Initially, the Iraqis treated the accord as a stab-in-the-back, fearing that the IDF forces in Jerusalem would subsequently be free to attack the Triangle. News from Iraq revealed preparations to bring the Palestine expedition back home, and the Palestinian population of Samaria also expected the Iraqis' departure.⁵⁰

Believing that there was a secret pact between Abdullah and Bunch to stabilise the truce and extend it to the entire country, the Iraqis agreed to a UN proposal to suspend hostilities in the Triangle front as well - limited to a fortnight. The expedition's HQ ordered its units to halt all patrols and raids beyond the Jews' front lines. To avoid possible complications, the Iraqis even forbade the villagers to till their fields close to the lines. Nonetheless, they publicly denied the very existence of the accord, and when it leaked to the press they asked the UN to deny the report and refused to prolong the cease-fire. The Palestinian auxiliaries' reaction to *HOREV* was to disrupt the quiet along the Iraqi front, and on one occasion Iraqi units were directly involved in combat with the IDF.⁵¹

After fighting in the Negev ceased, Samaria also quieted down. The continuous cease-fire impacted both on the Iraqi troops and the Palestinian inhabitants. The lengthy sojourn in Palestine without engaging in military activity other than garrison duties had an accumulative effect on the troops. Living far from their homes and families and among a traditional-patriarchal populace prompted a growth in desertion, drug use, homosexual scandals and widespread corruption. Consequently, relations between Iraqi soldiers and the population deteriorated. Since the expedition evidently could not liberate Palestine, its presence became a burden and the inhabitants' adoration in the first months was transformed into an attitude of cold reserve.⁵²

At the beginning of January 1949, reports from Baghdad to Tel Aviv explained the government's quandaries in terminating the Palestine adventure and bringing the expedition back to Iraq. The principal hindrance to evacuation was its likely effect on the government's survival in power: "The Iraqi government's problem is how to build the golden bridge from Palestine to Iraq." Afraid of the response of the mob, the government refused to take part in diplomatic exchanges between Israel and other Arab states. The Transjordanians, however, announced in the Iraqis' name that the latter had no aggressive designs. The attacks in Sharon at the beginning of January 1949, they asserted, were in response to IDF initiatives. General Reiley, too, corroborated these impressions.⁵³

The Iraqi government stepped down in mid-January 1949, and the new premier, Nuri Sa'id, devised a sophisticated solution that would save face: avoid the disgrace of negotiating with Israel and simultaneously relieve Iraq of the burden of its Palestine expedition. Nuri suggested ceding Samaria to the Legion's control. Thus, an armistice negotiated by Transjordan might be valid in this region, while Iraq, for its part, would appear as the only state that had not lost any Arab land in the war. Moreover, it had saved a part of Palestine and defended it throughout the war, pending its delivery to a new Arab authority.

Interpreting Iraq's decision as recognition of Israel and acceptance of its existence, the AHC wireless communications revealed the Palestinians' disappointment. Concurrently, first signs affirming the Iraqis' intention to depart from Palestine or at least to curtail their expedition were evidenced. Parties on furlough went frequently to Iraq and several units withdrew from their forward positions, assembling to the rear. A Transjordanian delegation went to Baghdad to discuss Iraq's inclinations towards negotiations with the Jews and transferring Samaria to the Legion's control.⁵⁴

Abdullah met with Abd al-illah and convinced the Regent to pull the expeditionary force out of Palestine. Evidence of an impending evacuation multiplied at the end of January. Rumours of an imminent withdrawal increased, and allusions in the Iraqis' wireless communications confirmed the agents' stories. Samaria's military governor transferred his administrative jurisdictions to a Transjordanian civil bureaucracy acting under the Legion's authority.⁵⁵

Outwardly in press and radio broadcasts, Iraq appeared as the driving force behind various efforts to consolidate a common Arab political stance and military plan. However, Nuri Sa'id's hyper-activism was designed precisely to divert attention from and prepare the ground for the expeditionary force's eventual withdrawal from Palestine.⁵⁶

In response to Dayan's inquiries about the Iraqis' intentions, al-Tal announced that they had empowered Transjordan to represent them at

the Rhodes talks. Iraq and Transjordan agreed to hand-over Samaria to the Legion. The transfer was scheduled to begin on 12 March. According to this plan, the expeditionary force would concentrate in Nablus, Tubas and Jordan valley. The Legion would replace them and accept responsibility for the Palestinian auxiliaries along the front line.⁵⁷

Before opening negotiations under UN auspices at Rhodes, Dayan and Shimoni met once more with Seti and al-Tal. Seti read the king's stipulations for an armistice, reiterating Transjordanian claims to Lydda, Ramle, Gaza and the Negev. The final borders, as well as Transjordan's demand for port rights in Haifa, would be on the agenda of the peace talks that would follow the armistice accord. Abdullah preferred sharing Jerusalem with the Jews to an international regime in that city. Dayan, for his part, demanded an official document authorizing Transjordan to represent Iraq at the negotiation table and an accurate drawing of the front line in Wadi Araba.⁵⁸

Ben-Gurion and Shertok had long suspected that Abdullah's intransigence in the matter of Gaza and the Negev was nothing but his British masters' voice. Against the king's claims they formulated Israel's strategy: taking hold of the entire Negev by advancing to Eilat. An armistice agreement with Egypt was a prerequisite for this move, and they preferred to delay official negotiations with Transjordan as long as possible by protracting the parleys in Jerusalem and embarking first on talks with Lebanon and Syria.

By various manoeuvres, Israel's delegation at Rhodes managed to postpone the opening of talks until 1 March. Refusing to recognize Transjordan's sovereignty in the West Bank, Israel insisted on declaring the Anglo-Transjordanian treaty invalid in this area. The delegation's guidelines as formulated in Tel Aviv held that Israel should demand the resumption of work in Naharayim and the Dead Sea plants; free access to the Wailing Wall, Mount Scopus and Mount Olives in Jerusalem; border modifications in Wadi Ara and Sharon and the Legion's withdrawal from Latrun and Wadi Araba.⁵⁹

Upon their arrival in Rhodes, Transjordan's delegates stated that they were empowered to speak also for Iraq. Bunch requested Baghdad's formal authorization, and Shiloah saw no point in objecting since "we cannot dictate to Iraq's government who will be its envoys". The Iraqis played into Israel's hands by delaying their approval. Grasping the Iraqis' ulterior motive — the desire to disengage from the IDF, while remaining for the time being in Samaria lest the negotiations with Transjordan fail — Shiloah proposed to take advantage of this opportunity to demand border modifications in Samaria.⁶⁰

Wishing to allow the IDF the time necessary to occupy more ground in the southern Negev, Judea desert and Mount Hebron, Shiloah and his

colleagues at Rhodes did their best to delay discussion of the armistice lines. Operation UVDA raised sharply the issue of the Israeli-Transjordanian border in Wadi Araba. The Legion was incapable of checking the IDF advance to Eilat, and Abdullah was content with diplomatic measures. He appealed to Britain for assistance and protested to the UN mediator, but to no avail. Anxious to avoid confrontation that might extend to other sectors, Glubb ordered his troops in Wadi Araba to withdraw from Israeli territories.⁶¹

Al-Tal in Jerusalem, and Transjordan's delegation at Rhodes, complained about the IDF movements and demanded immediate signing of a cease-fire agreement in order to perpetuate pre-UVDA lines. Shiloah announced Israel's readiness for a cease-fire, if Transjordan recognized the borderline in Wadi Araba.⁶² Shertok notified the king that the IDF would not cross the border but insisted on its freedom of movement within Palestine's boundaries. Assuring the king that Israel did not intend to seize Transjordanian territory or occupy Aqaba, Shertok stressed that if the Legion abstained from interference and evacuated Israel's territory there was no risk of a clash. After the IDF units arrived in Eilat, Israel's delegation at Rhodes was given the green light to sign a cease-fire accord as a preliminary to the armistice agreement.⁶³

In the wake of the occupation of the southern Negev, Shiloah suggested to Ben-Gurion threatening Transjordan with an offensive in Samaria. He asserted that if Iraq handed over Samaria to Transjordan, Israel might be faced with a *fait accompli*. Worried by Britain's reaction, Ben-Gurion was doubtful.⁶⁴ His apprehensions were sound. After UVDA, Kirkbride cautioned that Israel was just waiting for 2,000 legionnaires to relieve 20,000 Iraqis before the IDF would launch its next attack against northern Samaria to remove the threat to Haifa. He attested that Israel had the capability of enforcing a settlement, adding that the Legion was unable to prevent the IDF from taking hold of any terrain it wished to occupy. Hence, Kirkbride urged HMG to extend diplomatic assistance to the Arabs and amplify pressure on Israel.

Accusing Egypt of abetting the IDF advance to Eilat, Abdullah requested that Bevin extend military aid to Transjordan. Kirkbride went to London for consultations and broached Britain's alternatives: (a) Appealing to the United States to prevent an assault on Samaria; (b) supplying war materials to the Legion to enable it to confront this onslaught; (c) threatening Israel with direct British intervention; and (d) asking the Iraqis to stay in Palestine and join the armistice negotiations.⁶⁵

Preferring diplomacy to military action or violating the embargo, Britain prevailed upon Nuri Sa'id to keep the Iraqi expeditionary force in Palestine and empower Transjordan's delegation at Rhodes to speak for Iraq, as well. At the same time, the British urged the Iraqis to avoid any

provocation that might give Israel an excuse for retaliating, such as raids by Palestinian irregulars.⁶⁶

Habitually, Abdullah strove to safeguard himself on all sides. Apart from his note to Bevin, he sent a friendly reply to Shertok's letter, alluding to his acceptance of the IDF presence at Eilat. Focusing on Samaria, his principal interest was preventing Israel from occupying the territories that the Iraqis were about to evacuate. Eitan responded, indicating Israel's view that a Legion's take-over of the Iraqi front was a breach of the cease-fire. However, Israel was prepared to dispatch Dayan to discuss border modification with al-Tal directly that might facilitate the Legion's entrance into the region.⁶⁷

Determined to obstruct any attempt to present the Jews with a *fait accompli* in Samaria, Israel also objected to the Iraqis' continued presence in the West Bank as the Legion's reserve in case negotiations would break down. Aiming to seize those Iraqi-held territories that Israel claimed at the negotiation table, the IDF planned operation TFT ("Tooth for a Tooth"). The overt preparations served as a clear warning, and the Transjordanians as well as the Iraqis duly took note of them. Iraq approached the United States requesting prompt American intervention to avoid the forthcoming assault.⁶⁸

Deterred by Israel's military measures, Abdullah hesitated to enter Samaria. The Iraqis, eager to pull-out their army from the front line, urged the king to accept responsibility for their sector, but in vain. Two days elapsed after D-day for the hand over (13 March) and there was no evidence that it was taking place. Abdullah rightly maintained that replacing the Iraqis with the Legion was originally Sasson's idea. Sasson had mentioned this contingency in an earlier stage of the dialogue. The king did not comprehend the change of Israel's position and invited Dayan to Shune to hear Transjordan's stance on the future of Samaria.⁶⁹

Complying with the king's request, Dayan met al-Tal in Jerusalem on 18 March and the next day went to see Abdullah at Shune. The king was ready for concessions in Wadi Ara and Sharon, but insisted on retaining Qalqilia and Tulkarm "to reduce the number of refugees". Indicating the absurdity of demanding al-Jundi (the head of Transjordan's delegation at Rhodes) "sign in the name of the British Empire", Dayan recommended giving up Israel's demand that the British expedition leave Aqaba.

To disguise his personal involvement in the negotiations from his government, Abdullah dispatched al-Tal to Beirut, where Abu al-Huda was attending a meeting of Arab premiers; al-Tal's mission was to extract from the prime minister an order to Transjordan's delegation at Rhodes to sign the agreement along these lines. Simultaneously, the king informed Pirie-Gordon, Kirkbride's deputy, of his decision to delay the Legion's entrance to the Iraqi sector pending clarification of Israel's intentions.⁷⁰

Replying to Eitan's note of 15 March, the king eloquently confirmed the long and the short of his parley with Dayan and asked to meet with Israel's leaders. Ben-Gurion decided to accept the meeting's summary but to insist on the Iraqis' departure and on the handing over of the territory within weeks of signing the agreement, not months as Abdullah had proposed.⁷¹ Eitan sent the king a polite reply, and warned Shiloah at Rhodes to conceal the new development from Bunch and the Transjordanian delegation, pending Dayan's arrival in the island with the details. Ben-Gurion felt that agreement was near at hand and upon its signing, the war would be over.⁷²

Last-moment difficulties delayed the accord for several days. Hajj Amin's followers in the West Bank learned of the impending pact and urged the Mufti to accept the 1947 partition plan to obstruct the king's designs. Abdullah feared exposure of his concessions in public. Al-Tal told Dayan that as a substitute, Transjordan was ready to sign a secret pact in which it would cede the territories in Wadi Ara, Sharon and south-west of Jerusalem in accordance with Israel's claims. Ben-Gurion ordered Dayan to confer with al-Tal to ascertain the evacuation timetable, a matter that originally had been left for follow-up discussions on the island.⁷³

On 22–23 March 1949, both sides concluded the armistice lines and the agreement's timetable in Jerusalem and subsequently the Israeli delegation (Yadin, Eitan, Dayan and Harcavi) went to Shune. After initialling the accord in the king's presence at Shune, al-Tal went to Beirut to obtain Abu al-Huda's signature.⁷⁴

Israel quietly suspended the Rhodes talks pending conclusion of the Shune agreement. Meanwhile Bunch showed Shiloah a statement signed by Iraq's minister of foreign affairs, Fadil Jamali, authorizing the Transjordanian delegation to speak for Iraq in matters pertaining to Samaria.⁷⁵ Shiloah came under heavy pressure from Bunch to proceed with the negotiations, without being able to divulge to him the reasons for the delay. He protested to Tel Aviv and demanded clear guidelines:

I cannot play hide-and-seek anymore. Bunch knows of the parleys with Wilhelm [al-Tal, after Wilhelm Tel] and some Transjordanian delegates know or guess . . . I cannot continue this evasive game. Appearing in front of Bunch as an idiot is below my, and the government's, dignity.

Following Shiloah's complaint, Israel agreed to show Bunch the agreement. Nonetheless, Ben-Gurion firmly opposed participation of the UN in the accord.⁷⁶

According to the British, Abdullah signed the Shune agreement under heavy pressure and threat of resumption to hostilities. When Pirie-Gordon learned of the impending pact, he prevailed upon the king to delay his

answer to Israel's ultimatum for 48 hours. This break might enable Britain to bring about American pressure on Israel to curtail its territorial claims. Afraid of an imminent Israeli attack, Abdullah refused. Britain's embassy in Amman anticipated the frenzy likely to break out when people would learn of the king's concessions, and pondered how Abdullah could keep the terms secret from his Iraqi allies. British telegrams from Amman revealed frustration and fury over Britain's political defeat. Pirie-Gordon went so far as to compare the situation at Shune to the Munich conference in 1938 in which the western powers had prevailed on the Czech President Edward Benesh to capitulate to Hitler's demands.⁷⁷

Abu al-Huda's refusal to sign the agreement was the last obstacle. Israel reluctantly agreed to wait until 30 March to enable Abdullah to obtain his prime minister's assent. Emphasizing that the agreement had been concluded in his absence from Amman, Abu al-Huda briefed the Iraqi commanding officer, General Nur al-Din Mahmud, about the accord and handed him a map demarking the villages that would be handed over to Israel. Nur al-Din reported to Baghdad that being unable to decide on this matter, and reluctant to take responsibility for it, the prime minister would bring the proposal to the ministers and members of parliament at their meeting on 29 March.⁷⁸

As could have been anticipated, Transjordan raised fresh demands during the interval. On 27 March, al-Tal met Harcavi in Jerusalem and in Abu al-Huda's name asked to introduce three changes into the agreement: (a) Annulling its secrecy; (b) cutting short the timetable for delivery of the territories and handing them over to the IDF immediately; and (c) modifying the armistice line. Ready for A and B, Israel firmly rejected the third clause. Ben-Gurion also turned down Abu al-Huda's request that the Israeli leader meet with Transjordan's cabinet.⁷⁹

Eitan instructed Sasson to warn the king of undermining Israel's confidence by asking for changes in an agreement that his envoys had signed in his presence. Harcavi told al-Tal that the Israelis were prepared to meet with the Transjordanians on condition that no border modifications would be discussed at the meeting. Transjordan backed down, thus opening the road for an Israeli delegation headed by Yadin to go to Shune for the final and official signing.⁸⁰

Ultimately, America provided the outlet from the crisis. Encouraging Abdullah to sign the agreement, President Truman reiterated the commitment of the United States to Israel's borders according to the UN partition resolution. If Israel desired additional territories, he wrote to the king, it should reciprocate by handing over lands elsewhere and these exchanges could be discussed in the future.⁸¹ This pledge satisfied Abdullah, but not Abu al-Huda, who refused to add his signature to the agreement in protest of its stipulations. Fauzi al-Mulqi, the minister of defence, and Ahmad

Sidki al-Jundi, the Legion's deputy chief-of-staff, signed for Transjordan and Yadin, Eitan and Shiloah signed for Israel. Since the king had relented on the secrecy principle, they agreed that the Shune accord would be an integral part of the armistice accord. On 3 April 1949, the delegations of Israel and Transjordan signed the formal armistice agreement in Rhodes.⁸²

Mounting pressure from residents of Samaria was among the principal factors that delayed Abdullah's consent to Israel's demands to modify the border. Stormy demonstrations broke out in Nablus and other towns when the clauses of the agreement became known. Delegations of notables went to Amman to protest. Originally, they meant to proceed to Baghdad to mobilise Nuri Sa'id's assistance, but ultimately were contented with meeting Nur al-Din Mahmud at Zarqa. All their efforts having proved abortive, they decided that the inhabitants of Samaria should stay put in their villages, despite their dread of Israel.⁸³

Another cause for delay — and for Transjordan's surrender of its demand for secrecy — was exposure of an attempt on Abdullah's life at the end of March 1949. This conspiracy provoked fears for the Arab signatories' fate. It also proved that the pact was an open secret and no useful purpose might be served by covering up its contents.⁸⁴

Realizing that an Israeli-Transjordanian agreement was inevitable, the Iraqis wished to depart from Samaria as soon as possible. They promptly asked Transjordan to take receipt of the area, hoping thereby to avoid the inhabitants' wrath. The Transjordanians, on the contrary, wished to delay the hand over, pending the ratification of the official agreement at Rhodes.⁸⁵

Following signature of the agreement, the Iraqi expedition departed from Samaria. Starting on 6 April 1949, withdrawal to the East Bank was completed in five days. On 26 April the government in Baghdad decided to bring the expedition back home and on 25 July — five days after signing the armistice agreement between Israel and Syria — the last Iraqi soldier returned to Iraq.⁸⁶

The armistice accords with Egypt and Transjordan symbolized the dismemberment of the Arab coalition. Sasson and other Israeli officials expected a rapid advance from these interim arrangements to a comprehensive peace. They believed that accomplishing separate understandings with every Arab state was feasible, provided the Arabs could not strengthen each other. Hence, Israel tried to persuade the PCC to adopt Bunch's method of mediating and invite each Arab state separately to conduct a dialogue with Israel.⁸⁷ Leading the PCC and looking for a comprehensive settlement, American diplomacy opted for a conference attended simultaneously by all partners. The PCC succeeded in bringing Israel and the Arab states together to Lausanne, but failed to promote a dialogue between the antagonists.

Welcoming the Refugees in the Arab States

Long before the British mandate expired and the Arab armies invaded Palestine, Palestinian refugees had become a burden on neighbouring countries. Since the beginning of the civil war, their arrival provoked commotion wherever they went. The Arab states were inexperienced in dealing with such a situation. Their citizens did not understand why they should contribute for Palestine's sake and volunteer to fight for its liberation, while the Palestinians themselves were deserting to seek safe asylum across the border.

In September 1947, the League's council at Sufar adopted a resolution urging member states to open their gates to Palestinian women and children, should the situation make this necessary. In compliance with this resolution, the Syrian and Lebanese consulates in Palestine issued a growing number of visas to meet increasing demand after the outbreak of hostilities. Nonetheless, the governments in Beirut and Damascus prevailed upon the AHC to check spreading desertion.¹

Public opinion in the Arab world condemned the exodus and held hard feelings towards the escapees. Newspapers in Beirut suggested dispatching them back to Palestine. Young men, they asserted, should enlist in the ALA and fight. Under pressure of public opinion, Transjordan's authorities tried to induce refugees fit for military service to go back to Palestine.²

Abandonment of the country provoked arguments among the Palestinian leaders. On the one hand, the AHC activists on the spot supported the exit of certain categories of Arab inhabitants. Aware of the plight in Palestine, they endeavoured — albeit unsuccessfully — to regulate the departure by setting priorities and encouraging evacuation of women, children, and the elderly. On the other hand, Hajj Amin and his associates in neighbouring countries tried to halt the departure, realizing the flight's likely impact on the Palestinians' image in the eyes of their

Arab brethren. Lebanese newspapers announced: "Following the Mufti's intervention, Syria and Lebanon prohibited entry of Palestinians except women, children and men travelling for public purposes."³

Upon instructions from their governments, the Arab consuls in Palestine stopped issuing visas freely and co-operated with the AHC by scrutinizing the growing demand for entry permits into their countries. These endeavours, however, only raised the prices of the visas and the level of bribes paid to consulate clerks and AHC officials.⁴ Precisely when the orderly evacuation of children from Haifa began, Syria and Lebanon limited their number to 1,000 claiming that they lacked the necessary facilities to absorb more. At the end of March 1948, Lebanon's consulate refused to grant visas to Palestinians age 18 to 50. The Syrian consul was more stringent, denying entrance to those age 16 to 60.⁵

Reflecting ALA defeats, the mass flight of Palestinians snowballed in April-May, amplifying frenzy in the Arab countries. An uncontrollable flow of escapers crossed the borders, compelling the authorities to address their accommodation and provide them with basic needs. The inept governments blamed Britain — still the sovereign of Palestine — for their hardships.⁶

Until the invasion, the authorities in adjacent states did very little to alleviate the lot of the arrivals. Usually, the Palestinians had to fend for themselves and get their bearings on their own in the totally strange environment of cities such as Beirut or Amman where they found refuge. Stories of exploitation of the refugees were widespread and embittered the Palestinians. Similar manifestations in Nablus and in other Arab cities in Palestine lend credence to this gossip.⁷

Syria utilized refugees who had crossed the Jordan River into its territory for propagandist purposes and exerted political pressure on Britain. Threatening to dispatch their army across the border if the British failed to save Safed, the Syrians demanded prompt intervention to stop the *Haganah's* operations in Galilee.⁸

Early in May, the Arab section of the Jewish Agency estimated that 100,000 refugees had crossed the borders. This figure might have been inflated but the strain on the absorbing countries grew steadily. The Arab League allocated 100,000 sterling pounds for their maintenance, which amounted to a drop in the bucket.⁹

In view of the approaching summer, the spread of epidemics and shortage of supplies, the refugee issue became paramount on the Arab agenda.¹⁰ The Arab League decided to distribute the refugees who had arrived by the end of the mandate, among member states in fixed allotments. Each Arab government established a special committee to handle their affairs. Care for the arrivals in Transjordan included a security screening to expose "unwanted elements".¹¹ In Egypt, the authorities

assembled the Palestinians in barracks near the Suez Canal to prevent their infiltration into Cairo. Harsh conditions in these camps drove angry refugees to clash with police in Port Sa'id. Attempts to persuade the escapees to join the Egyptian volunteers who had departed for Palestine proved futile.¹²

Syria tried unsuccessfully to block the flow of escapees from Hula valley by sending them back to their hamlets. The army wanted to save itself the logistic and organizational burden of looking after them and preferred to use the Palestinian inhabitants as a fifth column behind IDF lines. Inside Syria, refugees enjoyed a more cordial welcome, and the government organized food supplies for them.¹³

Demanding that they either go back to Palestine or move to the interior, Lebanon's government forbade the escapees to stay in the country's southern district.¹⁴ An Arab woman code-named "Ma'aluli's wife", a prominent spy by her own merits, returning on 24 May from an eleven-day mission in Lebanon, confirmed this. Describing the state of the refugees' lodgings which she had seen on her way, "Ma'aluli's wife" emphasized the authorities' concern over the Palestinians' presence near the border. They feared that penniless deserters might indulge in espionage; consequently, the authorities pushed the Palestinians to Saida and beyond.¹⁵

On another mission to Lebanon and Syria, the *SHAY* provided this woman with a transit visa signed by Victor Khaiat, still acting on behalf of the Syrian consul in Haifa. She sailed from Haifa to Beirut on board a Turkish yacht carrying 100 passengers — mostly Palestinians. Security measures at Beirut harbour were tight and Lebanese officials interrogated all arrivals. Syrian and Lebanese citizens were questioned about conditions in Israel, and the Palestinians were asked about their financial resources and whether they wanted to enter a refugee camp or could support themselves. The agent reiterated the tense relations between the Palestinian refugees and their Lebanese hosts.¹⁶

Arab broadcasts and newspapers clearly reflected the significance assigned to the refugee question all over the Arab world. The flow of escapees inflated the cost-of-living wherever they appeared, worsening the economic state of the new arrivals as well as the indigenous inhabitants.¹⁷

The invasion encumbered the Arab governments with an enormous new burden. In addition to escapees who had fled to their territories prior to termination of the mandate, the invading states had to assume responsibility for the refugees in the regions that they occupied in Palestine. To block Palestinians from drifting across the borders, the political committee of the League reiterated its ruling that "member states should grant asylum only to women, children, and the elderly. Those capable of bearing arms should not be admitted . . . and ought to return to Palestine."¹⁸

This was easier said than done. There was no way to drive the refugees back into Palestine, and the Palestinians themselves lacked a consensus on this issue. On the one hand, the AHC encouraged their return and Arab radio stations restated the Mufti's pledge that in the wake of the Arab armies' victories, their villages were secure. Jimal Hussayni dismissed criticism of the Palestinians' desertion and declared: "They were the heroes who stood against the British and the Jews for 30 years and defended Palestine."¹⁹

On the other hand, Hajj Amin's opponents, led by Sulayman Tuqan of Nablus, denounced the Arab states for their treatment of the refugees. They argued that instead of following the Mufti and his companions to the Arab countries, the escapees should have returned to settle in Samaria and Mount Hebron. The chairmen of the pro-Mufti committees for defending *Filastin* retorted that the refugees fared far better in neighbouring states than under Tuqan's protection in Palestine.²⁰

During the truces, calls for return had little impact. Most refugees remained in their places of asylum and others continued to cross the borders to adjacent countries. True and false stories about atrocities and maltreatment of Arabs under Jewish domination were widespread. Old political and personal feuds persisted among the exiled Palestinians despite their common fate, and perhaps were even heightened by it.

Yussuf Haikal, Jaffa's former mayor, organized a refugee committee in Transjordan. This agency distributed food to destitute refugees in Nablus district, but within a few weeks exhausted its resources, probably based on the remains of Jaffa's municipal treasury. Stirred up by the Hussaynis and Istiqlalis of Nablus, enraged refugees organized a rival committee and accused Haikal of embezzling his town's funds. Haikal and the Nablus activists appealed separately to the League to take immediate steps to assist the refugees inside Palestine. They complained that Palestinians who took flight to Samaria were discriminated against, as their brethren who had fled across the borders received a larger share of the League's aid funds.²¹

The refugees' situation was better in the East Bank than in Lebanon or in the West Bank. Those who had arrived in Transjordan before the invasion usually lived in tents. Later, camps were erected for them on the outskirts of the main towns: Amman, Zarqa, a-Salt and Irbid. The authorities allocated them a small daily portion of bread and pocket money.

Except for Transjordan, Lebanon had born the brunt of the refugees, absorbing many escapees from Haifa, Acre and Galilee. Consternation grew among Christian exiles who strove to return as time passed and their conditions in the host country did not improve. Lebanon's government demanded the League share economic responsibility by extending immediate aid. Newspapers in Beirut as well as Amman published descriptions

of the escapees' living conditions, revealing meagre rations, insufficient material support and initial attempts at self-organization. As in Samaria, self-nominated deputies approached the authorities and the committees for defending *Filastin*, submitting various demands on behalf of the refugees.²²

Since the invasion, the hostile disposition towards the Palestinians gradually transformed into denunciation of the Arab governments that had assumed responsibility for their fate. Newspapers, particularly in Lebanon, criticized the authorities for neglecting the refugees. Editorials reproached the aid committees for the disgraceful conditions of their clients. The impromptu boards that looked after the refugees had exhausted their resources, and no permanent substitute framework had been arranged. Lebanon's government allocated 150,000 LP to the Palestine Office for aid purposes but the demand grew daily as more and more veteran refugees exhausted their own private means and more and more new escapers arrived from Nazareth and Galilee. The monthly allowance per person dwindled to 12 LP for those who lived off-camp. People in assembly centres received food but no financial assistance. There were accusations that large sums did not reach their target, having been pocketed by the Lebanese directors of the Palestine Office.²³

In Israeli eyes, the refugee question was a principal reason for the Arab states' desire to resume fighting at the end of the first truce in July 1948. Lebanon's vociferous objection to extending the cease-fire seemed to confirm this assessment. Although Lebanon's army was insignificant, and its contribution to the Arab war-effort was minor, the government in Beirut hoped to rid itself of the refugees during the next phase of the fighting and firmly supported the resumption of hostilities.²⁴

Throughout discussions with Bernadotte, the League insisted on recognizing the refugees' rights to return to their homes and reclaim their property. Azzam and other political leaders firmly conveyed to the UN mediator that these principles were essential preconditions for prolonging the truce.²⁵ For the time being, however, the League had to cope with the refugees' actual conditions, not with their future rights. In face of looming famine in the West Bank, it decided to establish a special body to feed them. This new committee joined the one that Tuqan had formed in Nablus and a new British aid organization, chaired by Frances Newton, which had already begun operating in Transjordan.²⁶

While the Arab states were struggling with the problems of escapees from the civil war, a fresh wave of Palestinians swamped Lebanon, ALA-held areas of Galilee and Samaria in the wake of the Ten-Day Campaign. These refugees' position was essentially different from their predecessors. They did not run away because they were incapable of resisting the Jews. The Arab states failed to protect them, and instead of deliverance brought

calamity upon Palestinian inhabitants. Their very presence in adjacent countries served as a constant reminder of the Arab armies' undoing.

Most new refugees came from Lydda, Ramle and adjoining villages. They headed for the Legion-held district of Ramallah and their arrival had immediate impact on the situation in this part of Palestine. Relations between Palestinians and Transjordanians deteriorated as the population's rage turned against Arab civil and military administrators in the West Bank. People blamed the Legion for the military débâcle and maligned the bureaucracy for its impotency and inability to ease the refugees' lot. Protests spread from Ramallah to refugee concentrations in Nablus and a-Salt on the Eastern Bank.²⁷

AHC activists and the Legion's HQ sent urgent telegrams to Cairo and Amman respectively, describing the escapees' deplorable conditions. Hajj Amin's followers greatly overstated the number of the escapees, citing figures as high as 100,000. The Legion's estimate was 30,000 only. The truth lay somewhere in between.

Coping with this problem was crucial for Abdullah's stature in the eyes of the Palestinians. Feeding so many hungry mouths presented the Legion with an enormous problem, particularly for an army that had barely any logistic infrastructure. Astounded by the turmoil in Ramallah, the Legion's HQ appealed to Amman:

The refugees call for taking revenge on the Arab army [the Legion] because they deem it responsible for the calamity that had befallen them. To pacify the turmoil, means should be found to accommodate . . . and feed them . . . Under present conditions, alleviating their lot by relying on Palestine is impossible.²⁸

The new escapees had no shelter, and most scattered in the orchards around the town. Severe conditions in Ramallah drove them further afield, and Transjordanian authorities could hardly block the drift of refugees to the East Bank. Incapable of tackling the hunger and housing plight in the West Bank, Transjordan's government appealed to local and foreign voluntary organizations for assistance. They endeavoured to extend aid, but their efforts to deal with the problem were inadequate to cope with its growing scope.

The invasion encumbered Transjordan's government with 30,000 refugees in Hebron and 30,000 in Nablus (in addition to 45,000 indigenous inhabitants in each city). So far, its efforts to help them had been futile. The situation was further exacerbated by a fresh wave of refugees from Lydda and Ramle that inundated Ramallah. Abdullah came under increasing criticism; demonstrations in the West Bank cities protested against his administration and Palestinian supporters' incompetence in solving their problems.

After the fall of Lydda and Ramle, the anger of indigenous residents as well as the refugees in Nablus burst forth and was directed against the Transjordanian governor, Ibrahim al-Hashim, and his local associates of the Shaq'a and al-Masri clans. The protests forced al-Hashim to leave the town until the Iraqi army restored order. Shallow attempts by Jerusalem's Palestinian governor, Ahmad Hilmi, to subdue the commotion proved ineffective. Arab broadcasts described the efforts of the League to extend aid, but the distance between words and deeds, or between the picture drawn by the radio and real life on the West Bank, was still tremendous.²⁹

The Ramallah municipality appealed to Abdullah to provide urgent assistance to the poorer refugees who suffered from lack of nutrition and shortage of water that placed their health in jeopardy. The king had no better answer than to state that he had passed the appeal to the health department, and to call upon Ramallah's leaders to show some patience, pending the arrival of help.³⁰

Transjordan's government was determined to prevent refugees from crossing the river to the East Bank. Improving conditions in the West Bank was the best way to stop the drift. The Legion provided 5,000 escapees in Jericho with food to prevent them from wandering across the river, but they required a daily supply of 15,000 loaves of bread and military logistics was incapable of supplying this quantity.³¹

To cope with the refugees' distress and calm turmoil among the Palestinians, Transjordan's government and the Arab League established special committees to handle various aid projects. Both committees included Palestinian representatives, but soon proved ineffective.³²

Abdullah approached the Iraqi government and requested admission of 100,000 Palestinians into Iraq. Officials at the Baghdad municipality prepared for their absorption and made lists of vacant houses in the city's Arab quarters. The government, however, refused to admit any refugees, except for former residents of villages on Mount Carmel. This exception was a manifestation of Iraq's guilty conscience over the Iraqi army's conduct in the face of the villages' downfall.³³

Another call for urgent aid was sent to Britain. Pirie-Gordon alerted the Foreign Office that "the refugee problem is proving beyond the competence of the Arab governments . . . The refugees are rapidly becoming desperate." Describing their dependence on inadequate local charities, Pirie-Gordon hinted that "an act of generosity by the British public at the present juncture would be timely, both politically . . . and financially".³⁴

In August 1948, Glubb went to London to report on the war situation and general conditions in Transjordan. The consequences of mass flight held a prominent place in his account. Glubb claimed that most refugees were penniless and lived on a daily bread ration supplied by the

government that could hardly keep them alive. He warned of typhoid and cholera epidemics that endangered the escapees and the entire kingdom. Outnumbering the town's indigenous population, the refugees in Amman were a constant source of agitation. Glubb deemed them a menace to the country's internal security and political stability. He suspected many to be subversive elements such as communists, Israeli agents or the Mufti's partisans.³⁵

Consulting with officials in the Foreign Office, Glubb reiterated the acuteness of the refugee problem, suggesting various measures to mitigate their circumstances. Subsequently, Glubb drafted a relief plan based on three phases: (1) Providing immediate supplies of food, tents, blankets and medication to keep the refugees alive during the forthcoming winter; (2) initiating interim assistance in the form of public works to develop the country's infrastructure, such as building a modern port in Gaza; and (3) resettling the refugees permanently in Gaza, Jordan valley and Wadi Araba and transferring the surplus for resettlement in other Arab countries.

Those refugees who could afford it moved from Transjordan to Lebanon, Syria or Egypt, while the completely destitute remained in the East and West Bank. Discarding any prospects for their return to the Jewish state within the UN 1947 borders, Glubb assumed that at least 200,000 refugees — half the total at that time — were irrepatrable. Should hostilities resume, he expected their numbers to increase by 100,000 or even 200,000, depending on the course of the military operations.³⁶ Kirkbride warned Bevin that even if fighting did not resume, all the governments concerned would be bankrupt and refugees would die. The result might lead to collapse and revolution.³⁷

Unable to alleviate the refugees' hardships, the Arab states prevailed on the UN mediator to facilitate their return during the cease-fire period. Arab political leaders stipulated unequivocally that return of the refugees was a precondition for their consent to hold their fire. Abu al-Huda indicated to Bernadotte that UN assistance to the refugees would render acceptance of a comprehensive solution easier. Refugees' aid held a prominent place in Arab broadcasts. Every day the radio stations announced another fund-raising campaign, promises of aid by foreign states or appeals to the United Nations on behalf of the refugees.³⁸

According to the stories (partly false) spread by travellers and infiltrators arriving in Galilee from Syria and Lebanon, the Syrian government granted the refugees citizenship and sold them lands at reduced prices. A Palestinian who came back from Damascus to Nazareth claimed that the number of refugees in Syria surpassed 100,000. They lived mostly around Damascus, and 37,000 appealed for subsistence.

In Lebanon, fearing the Palestinians' impact on the country's sensitive

demographic equilibrium and political stability, the authorities hesitated to admit more Palestinians. Hungry refugees rioted at Bint al-Jbail and looted food stores. Eventually, the police transferred some of them to other localities. The turmoil subsided after the crowd received rations of basic foodstuffs. Demanding their admittance into Lebanon's interior, the escapees threatened to return to their villages in Palestine if Lebanese authorities refused to let them in. Only a few wished to enlist into a new army that the Mufti was trying to establish in Galilee.³⁹

Unemployment was widespread among Palestinians in Lebanon. Those wishing to work had to bribe government's officials. Two-thirds of the refugees in the country, numbering 66,000, applied for aid. A self-appointed committee, chaired by Ahmad al-Khalil, represented the refugees before the authorities, the Arab League and the AHC. The government nominated a senior official to chair its own committee for refugees' affairs, which functioned until UNRWA undertook care of them in 1950.⁴⁰

More than 130,000 refugees fled to Egyptian-held territories. The largest concentration was in the city of Gaza where 35,000 escapees crowded. A similar number lingered in and around Majdal. Han Yunis hosted about 25,000 and the rest found shelter in Rafah and in the former military camps of Nusayrat and al-Burej. The army and the local National Committee lost control of the situation, and the arrivals simply hung around — with no one to care for them.⁴¹

The summer of 1948 was probably the most difficult for the refugees and their hosts. Having hardly begun to cope with problems created by pre-invasion escapees, a new wave unexpectedly overburdened the unprepared and incompetent Arab governments. Possessing neither resources nor skills for meeting the organizational, logistic and human quandaries, Arab leaders blamed everyone else for the catastrophe. Ignoring their own responsibility for the refugees' distress, they demanded the world solve the problem — in the short-run, by providing funds and personnel to care for the refugees, in the long-run by enforcing their return to Israel.

Arab politicians warned of the frightful fate awaiting the refugees should their conditions not be improved before the forthcoming winter. The International Red Cross' small team in Palestine and other voluntary organizations did try to extend assistance, but their efforts were a drop in the bucket. A Palestinian activist attested that "despite this assistance, the refugees will be unable to survive the winter".⁴²

Parallel to arousing world sentiment and mobilizing sympathy for dealing with the immediate needs of the refugees, other voices maintained that the escapees' problems could not be settled peacefully. They rejected any idea of negotiating a solution and insisted on re-conquering the places from where the refugees had allegedly been expelled, as the only remedy.⁴³

All concerned parties agreed on the need to extend immediate aid to the refugees. Their fate in the long run remained, however, a source of division. The Arab states wanted to rid themselves of responsibility for the refugees' absorption and strove for their prompt repatriation. However, Palestinian leadership rejected this solution on political grounds. Opposing the Arab states' demand to repatriate the refugees, the AHC argued that under the present circumstances: "Repatriation would amount to tacit recognition of the state of Israel . . . and would place repatriated Arabs at the mercy of the Jewish authorities."⁴⁴

Acquainted with Palestine's background, the British had realized the futility of repatriation as an option, since the outset of the mass exodus. Following the Ten-Day Campaign, British diplomats took note of the growing significance of the refugee issue, but still underestimated its scope. Blaming Israel for creating the calamity, Clayton wrote to London that he had heard many stories of the Jews' maltreatment of Arab villages. Either because of their cowardice or due to other reasons, he added, 200,000 refugees had already left their homes in Palestine. This number was, however, half the actual figure.⁴⁵

Britain advocated extending immediate aid to the refugees and ultimately resettling them in the Arab countries. Following consultations with Glubb during his visit to London, Burrows of the Foreign Office noted:

It is hardly conceivable that many of them will ever return to their homes . . . The long-run question of their resettlement has not been tackled at all, but it will demand enormous organizational endeavours and considerable financial means.⁴⁶

The British were mainly interested in the conflict's territorial aspects and paid little attention to the Palestinians' fate. At most, they regarded their plight as a problem of human suffering demanding a remedy, not a political issue. Foreign Office officials backed Bernadotte's territorial proposals, but were doubtful about, or totally ignored his demand to let the refugees return to their homes. Behind the scenes at the UN General Assembly, Britain was working for the creation of an international agency to provide aid in disaster cases. This instrument might also alleviate the Palestinian refugees' lot. The British did not discuss the question of their return at all.⁴⁷

Stabler, the US consul in Jerusalem, and other American diplomats in the Middle East, shared these views and sent similar appraisals to the State Department. The Americans tried to placate the Arab states by putting money from UNRRA funds at their disposal. Nonetheless, the dissatisfied Arabs blamed the United States for the refugees' plight because of American patronage of Zionism, and insisted on their right of return.⁴⁸

Perceiving that the flight was not as brief or temporary as they had

expected, some refugees did not wait for the Arab states or the UN to devise solutions. Infiltration, which accompanied Israel's early history until the Sinai War in 1956, had emerged already during the second truce. Fugitives who had not gone far from their homes, took advantage of the IDF's thin deployment along the front lines and crossed them freely. At that time, most infiltrators did not aim to resettle in their hamlets. They wanted to recover left-behind property and sometimes to take revenge. Yizhar Smilansky, a young intelligence officer and a future Israeli writer of renown (known as S. Yizhar), reported:

Groups of *fallahin* have come this week to the abandoned villages to collect food and belongings. We have found no evidence of sponsoring or guiding of this traffic.

Captured infiltrators, including children, were interrogated about the reasons and objectives of their infiltration, their routes and the escapees' conditions. Hinting at widespread hunger as the principal reason for their act, detainees described the lamentable situation at Beyt Jubrin where the escapees crowded in olive orchards around the large village. They had no food and no one came to their aid.⁴⁹

An elderly resident of Ain Karim, who had fled to Qurmizan monastery and returned to collect fruit in his orchard to sell in the Beit Jala market, told his interrogator: "The refugees' morale is very low. Having abandoned their lands and homes, the poor *fallahin* feel strongly the horrors of the war and the wandering."⁵⁰

Infiltrators from Syria passed freely to and from Lebanon through the Hula Valley marshes. Armed refugees slipped into deserted hamlets under cover of night to collect food and sometimes fired at passing Jewish vehicles. Local arrangements that allowed certain families or even larger groups to return, in exchange for rendering various services to the Jewish settlements and security services, encountered Syrian opposition. The Syrians used Palestinian irregulars to intimidate these returnees and harass life in the marshes in general.⁵¹

Lebanese and Israeli officers negotiated arrangements for harvesting the fields on both sides of the front line, agreeing to abstain from shooting at infiltrators and agreeing to take them into custody alive and send them back. Inhabitants of villages across the border, who had abandoned their hamlets in the wake of the IAF bombings, gradually trickled back. Several villages on the Golan Heights were deserted again in mid-September, when rumours spread alleging likely resumption of fighting.⁵²

The battles of October 1948 encumbered the Egyptian authorities and the Legion with an additional burden of escapees that fled to Gaza and to Hebron. Agents described the refugees' quandaries in the coastal strip between Majdal and Rafah and reported on their dispersion:

Most refugees in the towns live in houses and pay rent. East of Majdal many dwell in booths made of sackcloth . . . Elsewhere they have erected tin-huts . . . The Egyptians have begun to distribute food in the towns but the quantities are small . . . Some families sell their belongings, but the majority has nothing to sell. Fathers try to marry off their daughters. Prices have decreased to 80 and sometimes to 20 pounds and often no bride price is paid since the parents are glad to be relieved of feeding superfluous mouths. Many women and children go begging.

Describing the situation in Gaza, Han Yunis and Rafah, other informants verified this grim report.⁵³

On the eve of operation *HIRAM* — a military operation that brought many thousands of fresh fugitives to Lebanon — Tuvia Arazi had sent from Paris a detailed report on the refugees' situation in Lebanon. Relying on a Lebanese businessman, he estimated their number at 70,000. In addition, Lebanon had absorbed 10,000 Jews and Christians who had fled from Syria. Half the Palestinians were well-to-do or former employees of the British mandatory government who continued to receive their pensions in Lebanon. The other half were poor refugees whom the authorities accommodated in camps at Saida and the Bqa'a. The latter were sustained by the Arab League and not by the government. Summarizing the position, the source told Arazi: "Since the initial disorders in Lebanon subsided, the refugees have been a source of funds and employment." Confirming the essence of this analysis, Bishop Hakim added: "These funds have already been spent . . . Now, the problems of the future emerges."⁵⁴

Agents inside Lebanon portrayed a different picture, focusing on the situation among the poorer half. After *HIRAM*, conditions among the refugees rapidly worsened:

In Beirut's brothels, one may discern many Palestinian women who, owing to the difficulties, have to earn their livelihood in this shameful way. Housing conditions are extremely bad. More than 400 babies in the camps around Tyre and Saida have died of the harsh cold.⁵⁵

Similarly, Israeli agents returning from Transjordan and Samaria reported on continuing hardships in the refugee camps, a rising death toll, epidemics and maltreatment by the Legion and the Iraqi army. Rumours of suicides sparked by despair were widespread, and one agent summed up: "The escapees wholeheartedly want peace. If their lives will be guaranteed, they were ready to put themselves in the Jews' hands and live under their dominion."⁵⁶

The mood among the refugees and their hosts regarding their future was of principal interest to Israeli intelligence. Opinions concerning the escapees' return varied, depending mainly on prevailing conditions in

their former domiciles. Those whose villages had been destroyed did not wish to go back. They hoped that selling their seized lands might enable them to settle abroad. Escapees whose homes still stood, hoped to return even if it meant living under Israeli rule.⁵⁷

Palestinian notables in Lebanon and in Samaria sought means of influencing their people's fate. Those who had previous connections with Jews and had despaired of the Arab governments' capacity for improving the refugees' state, tried secretly to facilitate matters by re-establishing contact with their former Jewish acquaintances. Bishop Hakim lobbied on behalf of his Greek-Catholic community and looked after its members' assets in Israel. For these purposes, he wandered throughout the Arab capitals and Europe. Meeting in Paris with Sasson and Arazi, he proposed that Israel should purchase the refugees' lands and houses. The income, he maintained, might enable the sellers to settle elsewhere and thus reduce the severity of the problem.⁵⁸

Owing to Ahmad al-Khalil's kinship with Lebanon's minister of defence, Majid Arsalan, he enjoyed official recognition as the representative of the refugees in the country. Seeking direct contacts with Israel on behalf of his constituency, al-Khalil asked his old friend Ya'acov Salomon to meet him in Cyprus, but Ben-Gurion vetoed the meeting. Although al-Khalil chaired a committee that allocated aid funds among the refugees, he was himself financially hard pressed and even had to sell his car. Eventually, al-Khalil moved to the West Bank and joined Abdullah's administration.⁵⁹

The Mufti's partisans still endeavoured to delay Abdullah's takeover of the West Bank by manipulating the refugees' plight and bitterness. Kemal Ariqat reported to Hajj Amin about an incident in Jericho. A crowd of refugees had assailed a party of Transjordanian and Iraqi officers, allegedly because they were celebrating while the refugees had not received their rations for the previous 15 days. Another report to Hajj Amin suggested a socio-religious explanation to the incident, rather than a political one: The fact that the officers in question were dancing with women of ill repute.⁶⁰

The Legion took some precautions against the agitation, but the Hussaynis' efforts were frustrated primarily because at this juncture in time, most refugees had little interest in the West Bank's political future. Many would have preferred to go back to Israel and live under Israeli occupation. To check this trend, the Transjordanian and Iraqi administrations disseminated atrocity stories about the Jews' treatment of Arabs in their state. Against the background of Dir Yassin, people easily swallowed this propaganda. The brainwashing campaign spoke of economic paralysis in Israel; religious persecution; maltreatment of POWs under interrogation, and violation of women. Concurrently, Transjordanian

and Iraqi authorities refused to admit more escapees and threatened to drive them back into Israeli territory.⁶¹

In September 1948, international aid organizations began to display interest in the refugee problem and assess its future implications on their work and their budgets. General Harding visited Transjordan on behalf of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) to get a first-hand impression and estimate the cost of supporting the refugees.⁶²

By the beginning of 1949, several aid missions of medical personnel and welfare workers were active among the refugees: American Quakers in Gaza, a Red Cross delegation at Jericho, a Belgian team in Irbid, and a British group in Mafrq. Newspapers in Beirut announced an official agreement between the Lebanese government, the International Red Cross (IRC) and the UN to extend assistance to the refugees in Lebanon. The IRC undertook to accommodate, feed and clothe them at the organization's own expense. The government's central aid committee continued to care for health and welfare through the public services. It assisted orphans and women in confinement, and organized burial of the dead. Following this understanding, several ships arrived at Beirut harbour carrying supplies for the refugees.⁶³

In December 1948, the IRC assumed responsibility also for the refugees in Transjordan and in the West Bank. Several camps were erected on the West Bank near Jericho and Ramallah. A census showed that 160,000 persons lived in camps on the East Bank, but several agents claimed that the numbers were highly inflated: those who registered (heads of families) deliberately gave distorted figures about their kin to augment their small rations. A *mukhtar* in a camp near Jericho reported the presence of 10,000 souls on the premises while in fact they numbered about 3,000. He and his associates used to sell the 7,000 spare rations on the free market.⁶⁴

Because of false reports on the number of refugees, the IRC delegates ordered all refugees to queue in person for their rations. A new report from late March 1949 claimed that the refugees across the river numbered only 60,000.⁶⁵ A census in the Gaza Strip revealed 54,000 natives of the area; 10,000 who had lived there in the past and returned during the war, 30,000 Bedouin and 165,000 refugees. Since the census' sole purpose was issuing rations cards, it was reasonable to suspect that many refugees had registered twice. Hence, the total number was probably lower by several thousands.⁶⁶

Egyptian authorities in Gaza were indifferent to the civilian population's problems, particularly to the epidemics that spread in the winter of 1948/9. In comparison with the frequent epidemics back at home — such as the cholera epidemic of 1946/7 — Gaza's health problems appeared trivial. Corruption among the bureaucracy in charge of assistance endeavours provoked the refugees. Various sources described their turmoil,

stressing the Palestinians' plea to return home even if this meant living under Israeli rule.⁶⁷

The practical expression of this desire was an increase in infiltration through the thinly-held armistice lines. Infiltrators from the Gaza Strip also crossed the border in the opposite direction into Egypt. The Egyptians severely punished those whom they caught in Sinai. Furthermore, they transferred to al-Burej camp near Gaza several families from Jaffa who had fled to Egypt at the beginning of the war and settled in Qantara near the Suez Canal. Egypt's military administration in Gaza was oppressive, but despite the refugees' harsh conditions there was little chance of resistance or subversion on their part. Nonetheless, British and American observers remarked that the situation was ripe for the spread of anarchist and pro-communist ideas among the camp dwellers.⁶⁸

Compared to their brethren in Gaza, the refugees in Samaria fared better. Former agents of the Jewish Agency, such as Nimr al-Hauari and Ahmad al-Khalil, gained prominence among the refugees — support fuelled by frustration with their traditional leadership and the Arab states' performance. Abdullah appointed al-Khalil governor of Ramallah and when the Iraqis withdrew, al-Khalil expected to become governor of Samaria. Hauari travelled from camp to camp, preaching the need to come to terms "not only with the Jews, but even with the apes" to solve the Palestinians' plight.⁶⁹

This commotion was part of the Palestinians' preparations for the arrival of the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) in the Middle East. Following disintegration of Palestinian society and the discredit of the AHC, other activists tried to take the lead in rescuing the Palestinians from further decline. They lacked, however, a common goal or any semblance of partnership. Ahmad Shukairi served the Syrians' hard line. Many flocked to Abdullah's court. Hauari strove openly, and other notables secretly, to negotiate with Israel. The *Najada's* former leader announced his convictions at an assembly of refugees in Ramallah, where some listeners interpreted his speech as expressing a readiness for peace talks with Israel; in fact, his declared aim was merely election of a committee to discuss reparations. The refugees, he told the audience, should not trust the Arab governments on this matter. They should deal directly with the international agencies involved in the conflict, such as the UN mediator and the PCC. Other notables did not come out in the open like Hauari, but sent clandestine messages to Israel, calling upon Israel to adopt an Israeli-Palestinian solution — mobilizing the traditional opposition to the Hussaynis to support such an alliance.⁷⁰

The reliability of information provided by agents and informers on the Palestinians' mood was questionable. Opinions and feelings among the refugees and the indigenous population in the West Bank were still in a

state of flux, reflected faltering and insecurity typical of a transitory period from war to truce and then to armistice. The traditional leadership collapsed and dispersed. Foreign administration changed from Iraqi and Egyptian to Transjordanian. The future looked uncertain and even the threat of an Israeli occupation of the West Bank was not yet over. In this upheaval, the embarrassed Palestinians lost their orientation and wavered between loyalty to their traditional leaders or to the new rule of Abdullah, attempts to form a new leadership and even a separate deal with the Jews. The reports of Israel's Arab agents often reflected the last tendency, which was far from being the mainstream.

Consequently, rumours spread that the refugees preferred an Israeli administration over self-government in the manner of the "All Palestine" Government and even Abdullah's autocratic rule.⁷¹ Evidently, had fighting resumed, the mass flight of the earlier stages of the war would not have repeated itself. The inhabitants of Samaria learned the lesson of Lydda and Ramle and were determined to stay put.⁷²

In March 1949, the PCC arrived in the region and settled at Beirut. The refugees, particularly in Lebanon, prepared to appear before the commissioners and present their case. These preparations exposed the Palestinians' confusion and disunity. Various notables wanted to speak for their cities while the AHC dispatched emissaries to the refugee camps to encourage the dwellers to sign a petition calling upon the PCC to recognize the AHC as their sole representative body.⁷³

This was an open challenge to Abdullah's stature and the king threatened to retire from the joint discussions if the PCC accepted it. To avoid an open breach in the Arab League the other states acquiesced to Abdullah's demand. The PCC rejected, therefore, the AHC's claim to exclusivity as the Palestinians' sole representative. Hajj Amin refused to come to Beirut under these conditions.⁷⁴

The Palestinian delegations in Beirut represented a variety of organizations with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. Meeting them once, the PCC subsequently ignored them, while continuing its discussions with the Arab states' official delegations — jointly and separately. Finally, the Commission persuaded the Arabs to attend a conference at Lausanne to discuss the major issues of the refugees, the borders between Israel and the adjoining countries and Jerusalem. Delegations from Transjordan and Syria at Lausanne included Palestinian members, but the Palestinians had no collective or independent status at the conference and the Arab states pretended to represent their case.⁷⁵ Too disunited to even coherently voice their own diverse needs, by default the Palestinians were left without a genuine voice in their own future, free of the ulterior motives or hidden agendas of neighbouring states.

No one counted the number of refugees. The figures concerning their

numbers that various sources, Arab and non-Arab, published throughout the war were either wild guesses or reflected ulterior motives, such as the host governments' desire to augment their share of the aid funds. After termination of the fighting and stabilization of the armistice lines, the scope of the refugee problem could be calculated more accurately. According to the aid organizations, 1,021,000 people were under their care and protection in the fall of 1949. Their definition of "a refugee", however, was very broad. In addition to Arabs who had fled from territories occupied by Israel, it included displaced Arabs whose homes were not in Israeli territory. This definition also embraced people who stayed in their homes, but lost their source of livelihood because of the war or the armistice agreements (i.e. villagers on the Arab side of the border whose lands ended up on the Israeli side of the armistice line).

Under a more limited definition ("escapees only") the number of refugees was 765,000 persons, distributed as follows: 277,000 in the West Bank, 80,000 in the East Bank, 164,000 in the Gaza Strip, 120,000 in Lebanon, 77,000 in Syria, and 47,000 "domestic refugees" in Israel.⁷⁶

Upon transferring responsibility for the refugees to UNRWA early in 1950, the IRC made another attempt to count them. On that occasion, one of its workers recited under what circumstances refugee statistics had been determined in the past:

Early in 1949 . . . the Arabs handled all the census affairs themselves. At that time, many forged cards had been distributed to people and this inflated their real number . . . The census' lists disappeared and the work had to start from the beginning. Distribution of products continued against the Arab committee's cards. The census' service, however, hastened the inquiries.

The IRC issued new cards but an investigation proved that natives of Nablus were also holding them as well as well-to-do people who were not entitled to assistance and others who registered giving false names.⁷⁷

The aid organizations' original figures derived from the allocation of food cards. In the fall of 1949, the PCC appointed a commission chaired by the American Gordon Clapp to verify the scope of the refugee problem and study ways of solving it. Clapp set the number of refugees at 774,000, of whom 627,000 needed assistance. By contrast, Israel based its calculations on the mandatory government's statistics. Before the war 727,000 Arabs had lived within Israel's borders, of whom 165,000 stayed put or returned by the end of 1949. The number of refugees, therefore, could not surpass 562,000. Taking into account fatal casualties and the departure of non-Palestinian Arabs to their home countries, the number of refugees could not exceed 520,000.⁷⁸

Three years later, Israel corrected its previous aggregates and calcu-

lated the number of refugees at 630,000. At the same time, 881,000 people received food rations from UNRWA. The agency admitted that there were many fabrications: double cards, deceased persons' cards and indigenous paupers who received their share. Owing to political considerations, UNRWA has never attempted a thorough examination of cardholders.⁷⁹

The controversy over the refugees' total number remained unsolved. The gap between contradictory estimates widened with the lapse of time owing to natural growth and migrations. In the absence of a reliable census during the war or in its wake, the contradictions cannot be resolved. The starting point of the Israeli estimate, however, appears to be sounder than that of the aid organizations.

From Flight to Refugeeism: Blocking the Return

Administering occupied territories and supervising civilian population went beyond the role assigned to the *Haganah*, or later to the IDF. Ben-Gurion sought a suitable political and administrative solution to this problem. On the eve of statehood, he appointed Bechor Shitrit — a member of the People's Executive who became the first Minister of Police — to take charge of Arab affairs in co-ordination with Pinhas (Felix) Rosen, who was slated to serve as the first Minister of Justice. The two, however, had no control over events in the field, where various interested groups had begun creating a series of *fait accompli*.¹

At the beginning of May 1948, a delegation from kibbutzim of the Jordan Valley briefed Ben-Gurion on the Arabs' flight from Samakh and nearby hamlets. They announced the appointment of a kibbutz member as "governor of Samakh" and presented schemes for establishing new settlements on the abandoned lands. Realizing the inherent danger of such partisan actions to proper government within the forthcoming state, Ben-Gurion disapproved of unauthorized local initiatives such as the nomination of "governors". He promptly inquired about prevailing practices concerning abandoned property and learned that the *Haganah*'s High Command had established a board to handle such matters.

Subsequently, he summoned the chairman of this board, Gad Machnes, to report on the board's activities. In several instances, Machnes complained, the troops had acted without the board's knowledge and against its ruling.² Ben-Gurion ordered Machnes to submit a procedure for supervising abandoned property to the People's Executive for approval. Pending a permanent arrangement involving the newly created police force, Ben-Gurion ordered that troops be placed at the board's disposal to maintain order and control the population in occupied locations. These garrison units were to be composed of older soldiers unfit for combat duties. Ben-Gurion insisted on receiving direct accounts from the

board. Under certain conditions, he empowered Machnes and his assistants (whom Ben-Gurion destined at the time to be the Arab populace's future masters, although ultimately things developed along a different path, with the establishment of a central military administration) to expel residents from their homes.³

In making these decisions, Ben-Gurion's main concern was combating the rampant looting of occupied communities — a phenomenon he regarded as a moral peril as well as a degradation. In the wake of the rapid and extensive conquests, larceny became widespread. The *Haganah* blamed the *IZL* for the outrages, so initially Ben-Gurion told Yadin to warn the dissidents. Soon, however, he learned that looting was not limited solely to *IZL* personnel. Machnes complained that he could not fulfil his duties without the co-operation of the *Haganah*'s commanders: "At present every unit as well as private individuals confiscate abandoned Arab assets without the consent of the expropriation centre."⁴

The implications of the conquests worried Ben-Gurion. He wavered between handling the Arab population through a special ministry or imposing a military administration in areas populated by Arabs. Alluding to the status of the occupied territories, not merely a question of management, this issue was political rather than administrative. While awaiting the expiration of the mandate near at hand, Ben-Gurion noted in his diary certain vexing questions:

Deciding on a policy in an occupied town is imperative . . . Who should be in charge, the commanding officer or a governor? Who should appoint him [the governor]? What should be his jurisdiction in respect to the army and the residents? What should be done with the property of the escapees? What should the army be allowed to confiscate? . . . Should we declare military areas? What should be their status? What should be done with looters? Should we compensate [Arabs] for looted belongings? Should we expel Arabs? [Take them as] prisoners of war? What should we do with the remaining Arabs and their possessions? . . . Who should deal with the Arabs? To whom should they be subordinated? Who should protect them . . . the army or the police? . . . Who should allocate the budget?⁵

These questions were not theoretical any more. Every passing day raised practical problems requiring decisions.

Machnes embarked on forming machinery to handle Arab affairs. He recruited his staff among the advisers on Arab affairs that had been appointed at the beginning of the war. Having no significant role under the new circumstances, they were both qualified and available. Assembling them on 9 May, Machnes announced the establishment of the new department, outlining its organization and procedures.⁶

On the next day, Shitrit distributed a memorandum to members of the People Executive titled "The Arab Problem". Assuming a linkage between

the world's attitude to the Jewish state and its own policy towards the Arabs, he preached: "It is about time to live up to our principles." Citing atrocities that had occurred in the course of the fighting, he cautioned:

Regrettably, our forces have committed criminal acts that may stain the Zionist movement's good name . . . The finest of us have given a bad example to the masses . . . By all means, we must check the growing spirit of lawlessness.

Shitrit suggested creating a single authority to handle all Arab matters. Pending incorporation of Arabs into the life of the Jewish state, this authority — the Ministry for Minorities' Affairs — should be responsible for internal security; deal with cases of banishment or expulsion, return and resettlement of Arabs; look after their needs and organize essential supplies. All activity in the Arab sector should be subordinated to principles and policies formulated by the minister. Shitrit demanded that other authorities that had dealt with Arab affairs to date be liquidated and replaced with the ministry's permanent staff. His proposal also provided for nomination of a "custodian of absentees' assets" attached to the ministry, to protect abandoned property.⁷

With attainment of statehood, in the process of forming the Provisional Government, Shitrit was assigned the police and minority affairs' portfolios. At first, he meant to establish a combined department. However, identifying minorities with police matters had negative connotations, particularly to Jewish ears. Hence, the government decided on separating the functions and creating a special ministry for the minorities, the only linkage being the personage of a common minister — Shitrit — "wearing both hats". Under Machnes as director general, the ministry of minorities' affairs consisted of two sections: one for rehabilitating Jewish-Arab relations, and one for education and information, as well as a research institute for studying the problems of minorities in Israel.⁸

In the wake of the invasion, the tide of refugees seemed to have turned back. When the cease-fire took effect in June 1948, the harvest season was at its height. Those who had fled but had not gone far from their villages did not wait for any political settlement and slipped back into their hamlets to gather their crops. Many reports from the front lines described these attempts to return. IDF patrols in Jordan valley near Bisan observed Bedouin crossing the river and harvesting the fields. Penetrations in this area continued despite the killing of infiltrators by mines and ambushes. A local intelligence officer, Yona Ravnitzky (Yarhi), commented: "Apparently they have nothing to eat and they take risks because they have no alternative." The Bedouin exacted revenge for their casualties by mining roads in the region.⁹

Ignoring the truce lines, the infiltrators crossed freely between the lines,

until Israeli guards began shooting at them. Patrols engaged those who made their way into deserted villages, or grazed in their pastures — driving them back.¹⁰ Infantry units were sent to various hamlets to block the villagers' return due to fears that such movement might be a disguise for a take-over of the site by the ALA.¹¹

In Hula valley, escapees from Khalsa [Kiryat Shmona] who had fled to Lebanon sneaked into their village under cover of night. They reaped fields and irrigated tracts of vegetables, even in proximity to the IDF garrison at the local police fortress. At the opposite end of the valley, hundreds of refugees crossed the Syrian border regularly to gather crops. Usually, they escaped to the marshes when the soldiers shot at them, but sometimes the "peasants" returned fire, and the IDF suspected them to be disguised Syrian soldiers.¹²

During the truce, the harvest became a significant issue. Many escapees regarded their flight as a temporary measure for survival's sake. When the fighting ceased, returning seemed natural, as this had been the custom in the Middle Eastern manner of warfare. Viewing this homecoming with growing concern, the IDF head of intelligence alerted his superiors that harvesting Arab fields was not merely a political or economic question but primarily a strategic problem. He believed that one of the reasons that had driven the Arabs to accept the truce was the prospect of harvesting their fields under cover of the cease-fire.

Some Israeli officers and soldiers — farmers themselves — grumbled against orders to burn fields or destroy crops, doubting their military utility or moral justification. Other officers dismissed their approach: "In a total war, it is impossible to restrict the methods of warfare . . . Any action that might amplify hardship and chaos on the opposing side is military, and not political."

The infiltration's far-reaching implications were already obvious, and the IDF intelligence department warned of a potential danger that the villagers would resettle in hamlets far behind the lines. If fighting resumed, they might make up a fifth column or even offer active resistance.

The GSI assessed that the flow of refugees had posed a dilemma for the Arabs, and Israel should sharpen the dilemma by all means to augment their difficulties: "If the refugees outside our domains realise that there is nothing to harvest in their fields, we may suppress their ambition to return at all costs." The author of this memorandum proposed to examine modern methods of devastating crops, such as spraying them from the air. He also drafted a circular instructing commanders in the field to harvest every ripe plot and destroy all the crops that could not be reaped immediately, to prevent the Arabs from cultivating them. Yadin noted his approval in the margins.¹³

IDF intelligence released warnings and penned evaluations to substan-

tiate the policy of obstructing the return, on military and other grounds. At the beginning of the truce, the GSI cautioned that if infiltration was not halted, the army might have to reserve troops to secure lines of communications inside the country and to safeguard the army's rear.¹⁴ Adding arguments of public health to military and political justifications for blocking the infiltration and forbidding the return, Yadin warned Shertok of the likely spread of epidemics, which infiltrators might transmit across the cease-fire lines.¹⁵

During the first truce, infiltration was still thin and sporadic and mostly limited to gathering of crops. In the second truce, it became a major problem, having military, criminal and economic dimensions — apart from the natural aspiration of the infiltrators to return to their places of origin. Deputy Chief of Intelligence, Chayim (Vivian) Herzog explained the new threat:

These Arabs [the infiltrators] raid our settlements' surroundings and return with their bounty . . . Their success encourages the use of these methods of fighting against the Jews.¹⁶

After the last British soldier had left Haifa, the city's commanding officer, Ya'acov Lublini, focused his efforts on preventing Arab residents' return. He established a network of pickets, patrols and observation posts whose task was "closing Haifa in the tightest form and preventing the arrival and departure of Arabs and other suspicious persons". Nonetheless, the number of Arabs in Haifa rose from 3,100 in mid-June 1948 to 5,000 in mid-September, mainly through infiltration.¹⁷

Once again, intelligence assessments warned of the likelihood of refugees attempting to return by crossing the long and inadequately held cease-fire lines. One week in late September 1948, the IDF apprehended 90 infiltrators in Lydda and Ramle alone. Corroborating previous warnings, this figure manifested the scope of the problem.¹⁸

The abandoned village Bisan attracted looters that infiltrated from Transjordan, hid in the orchards by day and sneaked into the deserted houses after dark. Usually they sought food — fruits and vegetables — but also broke into houses and burnt them. An agent in the area warned of the dangers inherent in this developing pattern: "One day Arab inhabitants will quietly reoccupy Bisan."¹⁹

In Jewish-held Galilee, night-time treks to and from Lebanon, Syria and Samaria were an easy feat. Many infiltrators successfully "disappeared" among the local Arab population. Their good fortune encouraged others to attempt the same. Shafa'amr and Kafr Yasif were the infiltrators' main objectives and some went on to Haifa. The authorities could not take legal measures against those who were apprehended, for as long as they kept their mandatory identity cards, and pending a

new census and registration, they could assert that they had never left the country.²⁰

The IDF's conquests beyond the partition borders required an organized and centralized military administration. Up until this point, different types of military government had developed independently in various areas. The governors were appointed by different authorities and adhered to diverse policies. Ben-Gurion decided to establish a central military apparatus that would assume responsibility for the occupied territories and command their garrisons. He offered the post of chief military governor to Elimelech Avner (Zelikowicz), a former *Haganah* commander of Tel Aviv.

Before giving his consent, Avner visited the occupied cities. He realized the difficulties that emanated from the diversity of agencies operating in the field and the absence of clear definitions of responsibilities and jurisdictions among the army, the police, the Ministry of Minorities' Affairs and other state organs. Following this inspection tour, Avner presented a list of demands as a precondition for assuming office.²¹

The General Staff endorsed some of Avner's recommendations and in mid-August 1948 he was promoted to the rank of *aluf* (general) and appointed "Director of Military Government Department" in the Ministry of Defence.²² Although the military administration was an army unit for all intents and purposes, in matters of policy the governor was responsible directly to the Minister of Defence. Consequently, there was some vagueness whether he belonged to the General Staff or to the ministry's personnel.²³

Avner's military administration did not abolish other governmental apparatuses that had operated in the Arab sector. To co-ordinate their activities with those of the new staff, an advisory committee was attached to the military governor. Its members were delegates of all official agencies dealing with Arab policy. Shitrit chaired the panel, whose irresolvable role was to define a strategy binding all governmental departments and satisfying them all. This committee addressed the division of jurisdiction between the military and the civil authorities. It also formulated common policies on controversial issues such as employment, absentees and present-absentees' assets, appointments, release of prisoners and conduct of a census.²⁴

The variety of agencies dealing with Arab affairs and the lack of a legal basis for their functioning rendered rapid legislation an essential task. Rosen drafted a new law, "The Occupied Territories' Order", to regulate the state's activities in territories under military administration. Dov Yosef (Bernard Joseph), Jerusalem's governor, a senior politician and a lawyer by profession, objected to the proposed law. He argued that the bill deviated from the principles of military government and amounted to

a practical annexation of territories beyond the partition borders.²⁵ Avner did not like the proposal either. In his view, it mixed principles of international law (granting priority to the military governors) with Israeli laws (enabling independent actions of various government departments). This mixture implied conceiving the occupied territories as part and parcel of the state. He urged Ben-Gurion to decide:

If the state consider the military administration necessary . . . it should abolish the jurisdiction of government departments based on "The Occupied Territories' Order". On the other hand, if these territories are an integral part of the state, there is no room for a military governor.²⁶

Ruling over Arabs provoked frictions among Jews. Various civil authorities argued with the army, demanding special treatment for their Arab protégés. The municipal committee for Arab affairs in Haifa, for example, complained about the military's indiscriminate rigorous attitude to all Arabs: "It is inconceivable that after more than 30 years of living together... there have not been any Arabs deserving a better treatment than others." Usually, these arguments did not relate to matters of principle, but concerned the application of a positive discrimination doctrine and its justification in specific cases.²⁷

At the beginning of the second truce, Israel's Foreign Ministry expected a growing international demand to allow the refugees' return. Intelligence estimates predicted that they might become the crux of the Palestine problem and their repatriation would be a principal Arab demand in any negotiations. This prediction came true, and the refugees held a prominent place on Bernadotte's agenda. Shertok portrayed the mass-flight to the UN mediator as one of the war's major surprises, alongside Britain's support for the Arabs and the UN's impotence. Unimpressed, Bernadotte simply demanded to know if Israel would allow the escapees to return after the war and respect their rights to their property. Explaining that the government had not yet determined its position, Shertok refused to discuss the refugees as long as the war continued. For the time being, he stated, Israel respected the absentees' rights to their possessions, but refused to ensure their repatriation.²⁸

Following an interview with Sasson on 21 June 1948, the *Herald Tribune's* correspondent Kenneth Bilbie publicized "a significant change in Israel's policy". Sasson had conveyed to him Israel's decision to close its borders to 300,000 refugees. They might come back, he said, only after the Arabs have signed a peace treaty, provided they recognize the Jewish state's sovereignty and accept its authority. Bilbie added that Arabs living in Israel could leave the country under IRC protection if they so wished. He mentioned that the government considered settling displaced Jews in occupied towns, and interpreted the massive and systematic expropria-

tion of Arab assets as evidence of Israel's intentions. For several weeks, this interview was the only statement on Israel's policy concerning the refugees. Israeli diplomats referred to Sasson's statement whenever they had to clarify the government's position.²⁹

Before recommending a policy, the Foreign Ministry wished to learn more about the uprooted Palestinians' conditions and frame of mind. Sasson, Danin and Palmon invited Daud al-'Isa, *Filastin's* editor, to come from Ramallah to Jaffa, ostensibly to examine the state of his home and printing business. He divulged that many refugees wanted to liquidate their businesses and sell their lands. After the ruin and destruction, and in light of the fact that calamitous disturbances repeatedly broke out once every few years, they were unwilling to continue this mode of life. Mentioning appointments of Palestinian dignitaries to senior posts in the West Bank's administration, 'Isa added that the wealthy and the educated did not suffer.³⁰

Other Palestinian notables were anxious to verify Israel's disposition to their eventual return. Bishop Hakim arrived in Haifa to lobby for the return of members of his Greek-Catholic community. He met first with Salomon and then with Shitrit, Sasson, Shimoni and Machnes to broach the refugees' prospects of repatriation. Shitrit explained to him Israel's reluctance to discuss return as long as the war continued. He was ready, however, to consider special cases, granting due regard to the Bishop's recommendations.³¹

Blaming the Palestinian leaders for the refugees' hardships, Israeli propaganda claimed that by urging the masses to go into exile, Arab leaders sought to facilitate the Arab states' invasion. This line was built on rumours that had been spread by the escapees themselves to justify their desertion and underscore their leaders' impotence and perfidy, and allegations in the Arab countries against the AHC.³²

Israel's psychological warfare machinery also strove to disparage Abdullah in the eyes of the Palestinians.³³ However, the escape's real challenges were not propagandist or psychological, but practical. The mass flight had created a vacuum. As fate would have it this vacuum did not take place in a void, but as a constellation of two processes: The mass exodus of Palestinians that left uncontrolled stretches of turf came just at the point when Israel stood on the verge of a mass influx of homeless Jewish immigrants. Leaders of the agricultural settlement organizations and the Jewish National Fund who for decades had engaged in purchase of land from Arabs subsequently utilized to establish new Jewish settlements, quickly noted the opportunity and suggested filling the void with Jewish settlers. Three of them — Yosef Weitz of the JNF, Abraham Harzfeld of the Histadrut's Agricultural Centre and Levy Eshkol (Shkolnik), head of the Jewish Agency's department of agricultural

settlement (and Israel's future prime minister) — met with Ben-Gurion as early as 7 May 1948 and demanded to settle Jews in abandoned Arab hamlets.

A few deserted villages possessed lands that Jews had bought in the past, but for various reasons could not realize their tenure. The three maintained that once the Arab tenants had gone, there was no legal or moral barrier to replacing them with Jewish settlers. Vacant parcels of state-owned public lands were also eligible for Jewish settlement. A third category was the German Templars' colonies. Since the Second World War, the mandatory government had held their lands in trusteeship as enemy property. The Jewish Agency had prevailed in vain on the High Commissioner to let Jews cultivate them and now there was no reason to delay their takeover any longer. Harzfeld told Ben-Gurion that 46 groups of settlers were ready to inhabit deserted villages and asked permission to settle them on these lands.³⁴

On the eve of the Arab armies' invasion, Ben-Gurion was occupied by more urgent concerns. He was not convinced that seizing the vacated land was an issue of paramount importance that required his personal attention and ruled that lower echelons of the new state's bureaucracy should deal with this matter.

The land and settlement lobby joined hands with veterans of the Jewish Agency's Arab section to plan filling the vacuum. Upon Weitz's initiative, Shertok and minister of finance Eliezer Caplan approved the establishment of an informal team (Weitz, Danin and Sasson) for this purpose. The ministers empowered the three to draft a preliminary program for transforming still fluid "post-exodus" circumstances into a permanent reality. The underlying goal: to prevent the Arabs' return, and assist in their absorption and resettling elsewhere.³⁵

While the land and settlement activists coveted the abandoned lands, and were perhaps even keen to see more lands abandoned in the future course of the war, another agricultural lobby was interested in the availability of cheap Arab labour. In several places, Jewish farmers objected to the departure of nearby villagers because they needed them as labourers. When the farmers of the large veteran Jewish agricultural settlements in western Samaria learned of the army's intention to expel Arabs from the area, they complained to the Ministry of Minorities' Affairs. Shitrit addressed Ben-Gurion, at the same time notifying the local brigade's HQ to call off any directions to banish Arabs that had not been approved in advance by the minister of defence.³⁶

Since the Arab invasion violated the partition lines, Israel refused to regard them as binding. Weitz suggested to Shertok exploiting "the fact of evacuation" for exchanging the Palestinians with Jews from the Arab states. He proposed sending a delegation abroad to communicate with

Arab governments about resettling refugees in their countries. Weitz's inspiration in raising this idea came from the Turko-Greek pact of 1922, which ended the war between these two countries. This pact provided for exchanging the Greek residents of Minor Asia with Turks living on the Greek mainland and islands. Simultaneously, Weitz advocated buying lands from Arab owners who wished to sell their tracts before they left the country. He also recommended taking over the Germans' lands and founding new settlements on Jewish and state lands beyond the partition borders. First and foremost he had in mind strengthening a Jewish presence along the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road and in western Galilee.³⁷

Shertok briefed Ben-Gurion on these ideas, and proposed assigning Weitz with collecting data to support the proposals. After interviewing Weitz, Ben-Gurion ordered that tracts of land belonging to abandoned villages be considered a temporary trusteeship. This decision implied that Jewish settlers might cultivate them as long as the war continued. Yet, Ben-Gurion did not want the government to be involved and instructed the Jewish Agency and the JNF to handle the deserted hamlets.

On the next day, Weitz handed Ben-Gurion a memorandum listing the abandoned villages, the number of former inhabitants and the size of their lands. He calculated that 335,000 Arabs had run away by that time. More than 123,000 villagers had abandoned 155 hamlets and 77,000 Arabs had fled from five towns within the Jewish state's territory; 40,000 Arabs had departed from Jerusalem; 73,000 had escaped from two cities within the proposed Arab state's borders (Jaffa and Acre) and 22,000 *fallahin* had abandoned 35 hamlets beyond the Jewish state's borders.³⁸

Ben-Gurion explicitly expressed his stance at the next provisional government's meeting:

A war is a war. We did not make it . . . and I do not want the escapees to return. Now, we should frustrate their re-entry . . . I shall also favour denying their reappearance after the war.³⁹

Avoiding a discussion in the cabinet's plenum, where left-wing *MAPAM* and perhaps ministers of his own *MAPAI* party might undermine his position, Ben-Gurion proposed appointing a ministerial committee to study the causes for the exodus. This committee had never convened, but at the end of the war one of its appointed members, Shitrit, prepared a personal memorandum expounding his appraisal of the motivations behind the flight. He based his arguments on talks with Arabs who stayed in Israel, and the document reflected their views on the flight.

Shitrit's sources ascribed the escape to various sources: the legacy of Ottoman repression; a fear of domestic terror and anarchy in the manner of the 1930s; the Palestinian leadership's decision to conduct the war from headquarters abroad; fostering illusions among the escapers of a quick

return; a collapse of the Jew's traditional humble image in Arab eyes; overstating outrages such as Dir Yassin by Arab propaganda, and an "Arab mentality" as the famous historian Ibn Khaldun had described it already in the fourteenth century.⁴⁰

In view of the persecution of Jews in Arab countries after the invasion, Shitrit wanted to declare Arab property in Israel as a "security" against Jewish assets in the Arab states. Shertok doubted the wisdom of publicly linking both problems and suspended the proposal, at least temporarily.⁴¹

Aside from Shitrit, the ministers — and Israeli society-at-large — were less interested in the reasons for the Arabs' flight and more interested in obstructing their return. Seeking to block the return home, the IDF began the systematic demolition of deserted Arab villages to prevent their use by the enemy or the return of their residents. First priority was given to destroying hamlets close to the front lines or adjoining Jewish populated areas. At first, Ben-Gurion ordered the General Staff to prepare a list of 109 villages recommended for destruction. After further consultations, he approved the razing of 76 sites. During the second truce, sappers had demolished several of these hamlets.⁴²

Devastation was one method of averting infiltration designed to return home. Another measure was settling Jews in the escapees' houses. Already in June 1948, Weitz's team had contemplated a systematic inhabiting of abandoned sites. The hostilities' resumption in July delayed execution of the plan, but at the beginning of the second truce Ben-Gurion ordered its implementation as well as the establishment of new settlements along the road to Jerusalem and around Lydda airport.⁴³

A few improvised experiments preceded this decision. The idea of replacing Palestinian escapees with Jews surfaced for the first time in Safed. Determined to eliminate any possibility of their former neighbours' reappearance, local Jewish activists who had been terrorized by their Arab neighbours in the past, threatened that the Jews would leave if the Arabs would ever return to the town, and proposed accommodating new immigrants in deserted Arab houses. Backing this proposition, Moshe Shapira, the Minister of Aliyah, himself challenged by the influx of thousands of homeless Jewish immigrants, asked for Ben-Gurion's approval. Ben-Gurion consented, creating thereby a precedent that was soon applied elsewhere.⁴⁴

In July 1948, a neighbourhood in Jaffa was requisitioned and excluded from the military governor's jurisdiction for accommodating evacuees from the Negev and military installations. Concurrently, squatters among the new immigrants took up residence in the town's deserted buildings and the governor appointed a special committee to organize their housing. Following the uncovering of an Arab underground cell in the city, the governor ordered all Arab residents to move into the Ajami quarter on

the seashore. This measure opened up the rest of Jaffa to Jewish settlement. In September, the settling of Jewish evacuees and new immigrants spread to Acre and several villages in the central region.⁴⁵

Because of Acre's proximity to the front line, the army suggested transferring its Arab population to Jaffa. A similar plan, motivated by the same considerations, concerned the removal of Abu Ghosh's villagers to Jaffa. These proposals provoked opposition among civil authorities. Anticipating difficulties in finding sources of livelihood for the transferees, Shertok dropped the problem in the laps of the Ministry of Minorities' Affairs.⁴⁶ Shitrit promptly rejected this transfer and insisted on receiving a written order to the effect from Ben-Gurion. He firmly rejected the idea of turning Jaffa into a congregation point for the Jewish state's remaining Arab population.⁴⁷

Ben-Gurion, as well, did not countenance the transfer of Acre's Arabs to Jaffa. Within a short time, thousands of new immigrants had invaded Jaffa and set up residence in its houses. Besides, soldiers, policemen, evacuees and other people who lost their property in the war, and various military and civil offices as well, had found lodging in the city. In view of the changing conditions, the army dropped the transfer idea.⁴⁸

In face of the numerous problems that emerged daily, Ben-Gurion commissioned Shertok to take charge of all issues connected with the Arabs' flight and pressures to fill the vacuum. Weitz waited a few days, expecting Shertok to consult him. Having received no summons, he addressed the foreign minister on his own initiative:

We must take steps to promote a desirable solution from our viewpoint: gathering facts on the escapees and on those who have entered the Arab states; working out the transfer scheme's principles; disseminating propaganda about the flight's irreversibility . . . We should establish immediately the machinery that will lead us to our goal — execution of the transfer. This will crown our triumph and the sooner the better.⁴⁹

Danin and Shimoni joined Weitz in seeking solutions for the problems that the escape had raised or created. Primarily, they strove to obstruct refugees drifting back, until the government defined Israel's position on this issue. Early in August 1948, they listed essential prerequisites for defining this policy: Clarifying the fugitives' locations; registering abandoned property and evaluating it; collecting data on precedents of population transfers under similar circumstances. Having in mind cases such as the war between Greece and Turkey in 1922; Alexandretta's annexation by Turkey in 1939; the expulsion of Germans from *Sudetenland* and Silesia after the Second World War, as well as the emergence of India and Pakistan in 1947, they stressed the need for planning the refugees' resettlement in the Arab countries. Moreover, they demanded funding to budget demolition of Arab houses and mentioned

the need of explaining these measures to foreign and Israeli journalists.⁵⁰

The Arab states did not intend to resettle the refugees in their countries and adamantly demanded their prompt return: To counterbalance their pressures on the UN mediator, Shertok instructed Abba (Aubrie) Eban, head of the Israeli delegation at the UN, to oppose the refugees' return as long as the war (and the truce) continued. Eban would also announce that after the war, re-entry would depend on an overall settlement.⁵¹

Fearing that a solution imposed by the UN might force Israel to admit the refugees, Shitrit suggested their urgent registration. This registry should differentiate between escapees that had left the area within the partition borders and those who had fled from territories beyond them. Some Foreign Ministry officials backed the proposition, but Shertok was reserved. Registration could not remain secret and might imply acquiescence to the eventual return of the refugees, thus undermining Israel's diplomatic efforts to thwart such a move.⁵²

As might be expected, Bernadotte took up the Arab demand for repatriation and presented it to Israel as his own.⁵³ Shertok raised the matter in the Provisional Government's meeting and explained the basics of Israel's position:

Undoubtedly, we face a highly sensitive problem . . . We cannot remain indifferent to human suffering, but . . . we consider the truce, a stage of war not a phase of peace.

He ascribed the cry for the refugees' return to the Arab states' desire to rid themselves of a burden; the refugees' return would enable the Arabs to continue fighting. Furthermore, he said, the escapees' return meant introducing a fifth column into Israel and transferring responsibility for their fate from the Arab states to Israel.

Citing economic difficulties that were likely to accompany the return, Shertok advocated postponing solution to the problem until the conclusion of a peace treaty. Only then, Israel might broach it with the Arab governments in conjunction with the situation of the Jews in Arab countries.

Formulating Israel's official reply to Bernadotte in this spirit, Shertok dismissed any return as long as a state of war persisted and added:

When the Arab states are ready to conclude a peace treaty with Israel, this question will come up for a constructive solution as a part of the general settlement and with due regard to our counter-claims concerning the destruction of Jewish life and property.⁵⁴

Bernadotte prevailed on Israel to make a gesture to the refugees. In response, Shertok sermonized that their resettlement in the Arab countries was inevitable:

If we shall have a large Arab minority in our country, no matter how much we shall elevate them — we shall be accused of discrimination. These accusations will be the Arab states' excuse for interfering in our affairs . . . 300,000 refugees are a drop in the bucket for the Arabs. A long-term arrangement to resettle them will restore the situation and stabilize our relations with the Arab states.⁵⁵

Yet, Shertok's aides feared that the United States — afraid of a possible communist conspiracy to exploit the refugees' misery to ignite the revolutionary flame in the Middle East — might endorse the Arab stance and Bernadotte's demands.⁵⁶

Directly and indirectly, UN observers in Israel used various means to interfere in matters pertaining to the refugees, pushing for their return. Bypassing Israel's security claims against admitting them, they focused on the domestic escapees. These Arabs had left their homes but were living within Israel's borders, mostly in the vicinity of Nazareth.⁵⁷

Bernadotte rejected Israel's arguments. In his interim report to the UN General Secretary, he insisted on the refugees' right to return to their homes and receive compensation for destroyed or looted property. He realized that many had no place to return and would have to resettle either in Israel or in the Arab countries. The choice, however, should be theirs.⁵⁸

Israel turned down these demands jointly with the mediator's other proposals. Nonetheless, Shertok was inclined to admit a certain number of escapers, provided the rest resettled in the Arab countries. Simultaneously, Israeli propaganda emphatically played down the refugees' numbers, should Israel be forced to admit them.⁵⁹

Following Shertok's disputes with Bernadotte, Ben-Gurion summoned his ministers and advisers to discuss all sides of the issue and decide whether to allow any return or not. Opening the consultation, he referred to the urgent need to obtain vital information and defined three topics for subsequent discussion: (1) the refugees' property — particularly lands; (2) assistance in their absorption in the Arab countries; and (3) conditions for their reception in Israel.

Most speakers addressed the first and second items. They mainly referred to the cultivation of abandoned tracts — appraisal of their value and confiscation. Weitz also addressed the issue of return. He detailed his ideas about demolishing certain villages and settling Jews in others and declared: "Arabs that have escaped must not come back."

Studying resettlement problems all over the world was essential for presenting alternatives to the government. Weitz suggested assigning this task to an informal and secret body having appropriate powers: "The government's departments should assist, supply material etc. but without carrying out the task."

Other speakers remarked that Israel's resources were insufficient for

resettling the escapees. Shitrit advocated banning the return of non-Palestinian Arabs who had lived in Palestine before the war and, simultaneously, exchanging Palestinians for Jews from the Arab countries. Shimoni objected to the "transfer" slogan and warned of linking immigration from the Arab countries with the refugees' repatriation.

Shertok proposed to permit "domestic" refugees who were still inside the state's borders to go back to their homes, and Shitrit backed his proposition. Danin, however, demanded to delay any decision on this issue pending verification of their exact number. In his opinion, a census identifying all Arabs residing in the state was a prerequisite to barring a massive infiltration.

Ben-Gurion hardly voiced an opinion and mainly listened. On one occasion, he commented: "We are seeking means to help those who will not come back — and we desire them to be as numerous as possible — to resettle abroad." The conference dispersed without taking any formal decisions, and Ben-Gurion assigned Weitz, Danin and engineer Zalman Lif — a Jewish Agency's expert on land and planning problems — with preparing detailed proposals on all three issues.⁶⁰

Before his departure for the UN Assembly's session in Paris, Shertok briefed the government on the position he was going to take on the refugee issue. Officially, Israel opposed any repatriation before the war's end and insisted on solving the problem in the framework of a peace treaty. Unofficially, the delegation should explain that all concerned parties might benefit from resettling the escapees in neighbouring countries. Subsequently, the cabinet decided to postpone any dialogue on admitting refugees, pending the peace talks.⁶¹

For the time being, Ben-Gurion adhered to this position. Early in October 1948, the opposition parties joined in the debate when the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional State Council broached the government's stance on the late Bernadotte's report. The Revisionist delegate, Arye Altman, proposed demanding that the UN "transfer the Arabs and resettle them in the Arab countries' vast territories". Ben-Gurion promptly dismissed the proposition:

Although I am a Zionist, I think that those Arabs who wish to live in Israel should come back. We shall not shut the door in their face.

Ben-Gurion explained the government's determination to discuss the refugee issue only when negotiating peace treaties, and the council's committee approved this position by a majority vote.⁶²

So far, knowledge of the problem's proportions had derived from guesswork and impressions from "dubious" sources. Having made a preliminary study, Lif told Ben-Gurion that the scope of the flight beyond the borders had been exaggerated. Most escapees stayed in the country's

Arab parts and expected to return to their former homes. Lif calculated that 75,000 Palestinians had fled to Transjordan, 20,000 to Syria, 12–15,000 to Lebanon and 5,000 to Iraq. Only a few arrived in Egypt.⁶³ Bernadotte's numbers were higher and portrayed a different distribution. In his report to the UN General Secretary, the UN mediator estimated that the total number of refugees was 360,000: 80,000 in Samaria, 65,000 in the Gaza Strip, 50,000 in Transjordan, 70,000 in Syria, 50,000 in Lebanon, 12,000 in Egypt and 3,000 in Iraq.⁶⁴

Lif asserted that "only town-dwellers went to the adjacent countries . . . the *fallahin* linger near the front lines and hope to come back". He brought as an example the *mukhtar* of Qumi, a hamlet near kibbutz Ein Harod, who was waiting in Nazareth:

He has 1,000 dunam of private land. Although his two daughters are begging in Nazareth's streets, he does not want to sell his land. He is sure of his eventual return and by then, the prices of the land will grow considerably owing to the likelihood of mass immigration.⁶⁵

Sasson offered a contradictory example: A Lebanese Jew had arrived in Paris, representing several wealthy Palestinians who wished to sell lands to alleviate their dire circumstances in Beirut.⁶⁶

Broaching of the refugee problem expanded beyond the army and the officialdom. The Palestinians' flight generated astonishment in the *Yishuv* — open and latent longings, as well as reservations. Although rigorous censorship restricted public debate of the mass flight, the issue was intensely discussed in close quarters. An IDF report from late August 1948 remarked: "The refugee problem arouses plenty of thoughts among the public, which usually opposes their repatriation." This account also quoted mention of the refugee issue by journalists that were cut by the military censor, reminding readers abroad that the Arabs had left the country of their own free will, even against the Jews' wishes. No wonder, therefore, that the Jews, who always feared a large minority in their midst, were satisfied that the problem had been solved so easily and did not want the refugees to come back.⁶⁷

Statements by activists of the left-wing MAPAM party in support of the refugees' return annoyed the Foreign Ministry. As early as the beginning of May 1948, MAPAM's Arab section demanded the party's institutions be convened to determine its disposition to the Palestinians' flight. The party's leaders postponed the discussion several times, but during the truce the political committee finally declared its objection to Arabs' expulsion. MAPAM's statement urged the government to let them stay put, refrain from destroying their villages and safeguard abandoned property pending its owners' return. This declaration referred to the refugees as "Arab citizens of the Jewish State."⁶⁸

The resolutions did not reflect unanimity among the party's comrades. On the contrary, the issue of the Arabs' status in Israel, and especially the refugees' possible return, was a constant source of friction between the two factions that had united in January 1948 to form MAPAM: the Marxist *Hashomer Hatzair* and the activist *Ahdut Ha'avodah* parties. The collapse of their "fraternity among Peoples" principle worried certain members of *Hashomer Hatzair*, who sincerely regretted the mass flight. They particularly censured IDF conduct in Ramle and Lydda, where — ironically — the commanding officer was Yigal Alon, a prominent comrade of their own united party. By contrast, *Ahdut Ha'avoda* was primarily preoccupied with preserving its special status within the IDF through efforts to prevent disbandment of the *PALMAH* and could not have cared less about the Arabs' fate. *Ahdut Ha'avodah's* leader, Izhak Tabenkin, stated simply: "We all fight to have a homeland for the Jews in the Diaspora. Are our refugees worse than the Arabs?"

Giving voice to his own personal attitude, Tabenkin's colleague Menahem Dorman asserted: "When the Arabs kill my friends, I cannot feel the Arab refugees' plight." *Hashomer Hatzair's* activist in the Arab sector, Eliezer Bauer (Beer), dismissed Dorman's personal statement: "I do feel the refugees' distress. For me, *Fraternity among Peoples* is not an empty slogan. I have friends among the Arabs. I know that they had not wanted the war, and they have been severely punished." The movement's leaders joined in the debate, and Yaacov Hazan of *Hashomer Hatzair* claimed:

The Arabs have been expelled from the Land of Israel . . . It started in Dir Yassin and ended in pre-meditated deportations. In many instances, the expulsion was not a military necessity. Meanwhile, many Arab villages have been razed or settled by Jews . . . We may have to let the Arabs come back, and they will have nowhere to return . . . In view of the Jews' situation in the Arab countries, we need Arabs in the Land of Israel as hostages.

On the other hand, Tabenkin argued:

Every deportation is difficult. However, if we face the alternatives of expulsion or murder, we shall all opt for expulsion . . . Immigration will be impossible without space.

Tabenkin had no compunction about Ramle and Lydda. The Arabs had not been deported, he maintained, but deceived — not by the Jews, but by their own leaders.⁶⁹

MAPAM was not only more sensitive to the refugees' plight but also was the Israeli Arabs' chief advocate. When the Arabs of Jaffa were assembled at Ajami the party's deputy in the Ministry of Minorities' Affairs protested against the intent to fence off the neighbourhood, asserting that "Ajami would look like a closed ghetto". The allusion, but a few years

after the Holocaust, was self-evident.⁷⁰ The party's rank-and-file in the army and in the kibbutzim did not share their leaders' concern and frequently criticized their excessive preoccupation with the "Arab problem". When Hazan complained about the deportations, Ben-Gurion retorted that Hazan's own comrades and disciples had driven the Arabs out of Ramle and Lydda. Indeed, the involvement of MAPAM's members — officers and other ranks — in outrages that had encouraged the Arabs' flight made the party uncomfortable. This was particularly true of PALMAH units that for a long time had been identified with MAPAM. The party's political committee therefore demanded their comrades in the army: "strict observance of the Jewish purity of arms to secure the moral character of our war".⁷¹

These admonitions proved ineffective. Every now and then, the party's institutions had to address its members in uniform and the army in general, on issues of "purity of arms": total refrain from raping, looting and robbery. As the war dragged on, *Ahdut Ha'avoda's* members displayed growing impatience with their partners from *Hashomer Hatzair's* "excessive sensitivity to the Arabs' distress".⁷²

As a dominant centre party, MAPAI adopted a pragmatic stance. Addressing its leadership on this issue, Shertok stressed Israel's objection to the return of the refugees and elaborated on historical and practical justifications for this policy. Preferring to delay statements to this effect pending the termination of the war and opening of negotiation of a peace treaty, he demanded to refrain from declaring openly Israel's opposition to the escapees' repatriation.⁷³

Since the summer of 1948, Israel created a series of *fait accompli*, partly in response to prevailing military and economic exigencies and partly in anticipation of the future dispute over the refugees' return. Following the government's decision on the principle of "no return before the peace", these actions transformed the flight that most escapees had perceived as temporary, into a permanent refugee problem.

Bearing the title of the "foreign minister's adviser on transfer matters", Ezra Danin rejected criticism of the state's attitude towards the Arabs. He claimed that this disposition was an unavoidable by-product of the war:

If the High Command believes that it will achieve the desired war goals faster by destruction, murder and human suffering, I would not stand in its way. If we shall not act swiftly, our ruthless enemies will treat us in the same manner . . . If we had pitied the inhabitants of Lydda and Ramle and let them stay put, the Legion might have been able to conquer Tel Aviv, and you can imagine the picture . . .

Danin advocated reducing the number of Arabs in the state as far as possible, believing that absolute separation was the best solution for both peoples. Otherwise, he maintained, the remnants of bitterness would

cause endless frictions.⁷⁴ Far away in Paris Sasson, too, endeavoured to seek means to resettle refugees in the Arab countries. Believing in solving the problem in co-operation with Abdullah, he was furious to learn that his colleagues at the Middle East Department had disseminated covert propaganda against the king. Apologizing, Shimoni explained that the purpose had been to turn the refugees' indignation against the Arab rulers. Sasson was not satisfied. In his opinion, it was more important to work for their absorption in the Arab countries. The only Arab ruler with whom it was possible to broach this proposition was Abdullah. Hence, the king should be portrayed to appear in Palestinian eyes as a saviour, not a traitor.⁷⁵

In the absence of definitive political guidelines, Danin, Weitz and Lif were in the dark and asked Shertok:

Is it desirable now to bring home to both *fallahin* and townspeople that they would not return and should turn elsewhere to rehabilitate their lives?

Shimoni feared that such a stance might boomerang — providing Israel's opponents in the UN with ammunition to exploit such "immoderate" messages in Israeli propaganda. He recommended a more cautious approach.⁷⁶

In the absence of clear political guidelines for waging psychological warfare among the refugees, the three members of the transfer committee embarked on collecting relevant historical data. Danin studied transfers of population in the wake of previous wars:

Beginning with mass slaughters where the murderers inherited the victims' property and ending with the most civilized arrangements made by Powers capable of defending their nationals. The study deals mainly with events that have taken place during this century and includes: Armenians, Kurds, Greeks, Turks, Assyrians, Bulgarians, Russians, Germans, Poles, Czechs, Arabs in Lybia, Indonesian, Indians and Muslims in Punjab etc. etc. If we succeed in this gathering, we can confront every nation with a list of its own crimes in this field. Thus, they will have to restrain their criticism of Israel's actions.

Lif was in charge of surveying Arab lands in Israel while Weitz studied development schemes in the Arab countries to find out the cost of resettling a family and other factors influencing resettlement.⁷⁷

The committee needed reliable information on the numbers of refugees, their true economic state, their housing situation, dispersion and the scope of infiltration. Late in September, the Middle East Department summed up the refugees' situation for the first time. It cited the great variations among Arab sources concerning their numbers. Syria and Lebanon in particular inflated the figures to obtain larger grants for supporting "their" escapees. Most fugitives were still in Palestine's Arab parts, and

except for Transjordan no Arab state absorbed large numbers of Palestinians who had taken flight.

Contrary to future gaps between the Arab and Israeli numbers, at that time the total figures cited by both sides were almost in accord with each other: the average derived from the Arab sources was 455,000 while Israeli estimates were 424,000. The memorandum main purpose was, however, polemical — to contradict the Arab figures, not to serve as the foundation for a practical blueprint. It blamed the AHC for both causing the problem and preventing its solution lest this lead to an agreement between Israel and the Arab states.⁷⁸

Prior to resuming hostilities in mid-October 1948, Weitz summarized the refugee situation for Ben-Gurion. His main ambition was driving the refugees that still lingered close to the front lines further back, to thwart their infiltration. According to his sources, Arab Galilee hosted about 100,000 escapees who mostly wished to go back to their homes. He warned that if Galilee was annexed to the Jewish state as Bernadotte had proposed, refugees from other districts might flock to this region.

Ben-Gurion asked what could be done to prevent this congregation, and Weitz replied: "If not war, then we should harass them incessantly." His other anxiety was the bulk of refugees in Gaza. Predicting the hopeless situation of the Gaza strip in the future, he suggested sowing demoralization and anxiety among their ranks until they would move to the Mount Hebron area, since "they cannot go to the sea and they are not free to enter into Egypt".⁷⁹

Despite extensive debate of the refugee issues during the second truce, even at this stage of the war Israel had no consistent policy towards the Arab civilian population in battle zones. Anticipating *HIRAM*, the Foreign Ministry wished the IDF to take care "that no Arabs remain in Galilee after its occupation, and especially that no refugees from other places will remain there". However, co-ordination between the military and civil authorities was slack and Shimoni complained: "As usual, the army did not seek our advice and did not inform us in advance of the impending inauguration of operations in Galilee."⁸⁰

Between *YOAV* and *HIRAM*, Weitz, Danin and Lif presented their conclusions to Ben-Gurion. They blamed the Arabs for running away and insisted that by no means should Israel let them come back. They might comprise a fifth column, and their rehabilitation would be beyond the state's capacities. Arabs who had not fled should enjoy equal status as citizens of the state, while those who had run away should resettle in the Arab countries.

To finance this resettlement, the three suggested selling Arab property in Israel and extracting appropriate reparations for the Palestinians' role in the war. The Arab states should grant the lands for resettling the

refugees and international capital should contribute its share. Simultaneously, the Jews of Iraq and Syria would immigrate to Israel. Questions such as what would happen if the Arab states refused to fulfil their role or if the UN forced Israel to admit refugees, remained an open question. Ben-Gurion preferred to demand resettlement of the refugees in a single Arab country, preferably Iraq and by no means Transjordan. At this point, he still objected to linking the refugee question with the status of Jews in Arab countries.⁸¹

Another issue demanding a decision was the fate of “domestic” refugees — that is, displaced Arabs who had left their homes but remained in territory now controlled by Israel. For the time being, they stayed in Nazareth, in abandoned hamlets and camped in the open. As a test case, Shitrit asked Ben-Gurion and Shertok to examine the status of 48 families from Bisan living in Nazareth. He argued that they were not “absentees” since the army had evacuated them from their hometown two weeks after its occupation. Although the Foreign Ministry was disposed to consider favourably special cases such as this, it warned of a precedent: “If we allow them to return, hundreds and thousands more may come, each with his special arguments.”⁸²

Weitz and his colleagues recommended prohibiting the return of domestic refugees to villages close to the borders, such as Iqrit and Bir’am. In other instances, they objected to their return because they had planned to purchase the villages’ lands from their owners, to settle Jews on them. Hence, they proposed to concentrate the domestic refugees and settle them in villages other than their own.⁸³

The complete report was ready in December 1948. Lif dissented from some of his colleagues’ recommendations. He told Ben-Gurion that in his opinion no populated Arab villages should be left within a certain distance from the border. Some hamlets should be destroyed and Jewish settlers should inhabit others.⁸⁴ This report laid the foundations for Israel’s policy in the next phase, during the armistice negotiations and the PCC talks, and ultimately guided policy for many years to come. Its main principles were: (1) rejecting return without peace; (2) demanding the refugees’ resettlement in the Arab countries; and (3) thwarting their infiltration by all means. Although the government did not discuss these principles, Ben-Gurion adopted and implemented them.⁸⁵

In several individual cases, the authorities deviated from these guidelines and permitted the return of escapees from the Arab states. The Greek-Catholic Church prevailed on Israel to allow refugees from certain Christian villages in Galilee to return. Israel consented, provided the returnees would publicly declare their loyalty to the Jewish state. Bishop Hakim returned to Haifa owing to intervention by the Vatican on his behalf.⁸⁶ A few families of communist activists’ such as Tawfiq Tubi and

Hannah Naqara returned from Lebanon — infuriating the Maronites in Haifa who complained to Shitrit about the preferable treatment of communists.⁸⁷

Several deviations derived from slack co-ordination or internal power struggles within the new and inexperienced Israeli bureaucracy. Thus, for example, the Minister of *Aliyah* (Immigration), Moshe Shapira, attempted to interfere in matters pertaining to refugees' return and Ben-Gurion sharply reprimanded him:

Aliyah is the Jews' special right to return to their homeland . . . Arabs' return is absolutely not the Ministry of Aliyah's jurisdiction, and I wonder how it permitted certain Arabs to return without a government resolution [to that effect].⁸⁸

Another controversy broke out between the army and the Foreign Ministry over the Bedouin. The government officials objected to cultivating contacts with them prior to a formal decision on their admittance. Economic rather than political considerations and interests motivated the Foreign Ministry's objection. The army ignored the bureaucrats, openly fostering the link with the Bedouin.⁸⁹ Both sides brought the argument to Ben-Gurion's attention and decision. Yigal Alon suggested enlisting the Bedouin into a special IDF unit. Yadin proposed concentrating and settling them in the region of Zbeta, an old Nabatean site in western Negev. Both officers emphasized the political advantages and propaganda value of publicizing appeal by the Bedouin to Israel. Danin and Weitz, on the other hand, cited the damage that the Bedouin might cause to agricultural settlement and land registration in the region. Dismissing both the propagandist and the settlement arguments, Ben-Gurion gave instructions to weigh the issue solely on security grounds.⁹⁰

Against external pressures to let the refugees repatriate, Israeli diplomacy tried hard to persuade the United States that resettling Palestinians in the Arab countries was the most feasible proposition. Shertok stated to the PCC that the refugees might return only in the wake of signing peace treaties, and not due to the armistice agreements. On the one hand, he explained at length Israel's likely quandaries in integrating them and the impossibility of returning to the *status quo* prior to the war. On the other hand, he indicated plenty of possibilities for resettling Palestinians in Syria, Iraq and Transjordan and announced Israel's readiness to compensate those who had owned lands.⁹¹

Danin met with the American ambassador to Israel, James McDonald, who had been the League of Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees in the 1930s and had acquired some knowledge and understanding of refugee problems. Having presented his committee's work and findings to the ambassador — leading to the conclusion that resettlement was

inevitable, he succeeded — or so Danin believed — in persuading McDonald to adopt the Israeli stance. Other American diplomats in Israel and the region, who did not sympathize with Israel as McDonald did, also joined McDonald in promulgating the Israeli case out of practical considerations.⁹²

A principal obstacle in convincingly presenting the Israeli solution — resettling most refugees in the Arab states — was the need to demonstrate practical means of implementing it. Israeli delegates in the United States looked for funding sources and discussed with American experts various development projects in the Arab countries that might contribute to the resettlement enterprise.⁹³

The Foreign Ministry dispatched Palestinian and other Arab intermediaries to examine possibilities of resettlement in Transjordan and Syria. Sasson suggested inviting a delegation under Hauari to visit Israel: “They will see the true conditions and realize that there is no possibility of return.” Shertok was reserved, fearing that after the visit the delegation might defame Israel in the UN. He proposed to Sasson to activate Hauari in two other initiatives: encourage the settlement of refugees in Syria without waiting for international aid, and organize a Palestinian group earnestly prepared to establish a Palestinian administration in the West Bank.⁹⁴

While Bunch worked for ending the fighting and attaining the armistice agreements, the UN assigned another body — the PCC — with the task of mediating a permanent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The PCC was appointed in accordance with the UN assembly’s resolution of 11 December 1948 and comprised of delegates from the United States, France and Turkey. In March 1949, the commissioners arrived in the Middle East and began devising a comprehensive solution of the basic disputes: recognition of Israel by the Arab states, the refugees, the borders and the status of Jerusalem. Heavily burdened by the refugee problems, the Arab states insisted on prefacing discussion with address of this issue prior to all other questions. The PCC demanded a gesture of good will from Israel: admitting a certain number of refugees as a prerequisite for persuading the Arabs to resettle the rest in their countries.

Debating Israel’s stance *vis-à-vis* the PCC, an argument broke out between Shertok and Ben-Gurion. The foreign minister proposed to announce that the return might be discussed only in the framework of peace negotiations and the essence of the peace would determine its scope. Ben-Gurion and other ministers now opposed linking peace with repatriation. They maintained that Israel should only state that after signing a peace treaty would Israel be ready to discuss the refugees’ future. Finally, they compromised on mentioning a possible return without defining its magnitude.⁹⁵

Under heavy American pressure — exerted directly and through the PCC — Israel consented in the summer of 1949 to admit 100,000 refugees. Infiltrators and those who had been allowed to return on convalescent grounds were deducted from that figure. This gesture, however, far from satisfied Arab demands and the Arab states refused to accept it or let the refugees under their dominion utilize the opportunity and apply for their admittance.

Epilogue

The armistice agreements of 1949 ended the fighting, but neither addressed the causes of the war nor solved its consequences. At first, Israel regarded these accords as an interim phase leading to talks about a permanent settlement of the Arab–Israeli conflict and signing peace treaties. These hopes were not consummated. The armistice regime persisted until the Six Day War in 1967, and the permanent settlement still seems to be far from near at hand even at the time of writing this, in the closing days of the twentieth century, and revising it after the collapse of the Camp David summit meeting in July 2000.

Transforming the armistice into peace was the task of the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC). Late in April 1949, the PCC convened the parties at a conference in Lausanne (Switzerland) that ended inconclusively in August of the same year. The PCC failed to bridge the enormous gaps between the adversaries and could not even bring them together for common discussions. Subsequently, it embarked on reviewing the conditions of the Palestinian refugees and devising solutions for their temporary rehabilitation. Two more rounds of talks — at the beginning of 1950 and in the fall of 1951 — ended in failure and the PCC disappeared into oblivion. During the first half of the 1950s, attempts at mediation and direct talks between Israel on the one hand, and Jordan, Egypt and Syria on the other, also proved futile.

From 1949 to 1967, the Palestinians receded from the political scene. Those who remained in Israel, as well as those who returned legally or illegally in the first year after the war, became Israeli citizens. The indigenous Palestinians on the West Bank and the refugees on both banks were incorporated into Jordan, which granted them full citizenship. There were also “Egyptian” Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as well as “Syrian” and “Lebanese” Palestinians in refugee camps in Syria and Lebanon — all without recognized citizenship. The concept “Palestinian” as such vanished, unless it was linked to the word “refugee”.

Only in the wake of the Six Day War, did the Palestinians return to the political arena under their own banner. Since Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip but did not annex them, the inhabitants of these areas ceased to be “Jordanian” and “Egyptian” but did not become “Israeli”. They reappeared as “Palestinians” — a term that had been forgotten for 18 years. After relations between Israel and the Arab states stabilized in the wake of the Yom Kippur war in 1973, the Palestinian question returned to the centre of the Israeli–Arab conflict.

Four issues have curtailed all ventures to reconcile the Arab states and the Palestinians with Israel after the war of 1948. The ostensible transformation of Israeli–Arab relations in recent years notwithstanding, these four issues still constitute an insurmountable hindrance to any permanent settlement.

The first issue has been territorial. Israel inherited Mandatory Palestine’s international borders with the adjacent Arab states. The Arab armies violated these lines by their invasion of Palestine in May 1948 and — except the Arab Legion — violated the borders of the Jewish state according to the UN resolution of 29 November 1947. Nevertheless, Israel accepted the international borders and in 1949 withdrew its forces from Egyptian and Lebanese territories in preparation for or in the wake of the armistice negotiations. Until 1967, Egypt demanded a corridor through the Negev that separated it from the rest of the Arab world, as a precondition for any settlement with Israel. As part of the Camp David peace treaty with Egypt, Israel again evacuated all Egyptian territories that had been occupied in 1967. In return, Egypt recognized the legitimacy of its international border with Israel, but not yet Israel’s other borders.

Israel’s border with Syria has posed a different problem. Unlike the other Arab states, Syria has never recognized its international border with Palestine whose demarcation had been determined by an Anglo-French pact in December 1920 and modified later — in 1923 — during the process of setting up border markers in the field. In 1949, Syria refused to withdraw its army behind this line. The compromise that the UN mediator devised — defining the controversial area between the former Syrian lines on the Jordan River’s western bank and the international border as a “demilitarized zone” — was open to contradictory interpretations by the adversaries. For all intents and purposes, partitioned in practice by Syria and Israel between 1951 and 1953, this “demilitarized” area remained a constant source of friction until the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights in 1967.

The most crucial territorial problem, however, has been the border between Israelis and Palestinians. The armistice lines of 1949 separated between Israel on the one hand, and Egypt and Jordan on the other. From a Palestinian standpoint, the armistice lines (in popular parlance

the "Green Line", as designated on maps) have been meaningless and non-committing. Continuous infiltration into Israel manifested this attitude. The only internationally recognized line separating Israelis from Palestinians has been the 1947 partition borders. At the PCC talks in Lausanne, the Arab states insisted this line be a starting point for discussion of the territorial issue. Under heavy American pressure and fears that Israel would not be admitted as a member to the UN, the Israeli delegation succumbed to this demand (presented by the PCC as its own). After Ben-Gurion ignored their request for instructions, the delegates signed the document known as "The Lausanne Protocol", which accepted the principle of the 1947 lines as the basis for territorial discussions, although it allowed the parties to suggest modifications. Subsequently, the PCC dismissed the scheme of border amendments submitted by Israel as going far beyond what the commissioners had meant by the term "modifications". The PCC even refused to hand the Israeli proposals over to the Arab delegations. Thus, the territorial discussion reached a stalemate at the very beginning of the conference and has remained such ever since.

The Arabs also linked the claim for Israel's withdrawal to the partition lines with the refugee issue. In Lausanne and elsewhere, Arab delegates maintained that the more territory Israel would cede, the less would be the scope of the remaining refugee problem after the return of some to the vacated area.

Apparently, *the second issue*, which has been posed by the Palestinian refugees, is the most crucial. Several other major refugee problems have emerged in the world during the twentieth century — in Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Balkans, India and Pakistan, Vietnam and various countries in Africa. Most have found their solution long ago. Only the eternal Palestinian refugee problem has endured, affecting all parties concerned. More than any other single factor of the Israeli-Arab conflict, the Palestinian refugee problem manifests its unique features as a confrontation between opposing civilizations, extending beyond the ordinary national or religious level of other historical encounters.

Israel's efforts to convince the Palestinians, the Arab states and the entire world that this problem should be solved by resettlement have been sincere, but geo-culturally out of context. The Israeli approach derived from the European experience, particularly after the Second World War. The mass repatriation of millions after that war concerned only the Allies' nationals. Refugees or deportees of the defeated belligerents resettled to begin life anew elsewhere. Germany absorbed millions of deportees from the *Sudeten* in Czechoslovakia and from Silesia. Poles, whom the Russians had driven out of Galicia, resettled in Silesia. *Chetnik* and *Ustasha* refugees did not go back to Yugoslavia. Israel wanted to apply this prin-

ciple to the Middle East — to a large extent oblivious of the deep-seated difference in historical experience.

In the fifty years that have transpired since the 1948 war, the Arab world has not absorbed the refugees, although various states — especially in the Arab Peninsula — exploited their skills. A partial exception was Transjordan. While individual refugees settled to begin life anew in and outside the region, the majority barely mixed with their hosts — neither in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip nor in the Arab countries. They have remained aloof from the indigenous population — socially and geographically — living in their separate camps and expecting their return.

The Arab world — the refugees themselves, other Palestinians and the Arab states — rejected forthwith the Israeli approach to the problem and Israel's proposals to resolve it. The implied message has been unequivocal: First, the Palestinian refugees are Israel's creation and responsibility, and it should not expect the Arab world to help solving the problem or share the responsibility for their ultimate fate. Secondly, the Arabs have not been able to crush Jewish statehood, but Israel should not expect them to comply with its alien code of behaviour. Unlike Europe, the pattern in the Middle East has been that war refugees return to their homes when hostilities end, and do not resettle elsewhere. Israel has to reckon with this twofold message. Yet, unless the Jewish state is ready to commit national suicide with a demographic Damoclean sword — allowing the abolition of Israel's Jewish character and the Jews' hegemony as a social and political entity — it is difficult to foresee how the problem can be solved.

A *third focal issue* has been Jerusalem. In Arab eyes, Jerusalem embodies the whole conflict because apart from its religious and historical significance, the fate of the holy city also concerns the territorial and refugee issues. Although Jerusalem has had a Jewish majority since the middle of the nineteenth century, the town was also the seat of the Arab elite in Palestine and the traditional centre of Arab political life.

In Jewish eyes, Jerusalem is primarily the historical capital of the Jewish people, the holy city, for generations the focal point for historical yearnings (i.e. "Next Year in Jerusalem") for a return to Zion. The town's fate in 1948 symbolized the UN's failure to implement the partition plan. Israel therefore preferred sharing the city with Jordan rather than internationalization as the least of all evils, and both states co-operated in frustrating UN attempts to revive internationalization. With Jordan's disappearance from the West Bank in 1967, Israel annexed Jerusalem. Ever since it has tried hard to deny the Palestinians any political foothold in the town, claiming that they have neither historical nor legal status in Jerusalem. Once more, this seems to be an unbridgeable gap.

The fourth issue concerns Arab reconciliation with Israel. After their defeat in 1948, the Arab states adopted a series of UN resolutions — to

which they had vehemently objected prior to their military débâcle — as the cornerstone of their political case against Israel. These resolutions concerned the aforementioned issues of the partition and borders, the refugees and Jerusalem. While insisting on their strict fulfilment, the Arab states refused to commit themselves to recognition of and peaceful and friendly relations with their new neighbour. Political and economic relations with Israel, they asserted, were their own business and should not be linked to implementing UN resolutions that should be an international commitment.

This attitude persisted until Anwar Sadat's peace initiative in 1977. It has changed considerably in recent years across most of the Arab world, although genuine acceptance by the Arabs of the "legitimacy" of a non-Muslim entity such as the State of Israel in their midst remains fundamentally unresolved. Only recently, the parties have begun to tackle the basic issues concerning Israeli-Palestinian relations and as could be expected — they failed to reach any understanding about ending the conflict. The unsolved dispute continues to cast a shadow on Israel's relations with the Arab states as well.

The seven year-old Israeli-Palestinian dialogue since the Oslo pact has been conducted on two different levels which, unfortunately, do not seem to be converging: Ultimately, the vast majority of Israelis seeks co-existence with the Arab surroundings and understands that such co-existence requires compromise and concessions on Israel's part. The domestic controversies among Israelis do not concern the principle of compromise and concession, but its scope and implementation: How far to compromise and what should be the limit of *accommodation*. The Palestinians strive for neither co-existence nor compromise but for *justice*: The final and permanent settlement with Israel should remedy the wrongs that have allegedly been done to them, at least since the UN partition plan if not since the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Justice as framed by the Palestinians is an absolute: pure — recognizing no compromises; it is exclusive — with no apparent leeway for reciprocity in the pursuit of "righting historical wrongs". As long as Israeli concessions meet the Palestinians' conceptions of justice — the dialogue persists. When Israel stops conceding and insists on any of its positions calling for compromise — the Palestinian struggle for what they perceive as their "just rights" is likely to erupt again.

Notes

Introduction

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- 41 MELF daily sitrep for 29 February, 2 March 1948, PRO, CO 537/3867, MELF weekly sitrep, 6 March 1948, *ibid.* and the High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, same date, PRO, CO 537/3904.
- 42 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 284, entry for 8 March 1948.
- 43 "Adi" report on Hassan Salameh's activities, 14 January 1948, HA, 105/23.
- 44 Cunningham to Broadmead, 9 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115 and the High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 10 January 1948, *ibid.* Broadmead heard on the BBC that he "had been instructed to make a strong protest". He angrily grumbled that he should get his orders from London, not from Jerusalem, and the Foreign Office fully endorsed his complaint. Cf. Broadmead to FO, 10 January 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903, and Wright to Martin, 23 January 1948, *ibid.*
- 45 Report on events in the vicinity of Kfar Etzion, 11 January 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/104, summary of news from the Arab press, 15 January 1948, HA, 105/60, "Tene"/A daily summary, 20 January 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810 and MELF to WO, 17 January 1948, PRO, CO 537/3867.
- 46 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 16 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115, "Mizrahi" report on the attack on Kfar Etzion, 20 January 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/104, and "Yavne" review titled "Arabs' opinions of their fiasco at Kfar Etzion", 1 February 1948, *ibid.*
- 47 "Tene"/A daily summary, 20 January 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and "Hashmonai" news, 23 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29.
- 48 "Hazi" (eggplant) report, 14 December 1947, IDFA, 500/48/29, "In the Arab Camp", same date, CZA, S 25/9046, and "Mizrahi" report, 16 December 1947, IDFA, 4944/49/617.
- 49 "Hashmonai" to "Ben Yehuda", 25 December 1947, *ibid.* and "Tene" daily summaries, 29–30 December 1947, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 50 Palestine HQ fortnightly intelligence review, 20 December 1947, PRO, WO 261/571.
- 51 "Yavne" reports on the battle near Qastel, 26 January, 1 and 6 February 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/104, and a report on the villagers' conference in Ramallah, 6 February 1948, *ibid.*

- 52 Lifschitz's report, 4 February 1948, CZA, S 25/3569, and the Mufti's letter of 12 February in: "Tzefa" to "Tene"/A, 11 March 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 53 SHAY monthly summary of events in Negev, 2 December 1947, HA 105/228.
- 54 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 36, entry for 12 December 1947, Danin to Sasson, 23 December 1947, CZA, S 25/4057, and Ben-Gurion's speech at the meeting of MAPAI centre, 8 January 1948, LPA, 23/48.
- 55 Danin to Sasson, 23 December 1947, CZA, S 25/4057, Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 69, entry for 24 December 1947 and "Adina" to "Zarhi" (Danin), 29 December 1947, CZA, S 25/3569.
- 56 Shiloah to Saharov, 27 December 1947, CZA, S 25/815, Negbi's report on his meeting with British officers, 2 January 1948, CZA, S 25/4148, "Hamoatz" (PALMAH HQ) to "Knesset" (the Haganah's supreme command), 6 January 1948, BGA, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 9 February 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 57 An estimate of the situation in the Negev, 7 March 1948, CZA, S 25/3569.
- 58 "Baal Habayit" (the houselord) reports on the situation in Gaza and the futile ambush, 2–3 February 1948, HA, 105/23 and "Yovav" (David Karon) report to "Tene"/A, 15 February 1948, *ibid.*
- 59 "Yovav" report on Birsaba, 26 February 1948, *ibid.* and SHAY southern district bulletins, 17, 25 March, and 1 April 1948, HA, 105/228.
- 60 The League boycott committee's report on its activities from the boycott's promulgation to the end of September 1947, 28 November 1947, ISA, FO/2567/14.
- 61 Beeley's minutes of Bevin and Creech-Jones' meeting with the Iraqi delegation at London, 21 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115.
- 62 The review "In the Enemy's Camp in the South and Negev", 17 March 1948.
- 63 SHAY list of economic targets, 22 October 1947, HA, 105/286.
- 64 Ben-Gurion to Shertok, 14 December 1947, BGA.
- 65 "Hakhmi" memorandum to Yadin on Economic Warfare, 28 December 1947, CZA, S25/9178.
- 66 Protocol of a meeting on Arab affairs (note 16 above), pp. 38 and 44.
- 67 Alexandroni's review of the enemy's situation, 14 January 1948.
- 68 Sasson's remarks in the political department's meeting at Jerusalem, 31 January 1948, CZA, S 25/9379, Shiloni (Zvi Averbuch) to Saharov, 7 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/87 and D. Goldberg, *Zikhronot Ish Petah-Tiqva* (Memoirs of a Petah Tiqva Resident, in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1992, p. 84.
- 69 "Tiroshi" (Meir Novik) to "Itai" (Iser Beeri), 6 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/87, minutes of a meeting between Ben-Gurion and Yosef Yacobson, 17 March 1948, HA, 50/21, Galili's circular letter to the brigade commanders, 22 March 1948, and Bengal to Averbuch, 26 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/87.

2 The Palestinians' Organization for War

- 1 Y. Nevo, *The Arabs of Palestine, 1947–1948: Military and Political Activity*, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 23 (1987), pp. 3–38, and H. Levenberg, *The Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine, 1945–1948*, pp. 40–2.

- 2 Cf., for example, the Arab Office in London's statement against Britain and the United States, 9 January 1948, PRO, FO 371/68500.
- 3 "In the Arab Camp", 7 and 14 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 4 Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, p. 180.
- 5 A memorandum on the AHC responsibility for the disturbances, 16 December 1947, CZA, S 25/4148.
- 6 "In the Arab Camp", 14 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 7 Protocol of a consultation on Arab affairs, 1 January 1948, HHA, Galili section, 1/c, pp. 2–3, 6–8 and 24; Sasson to Danin, 4 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569.
- 8 Alexandroni's intelligence summary, 14 January 1948.
- 9 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 3 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115.
- 10 "Hayogev" report on political affairs, 14 August 1947, HA, 105/286, *Al-Wahada*, 27 November 1947, and "In the Arab Camp", 7 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9051. The regulations are also attached to Rafiq al-Tmimi's letter to Qalqilya's national committee, 13 December 1947, ISA, 65/5/3847. Al-Tmimi was at the time the chairman of Jaffa's national committee. Cf. also Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, pp. 180–2.
- 11 Goren, *From Destruction to Recovery*, p. 48.
- 12 "In the Arab Camp", 21 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9051; FSS 317 weekly review, 26 December 1947, PRO, WO 275/79.
- 13 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 3 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115.
- 14 "Hanagid" (Ahmad al-Khalil) news, 14 December 1947, BGA, and protocols of Haifa national committee meetings, 2, 4, 6 and 7 December 1947, HA, 100/12.
- 15 A poster of Haifa national committee, 16 December 1947, BGA.
- 16 "Hanagid" news, 14 December 1947, *ibid.* For a detailed description of the committee's activities cf. Goren, *From Destruction to Recovery*, pp. 45–56.
- 17 "News from Government Sources", 10 December 1947, HA, 105/23, and SHAY review on the situation of the Arabs in Haifa, 4 January 1948, HA, 105/67.
- 18 "Tene" to Yadin, 27 December 1947.
- 19 Publications of the AHC information bureau from February to May 1948 are kept in HA, 105/140.
- 20 "Yavne" review titled "The Present Arab Institutions in Jerusalem — Organisation and Leadership", 28 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29.
- 21 "Mizrahi" report on Khalidi's interview with Gurney, 12 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29; Cunningham to Creech-Jones, 25 January 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903 and "Yavne" daily bulletin, 20 February 1948.
- 22 "Azati" report on the Arab medical services, 3 February 1948, HA, 105/23.
- 23 "In the Arab Camp", 4 January 1948, CZA, S 25/9051.
- 24 Transcripts of conversations between Khalidi and the Mufti, 16 and 18 December 1947, BGA.
- 25 Palmon to Danin, 18 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569, and to Sasson, 20 January 1948, CZA, S 25/9007.

- 26 A transcript of a tapped telephone conversation between Abu Saud and the AHC office in Cairo, in: Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 169, entry for 21 January 1948.
- 27 A transcript of Khalidi's talk with his nephew in Beirut, 21 December 1947, BGA.
- 28 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 112–14, entry for 4 January 1948 (quoting a listening report to the Jerusalem committee's telephone).
- 29 A transcript of the Mufti's talk with Khalidi, entry for 13 January 1948 in Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 156, and "In the Arab Camp", 18 January 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 30 "Yavne" daily bulletin, 8 February 1948.
- 31 "Tene" daily summary, 12 January 1948, IDFA, 900/52/58.
- 32 "Yavne" daily bulletins, 7 and 20 February.
- 33 "Hayogev" report, 9 December 1947, BGA, and "Avram" report on Salameh's conference with Hussayni loyalists at Kula, 19 December 1947, HA, 105/23.
- 34 News on the training base at Tzurif, 2 and 5 January 1948, *ibid.* "Hayogev" report, 5 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569.
- 35 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 10 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115; A transcript of Khalidi's conversation with the Mufti in Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 169, entry for 21 January 1948, and "In the Arab Camp", 25 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29.
- 36 "In the Arab Camp", 14 March 1948, CZA, S 25/7733.
- 37 "In the Arab Camp", 25 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29; "Tiroshi" report on Abd al-Qadir's tour of villages in Samaria, 20 January 1948, HA, 105/23, and a listening report on an assembly in Nablus, 27 January 1948, *ibid.*
- 38 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 6 March 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904.
- 39 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 3 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115.
- 40 Yadin's memorandum to Ben-Gurion, 19 December 1947, BGA.
- 41 Official announcement on the Jerusalem radio, 14 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9210; Alexandroni's intelligence review, 24 December 1947; Fein to Sasson, same date, CZA, S 25/4050, and "In the Arab Camp", 28 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9051.
- 42 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 27 March and 3 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 43 Nevo, *The Arabs of Palestine*, pp. 31–2.
- 44 Reports on Acre, 28–29 December 1947, HA, 105/23; "Azati" report, 31 December 1947, BGA, and "Hashmonai" news, 12 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29.
- 45 Palestine HQ intelligence summary, 20 December 1947, PRO, WO 261/571; "In the Arab Camp", 4 January 1948, CZA, S 25/9051; Danin to Sasson, 13 January 1948, CZA, S 25/9007, and Alexandroni's intelligence review, 14 January 1948.
- 46 Protocol of a consultation on Arab affairs, 1 Jan. 1948 (n. 7 above), p. 1.

- 47 Y. Gelber, *Growing a Fleur-de-Lys*, I, Tel Aviv 1992, p. 362.
- 48 Protocol of consultation on Arab affairs, 1 January 1948 (note 7 above), pp. 10–11, 24 and 40.
- 49 “Hiram” to “Tene”, 5 January 1948, HA, 8/22; “Hiram” summary of Ain Ghazal, 9 July 1947, HA, 105/224, and Alexandroni’s reviews on Taybe and Qalansawa, 22 January 1948.
- 50 Isdud and Masmiya’s village-dossiers, HA, 105/134.
- 51 “Avner” report on Jaffa, 1 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91.
- 52 “Hayogev” report, 18 January 1948, HA, 105/60.
- 53 H. Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, pp. 144–6.
- 54 “Yavne” report on training centres in the Old City of Jerusalem, 9 November 1947; “Tene”/A daily summary, 1 January 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and many news items on the Palestinians’ training, March–April 1948, HA, 105/154.
- 55 Various reports to and from “Hashmonai”, December 1947, IDFA, 500/48/29, and a defence scheme of Musrara neighbourhood attached to Abraham Cohen to GSI, 18 August 1948.
- 56 A report on the situation in Jerusalem, 22 December 1947, BGA; “Yavne” report on the Arab recruitment and training outside Jerusalem, 25 January 1948, IDFA 500/48/29; “Tene” daily summaries, 5 and 28 January 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and a summary of “Hiram” news, 26 January 1948.
- 57 “Yavne” daily bulletin, 30 January 1948; a report on Qatamon, 12 February 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/104, and 6th Airborne Div. intelligence review, 10 February 1948, PRO, WO 275/60.
- 58 Jerusalem District HQ summary of news, 7 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9210 and Alexandroni’s intelligence reviews, 17 and 24 December 1947.
- 59 “Tene” summary, 28 December 1947, IDFA, 1/57/810, and “In the Arab Camp”, 4 January 1948, CZA, S 25/9051.
- 60 “Tiroshi” report on the watch system in Sharon’s villages, 22 December 1947, HA, 105/227. For an Arab description of a village’s organisation for the war (Ma’ilya in western Galilee) cf. E. Shoufani, *The Fall of a Village*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, I, 1972, pp. 114–16.
- 61 Reports on the Arab transport services, 1–2 January 1948, HA, 105/296; “Hashmonai” daily bulletin, 5 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29, and “Tene” daily summary, 12 January 1948, IDFA, 900/52/58.
- 62 “Tene” daily summaries, 1 and 24 February 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 63 “Yavne” daily bulletin, 22 March 1948, CZA, S 53/2146.
- 64 News about the Qatana training centre, 16 and 28 October 1947, HA, 105/148; “Hiram” report on Qatana, 13 November 1947, *ibid.* and news from “Tzefa” and from “Yavne”, 13–19 November 1947, *ibid.*
- 65 A report from an agent in Syria to “Tene”/A, 1 December 1947.
- 66 “Tzefa” report on Qatana, 28 December 1947, and Lishansky’s testimony at Yigal Alon House archives, February 1991, pp. 64–5.
- 67 SHAY review of Arabs’ desertion from the security forces, 25 December 1947, HA, 8/20, and MELF weekly sitrep (situation and intelligence report), 12 January 1948, PRO, CO 537/3867.
- 68 Danin to Sasson, 13 January 1948, CZA, S 25/9007.
- 69 6th Airborne Div. to TJFF, 6 January 1948, PRO, WO 275/7; Kirkbride to

- FO, 5 January 1948, PRO, FO 371/68827, and General Macmillan's report on his tenure in Palestine, 3 July 1948, IWM.
- 70 "Hayogev" report, 5 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569.
- 71 The Arab section's summary of information from Syria, 5 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9026; "Tzefa" reports, 28 December 1947 and 6–7 January 1948, HA, 105/215; "Yanai" (the SHAY Paris station) to "Tene", 31 December 1947, HA, 8/22; "Hiram" report to "Tene", 5 January 1948, *ibid.* "Yavne" news, 4 January 1948, HA, 105/37; Berman to Fischer, 6 January 1948, BGA; "Tene" daily summary, 12 January 1948, IDFA, 900/52/58, and "In the Arab Camp", 18 January 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 72 FSS 317 weekly review, 9 January 1948, PRO, WO 275/79.
- 73 The legation in Damascus to the State Department, 8 January 1948.
- 74 Cairo embassy's report on Egypt's assistance to the liberation of *Filastin*, 26 January 1948, PRO, FO 371/68368.
- 75 A review on "Fascist Yugoslav Muslims in the Arab Gangs", 13 February 1948, CZA, S 25/3991; news from "Avner", 20 February 1948, ISA, FO/2568/4 and *Davar*, 17 February 1948.
- 76 "Tene" daily summaries, 3 March 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; Palestine HQ intelligence summary, 12 March 1948, PRO, WO 261/573, and "Avner" report on the escapees from Acre, 19 April 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 77 A progress report on the withdrawal from Palestine, 24 March 1948, PRO, CAB 131/6, and entry for 15 March 1948 in Henry Gurney's diary, Middle East Centre's archives, St. Antony's College, Oxford. Cf. also "Tene" daily summary, 27 May 1948, HA, 105/94.
- 78 "Hashmonai" to Leo Cohn, 27 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9204; Captain Mahmud al-Rifa'i to Mahmud Sam'an, 9 March 1948, IDFA, 1/57/10, and Shauqat Shuqair to Taha al-Hashimi, 17 June 1948, *ibid.*
- 79 Protocol of a consultation on Arab affairs (note 7 above), pp. 9–10 and 24.

3 *The Arab League's Intervention*

- 1 Safwat's report, 27 November 1947, in S. Segev (ed.), *Meahorey Hapargod* (Behind the Curtain, in Hebrew), Ma'arahot, Tel Aviv 1954, pp. 70–7. Cf. also T. Mayer, Arab Unity of Action and the Palestine Question, 1945–1948, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22 (1986), p. 340, and W. Khalidi, The Arab Perspective, in: R. Louis and R. W. Stookey (eds.), *The End of the Palestine Mandate*, London 1986, pp. 121–2.
- 2 Jewish Agency's memorandum on the Arabs' military preparations for obstructing the UN resolution, 21 December 1947, CZA, S 25/4148. Cf. also A. Sela, The Arab League and the Palestine Question, p. 414, and H. Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, pp. 189–91.
- 3 Clayton's note on Cairo conference, attached to Trautbek to Burrows, 23 December 1947, PRO, FO 816/115. Cf. also Nuri Sa'id's version in a pamphlet which he published in August 1948, attached to Richmond to FO, 19 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/128.
- 4 Khalidi, *The Arab Perspective*, p. 122.
- 5 Campbell to FO, 8 December 1947, PRO, FO 371/61580.

- 6 Clayton's note on the conference, attached to Trautbek to Burrows, 23 December 1947, PRO, FO 816/115. Cf. also Khalidi, *The Arab Perspective*, pp. 123–4; Mayer, *Arab Unity of Action*, pp. 340–1 and Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, p. 423.
- 7 Shimoni's report to Meyerson on his meeting with Abdullah's envoy, Dr. Shauqat Setti, 10 December 1947, BGA.
- 8 A transcript of the Mufti's conversation with Khalidi, 16 December 1947, *ibid.*
- 9 Sasson's memorandum, 21 December 1947, *ibid.* Sasson's estimate of the League's decisions was inaccurate, as proved by comparing his memorandum (as well as Clayton's) with the Cairo resolutions in Segev, *Meahorey Hapargod*, pp. 55–6.
- 10 Kirkbride to FO, 20 December 1947, PRO, FO 371/61583, and Beeley' memorandum, 23 December 1947, *ibid.*
- 11 "Tene"/A daily summary, 5 January 1948, IDFA, 900/52/58.
- 12 Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, pp. 425–7 and 434–44.
- 13 Palestine HQ fortnightly newsletter, 30 January 1948, PRO, WO 261/573; "Hiram" report on the military committee's meetings in Damascus and in Beirut, 11 February 1948, and various reports, February–March 1948, in HA, 105/104.
- 14 Segev, *Meahorey Hapargod*, pp. 57–61; Mayer, *Arab Unity of Action*, p. 341, and Khalidi, *The Arab Perspective*, pp. 125–6.
- 15 The Arab section's review of the Arabs' military preparations according to the Arab press, 20 February 1948, HA, 105/215; An agent's report from Lebanon, 19 February 1948, *ibid.*
- 16 Danin to Sasson, 12 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569 and Broadmead to Bevin, 19 February 1948, PRO, FO 371/68368.
- 17 Alexandroni's intelligence summary, 14 January 1948; "In the Arab Camp", 18 January 1948, HA, 105/124,; and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 22 January 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 18 Palestine HQ fortnightly newsletter, 30 January 1948, PRO, WO 261/573.
- 19 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 73–4, entry for 26 December 1947, and II, p. 663, entry for 26 August 1948; news from Beirut, 8 February 1948, CZA, S 25/4054; M. Mardor, *Shlihut Aluma* (Clandestine Mission, in Hebrew) Tel Aviv 1957, pp. 245–61; E. Tal, *Mivtzaei Heil Hayam Bemilhemet Ha'atzmaut* (The Navy's Operations in the War of Independence, in Hebrew), Ma'arachot, Tel Aviv 1964, pp. 130–7, and A. Yona, *Lelo 'Ikvot* (Leaving No Traces, in Hebrew), Ministry of Defense Publications, Tel Aviv 1965, pp. 143–70.
- 20 Palmon to Danin, 18 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569; "In the Arab Camp", 25 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29, and Navon's report on relations between Qawuqji and the Mufti, 21 January 1948, *ibid.*
- 21 MELF weekly sitrep (situation and intelligence report), 12 January 1948, PRO, CO 537/3867; 6th Airborne Div. to Colonel Norman, 14 January 1948, PRO, WO 275/48, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 25 January 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 22 Kirkbride to FO, 21 January 1948, PRO, FO 371/68365; "Tene" daily

- summaries of information, 21–22 January 1948, IDFA, 900/52/58; “Tene”/A daily bulletin, 22 January 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; Cunningham to Creech-Jones, 24 January 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903, and the High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 1 February 1948, PRO, FO 816/116. Cf. also F. al-Qawuqji, *Memoirs*, 1948, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1 (1971/2), pp. 27–9.
- 23 Broadmead to FO, 31 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115, and the High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 7 February 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903.
 - 24 Cunningham to Kirkbride, 1 February 1948, PRO, FO 816/115, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 2 February 1948, *ibid*.
 - 25 The High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 24 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/116.
 - 26 Cunningham to Creech-Jones, 4 February 1948, *ibid*.
 - 27 The High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 14 February 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903, and Creech-Jones to Cunningham, 15 February 1948, *ibid*.
 - 28 The High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 21 February 1948, *ibid*.
 - 29 “In the Arab Camp”, 8 February 1948, IDFA, 5942/49/24; “Tene”/A daily bulletins, 6, 15, 16 and 22 February 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and “Avner” review titled “Arab Volunteers in Palestine”, 25 February 1948, HA, 105/215.
 - 30 The High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 13 March 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904.
 - 31 Palmon’s report on the POW’s interrogation, HA, 105/215; Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, I, pp. 187–8, entry for 28 January 1948; “In the Arab Public” (*SHAY* periodical summary, not identical with the Arab section periodical summary “In the Arab Camp”), 8 February 1948, IDFA, 5942/49/24; “Tene”/A daily bulletins, 6, 15, 16 and 22 February 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
 - 32 “Tiroshi” report, 18 February 1948, HA, 105/216; News on military exercises in various villages in western Samaria, 17–18 February 1948, HA, 105/148, and a report on the “gangs’ court” in Nablus, 24 February 1948, ISA, FO/2568/4.
 - 33 The High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 24 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/116, and 7 February 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903.
 - 34 “Tene”/A daily bulletin, 5 February 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
 - 35 Protocol of the *Yishuv*’s Defence Committee meeting, 27 January, CZA, S 25/9345.
 - 36 “Hanagid” report on his visit to Damascus, 23 January 1948, HA, 105/352.
 - 37 For example, *Haaretz*, 10 February 1948, quoting various American newspapers.
 - 38 “Dov” report on his visit to Nablus, 2 February 1948, HA, 105/215; a report on the village Ara, 3 February 1948, and “Hiram” report, 12 February 1948, *ibid*.
 - 39 “In the Arab Camp”, 1 and 8 February 1948, HA, 105/124, and the High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 1 February 1948, PRO, FO 816/116.

- 40 Palestine HQ fortnightly newsletter, 11 February 1948, PRO, WO 261/573; the High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 14 February 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903, and a copy of a British intelligence review on the ALA, 19 March 1948, IDFA, 900/52/45. Cf. also Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, p. 445, and Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, p. 201.
- 41 "Tiroshi" report on Abd al-Qadir and Salameh's excursion to Damascus, 24 February 1948, HA, 105/23.
- 42 Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, p. 206.
- 43 "In the Arab Public", 9 and 16 March 1948.
- 44 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 298, entry for 14 March 1948; Qawuqji, *Memoirs*, p. 298, and "In the Arab Camp", same date, CZA, S 25/7733.
- 45 An undated list (probably from March 1948) of the Arab commanders and their command-zones; and "Yeruham" (the new code name of the SHAY in Jerusalem) undated review on "The Arab Command in the Jerusalem District, January–May 1948", HA, 105/133.
- 46 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 245–6, entry for 16 February 1948; Epstein's report from Washington, 20 February 1948, CZA, S 25/3569, and "Hilel" to Yadin, late February 1948, BGA.
- 47 An undated circular letter, probably from late February 1948, titled "Guidelines for the commanders of *Filastin's* cities", HA, 105/215. For a list of the officers, cf. Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, p. 201.
- 48 "In the Arab Public", 9, 16 and 23 March 1948; "Tene" summary of information, 1 April 1948, HA, 105/62.
- 49 "Haganan" (the gardener) reports, 23, 26 and 29 January 1948, HA, 105/215; "Tene" daily summary of information, 26 January 1948, IDFA, 900/52/58; and "Tene"/A daily bulletins, 25–28 January 1948, 1 and 4–5 February 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810. Cf. also Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, pp. 193–4.
- 50 "Hiram" report, 11 February 1948; SHAY's review on the ALA, 13 February 1948, ISA, FO/2568/4, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 242–3, entry for 14 February 1948.
- 51 Palestine HQ fortnightly intelligence review, 13 February 1948, PRO, WO 261/573.
- 52 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 21 February 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903. Cf. also Levenberg, *The Military Preparations*, pp. 199–200.
- 53 "Yavne" bulletin, 1 March 1948.
- 54 SHAY review, 16 February 1948, BGA. This estimate probably emanated from a report from Lebanon by Hajj Tahir Qaraman, a wealthy businessman from Haifa, and cf. News from "Damuni" (Qaraman) in "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 11 February 1948, HA, 105/60.
- 55 "Hayogev" news on "intrigues between the Mufti and Fauzi al-Qawuqji's people" in: "Avner" to "Tene", 2 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91.
- 56 "Dr. Mazliah" report, 18 February 1948, HA, 105/215.
- 57 "Seret" reports to Giv'ati and Qiryati, 2 and 14 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91; "Dr. Mazliah" report, 10 March 1948, ISA, FO/2568/4; "In the

- Arab Public", 23 March 1948; "Avner" to "Tene", 28 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91, and "Seret" to Qiryati, 29 March 1948, *ibid*.
- 58 Danin's report on the interview, 16 March 1948, CZA, S 25/3569, and "In the Arab Public", 23 March 1948. On Abdullah's gift to Qawuqji cf. Cunningham to Colonial Secretary, 18 March 1948, PRO, FO 816/117.
- 59 The British Embassy's report on "Egyptian Aid to the Liberation of Palestine", 26 January 1948, PRO, CO 537/3987, Letters from "Eliahu" and "Halfan" (Egyptian high-ranking agents) to the Arab Section, 7 and 8 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569 and Sela, The Arab League and the Palestine Question, pp. 461–2.
- 60 "In the Arab Camp", 8 February 1948, HA, 105/124; "Tene"/A daily bulletins, 15, 19 and 24–25 February 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; Karon's report, 22 February 1948, HA, 105/215; "Tene"/A daily bulletins of late February and early March 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and "In the Arab Public", 9 March 1948.
- 61 "Tene"/A daily bulletins, 22 and 25 March 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; "Na'im" report, 1 April 1948, ISA, FO/2568/4; Eitan to Shertok, 9 April 1948, CZA, S 25/1704, and central POW camp's CO to MO/Intelligence, July 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 62 Qaron's report on the attack on Kfar Darom, 10 April 1948, HA, 105/92, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 13 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 63 S. Yaari's review of military operations in Palestine according to the Arab press, 26 April 1948, CZA, S 25/8996.
- 64 "In the Arab Camp", 11 April 1948, HA, 105/124, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 18 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 65 Cunningham to Campbell, 19 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904.
- 66 SHAY review titled "The Arab Command in Palestine", 6 May 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/48.

4 *Shaping the Yishuv's War Policy*

- 1 "Tene"/A to Galili, 4 December 1947, HA, 73/98.
- 2 Sasson to Ben-Gurion, 7 December 1947, BGA.
- 3 Palestine HQ Fortnightly Intelligence Review, 5 December 1947, PRO, WO 261/571, and "In the Arab Camp", 7 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9051.
- 4 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 12, entry for 1 December 1947.
- 5 "Tene" daily bulletins, 4 and 7 December 1947, IDFA, 900/52/58; FSS 317 weekly summary, 5 December 1947, PRO, WO 275/79 and the chapter on "British opinion" in a SHAY review of the same date, HA, 73/98.
- 6 Protocol of the Yishuv Security Committee's meeting, 4 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9344.
- 7 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 27–8, entry for 9 December 1947, and Ben-Gurion to Shertok, same date, in: G. Yogev (ed.), *Israel: Political and Diplomatic Documents, December 1947–May 1948*, Jerusalem, Israel State Archives, 1979 (hereafter: *Documents*), no. 29, pp. 42–3.
- 8 Protocol of the Yishuv Defence Committee's meeting on 11 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9344, pp. 1–3.

- 9 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 37–8, entry for 11 December 1947.
- 10 Danin's report on his meeting with "Aryeh" (Hauari), 11 December 1947, BGA.
- 11 Danin to Sasson, 23 December 1947, CZA, S 25/4057. Cf. also E. Danin, *Zioni Le'lo Tnai* (An Unconditional Zionist, in Hebrew), I, Jerusalem 1987, pp. 205–8.
- 12 Shiloah to Shertok, 11 December 1947, CZA, S 25/4064, and 13 December 1947, CZA, S 25/1700.
- 13 Ben-Gurion to Shertok, 14 December 1947, BGA.
- 14 Danin to Sasson, 12 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569, and Galilee district officer's report, 15 January 1948, PRO, CO 537/3853. On other attempts at achieving local arrangements cf. B. Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 36–41.
- 15 A list of retaliation acts attached to Yadin's memorandum to Ben-Gurion, 19 December 1947, BGA.
- 16 Protocol of a meeting on Arab affairs, 1 January 1948, HHA, Galili's files 1/c, pp. 12–14 and 42.
- 17 "Hiram" to "Tene", 5 January 1948, HA, 8/22, and FSS 317 report on the raid, 2 January 1948, PRO, WO 275/48.
- 18 "Azaria" (Michael Schechter) report on the events that preceded the raid on Hissas, 23 December 1947, HA, 73/81; 6th Airborne Div. intelligence summary, 2 January 1948, PRO, WO 275/60.
- 19 Danin to Sasson, 23 December 1947, CZA, S25/4057.
- 20 Yadin's memorandum (note 15 above).
- 21 "In the Arab Camp", 21 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9051, and FSS 317 weekly summary, 26 December 1947, PRO, WO 275/79.
- 22 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 65–7 and 72, entries for 22 and 25 December 1947.
- 23 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 3 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115.
- 24 Protocol of a meeting on Arab affairs (note 16 above).
- 25 Galili's questionnaire to the committee's members, 1 January 1948, BGA, and the special committee's memorandum to "Hillel" (Galili), 2 January 1948, HHA, Galili's files, 1/c.
- 26 Protocol of a meeting on Arab affairs (note 16 above), pp. 55–62.
- 27 Shertok to Shiloah, 8 January 1948, BGA.
- 28 Cunningham to Creech-Jones, 7 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115.
- 29 Protocol of Ben-Gurion's consultation with the supreme command, 9 January 1948, BGA.
- 30 "In the Arab Camp", 18 January 1948, HA, 105/124, and Shiloah to "Amitai", "Hillel" and "Dan", 8 January 1948, BGA.
- 31 Sasson's detailed appreciation and analysis appeared in "In the Arab Camp", 25 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29.
- 32 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 163, entry for 19 January 1948.
- 33 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 16 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115.
- 34 Yadin's circular letter on attacks' planning, 27 January 1948, IDFA, 959/49/202.

- 35 "Hillel" to "Amitai", 29 January 1948, BGA.
- 36 Entry for 3 February 1948 in Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 204.
- 37 "Amit" to Yadin, 26 January 1948, BGA.
- 38 Yadin's memorandum titled "An analysis of the strategic situation and conclusions in regard to our manpower's distribution and organization", 2 February 1948, IDFA, 2315/50/48.
- 39 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 14 February 1948, PRO, CO 537/3903.
- 40 Protocol of a meeting on Arab affairs (note 16 above), pp. 18–19.
- 41 Ibid., pp. 27–32.
- 42 Y. Gelber, *Shorshei HaHavazelet* (Growing a Fleur-de-Lys, in Hebrew), I, Tel Aviv 1992, pp. 275–6.
- 43 Polkes to Assaf, 11 February 1948, BGA, and Assaf to Ben-Gurion, 15 February 1948, *ibid*.
- 44 A draft of Ben-Gurion's letter to Assaf, 22 February 1948, *ibid* and the final version that was actually sent, 1 March 1948, *ibid*.
- 45 Assaf to Ben-Gurion, 2 March 1948, and Ben-Gurion's reply, 3 March 1948, *ibid*.
- 46 Shitrit to Ben-Gurion, 6 July 1948, ISA, FO/2563/21.
- 47 *Al-Zaman*, 8–9 July 1948, in *Da'at's* circular, 22 July 1948, ISA, FO/2402/20.
- 48 Sasson's report on his meeting with Hakim in Paris, 26 October 1948, ISA, FO/2563/21.
- 49 Sasson's proposals, 13 March 1948, ISA, P/573/1.
- 50 Y. Gelber, *Jewish-Transjordanian Relations, 1921–1948*, London 1996, pp. 258–60.
- 51 Shimoni's comments on Sasson's proposals, 20 March 1948, CZA, S 25/9383.
- 52 MELF weekly sitrep, 16 March 1948, PRO, CO 537/3867.
- 53 "In the Arab Public", 9 March 1948, IDFA, 5942/49/24.
- 54 Aran to Shertok, 13 March 1948, CZA, S 25/1703, and Sherf to Shertok, 18 March 1948, *ibid*.
- 55 "In the Arab Public", 23 March 1948.
- 56 Palestine HQ intelligence review, 9 April 1948, PRO, WO 261/574.
- 57 Yadin's circular letter to the brigades, 23 March 1948.
- 58 "News of the Arab Press", 28–30 March 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504.
- 59 "In the Arab Camp", 5 April 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 60 "Yavne" review of the situation in Jerusalem, 31 March 1948, HA, 50/25; telegrams from Jerusalem, same date, BGA; Ben-Gurion to Shertok, 27 March 1948, BGA, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 323, entry for 28 March 1948.
- 61 Shertok to Shiloah, 29 March 1948, in: Yogev, *Documents*, no. 327, p. 536.
- 62 Aharon Gil'ad's diary on Nabi Daniel convoy that Herzog sent to Ben-Gurion on 6 April 1948, BGA; "Yavne" bulletins, 27 and 29 March 1948, and I. Levy, *Tish'a Kabin*, Ministry of Defence Publications, Tel Aviv 1986, p. 395. Leo Cohn to Shertok, 24 March 1948, CZA, S 25/1703.
- 63 The Political Department to Shertok, 25 March 1948, CZA, S 25/1703, and Herzog to Shertok, 26 March 1948, *ibid*.

- 64 Berman's memorandum, 26 March 1948, CZA, S 25/9383, and a common memorandum by Eitan, Herzog, Levavi, Berman and Sasson to the Jewish Agency's Executive in Tel Aviv, 28 March 1948, *ibid*.
- 65 Sasson to Ben-Gurion, Meirson and Caplan, 30 March 1948, in: Yogeve, *Documents*, no. 328, p. 536.
- 66 "Dr. Mazliah" report, 18 February 1948, HA, 105/215; "Tiroshi" report to Divon on a meeting with Madlul Bek Abbas, 2 March 1948, HA, 105/23, and Dan Even (Epstein, Alexandroni's commanding officer) to Yadin, March 1948.
- 67 "Hillel" to "Amitai", 29 March 1948, HA, 50/ 21.
- 68 Ben Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 330, entry for 31 March 1948.
- 69 Palmon's report on the interview with Qawuqji on 1 April 1948, HA, 50/ 25. Cf. also E. Oren, Hama'aracha BiMevo'ot Haifa, April 1948 (The Campaign at the Approaches to Haifa, in Hebrew), *Ma'arahot*, 251/2, October 1976, p. 56.
- 70 F. al-Qawuqji, *Memoirs* 1948, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1 (1971/2), pp. 35 and 37.
- 71 Palestine Committee's report to the Cabinet's Defence Committee, 24 March 1948, PRO, CAB 131/6, and a SHAY summary titled "Foreign Combatants' Penetration to Palestine", 15 April 1948.

5 *The Beginnings of the Palestinians' Mass-Flight*

- 1 J. Schechtman, *The Arab Refugee Problem*, New York 1952; M. Syrkin, The Arab Refugees: A Zionist View, in: *Commentary*, 41/1, 1966.
- 2 SHAY summaries, 14 and 22 September, 1947, ISA, FO/65/4.
- 3 Sasson to Danin, 4 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569.
- 4 Entries for 3–10 December 1947 in Jerusalem District's logbook, CZA, S 25/9210.
- 5 "Hayogev" report, 9 December 1947, BGA.
- 6 A report from Jaffa, 30 December 1947, HA, 105/215.
- 7 Palmon to Sasson, 24 December 1947, CZA, S 25/4050, "Ariel" (David Engel) reports, 2 and 19 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569, and "Hayogev" report, 5 January 1948, *ibid*.
- 8 T. Goren, Madu'a Azvu Hatoshavim Ha'arvim Et Haifa: 'Iyun BeSugia Hatzuia (Why the Arab Residents left Haifa, in Hebrew), *Cathedra*, 80, 1996, p. 176.
- 9 News from "Hanagid", 14 December 1947, BGA; SHAY summary of events in Haifa during December 1947, 4 January 1948, HA, 105/67; "Tene" review of the Arabs' emigration from Haifa from December 1947 to the end of February 1948, HA, 105/89, and "Hiram" report on Haifa's national council, 15 December 1947, HA, 105/22.
- 10 Reports on reactions in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa to the Damascus Gate bomb, 1–2 January 1948, HA, 105/60.
- 11 Various SHAY Reports and Arab newspaper clips from December 1947 and January 1948, HA, 105/215.
- 12 Ben-Gurion to Shertok, 14 December 1947, BGA; Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*,

- I, p. 114, entry for 5 January 1948. Cf. also “Tene”/A daily summary of the same date, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 13 Palmon’s report on his talk with Abd al-Raziq, 17 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9028.
- 14 “In the Arab Camp”, 28 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9051.
- 15 Yadin’s memorandum, titled “Summary of the *Haganah* and the Enemy’s Situation in View of the Recent Events”, 19 December 1947, BGA.
- 16 “Far’im” (an Arab informer from Safed) report, 21 December 1947, IDFA, 900/52/24, and “Hakomer” (The Priest) report, 30 December 1947, HA, 105/215.
- 17 “Tene” news, 30 December 1947, IDFA, 1/57/810; “Hashmonai” news, 4 January 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/104; “Hashmonai” to “Shadmi” (Moriya battalion), 13 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29, and “Zadik” (Moriya Battalion’s intelligence officer) to “Hashmonai”, 15 January 1948, IDFA, 466/48/1.
- 18 Broadmead to FO, 16 January 1948, PRO, FO 371/68365, and reports from “Avram” and “Hiram”, 8 January 1948, HA, 105/215.
- 19 Various SHAY reports, 9–17 February 1948, HA, 105/215, and Paltiel Sela’s testimony, pp. 35–6.
- 20 Lists of arrivals and departures from Lydda airport, 14–25 January 1948, HA, 105/215, and a list of arrivals from Beirut to Haifa on 29 January 1948, *ibid.*
- 21 *Haaretz*, 17 December 1947, and *Davar*, 18 January 1948.
- 22 “In the Arab Camp”, 21 December 1947, CZA, S 25/9051, and Shimoni’s review of Arab military preparations according to the Arab press, 9 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569.
- 23 *Filastin* and *Al-Difa’a* of early January 1948, and the AHC proclamation in Cairo, 8 January 1948, HA, 105/215.
- 24 On the national committee’s endeavours to check the escape from Haifa cf. Goren, *From Destruction to Recovery*, pp. 143–5.
- 25 The High Commissioner’s weekly intelligence appreciation, 24 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/116.
- 26 Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, I, p. 120, entry for 6 January 1948. The SHAY claimed that the escape from Qatamon preceded the raid. Cf. “Tene”/A daily summary, 5 January 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 27 G. Shilo (ed. and trans.), *Kaze Ani Rabotai — Miyomano shel Halil al-Sakakini* (This Is the Way I Am, My Lords! — From Halil al-Sakhakini’s Diary, in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1990, pp. 228–9.
- 28 Ben-Gurion quoted the tapping report in his *War Diary*, I, p. 141, 12 January 1948.
- 29 “Hashmonai” news, 12 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29, and “Yavne” report of the same date, HA, 105/215.
- 30 Quoted in: Palmon to Danin, 18 January 1948, CZA, S 25/3569.
- 31 Lutzky’s report to Sasson on his interview with “Albert”, 20 January 1948, CZA, S 25/9007.
- 32 Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, I, p. 177, entry for 22 January 1948.
- 33 “Hiram” report, 3 February 1948, HA, 105/215; FSS 317 weekly summary, 6 February 1948, PRO, WO 275/79.

- 34 "Mizrahi" (Navon) report on the tension between Christians and Muslims in Baq'a, 21 January 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/104.
- 35 6th Airborne Div. daily sitrep (situation and intelligence report), 12 February 1948, PRO, WO 275/67; "Yavne" daily bulletin, 13 February 1948, and a report on events in Talbiya from 17 to 30 April 1948.
- 36 Gibli's report of 26 January 1948 on Giv'ati's action in the village Abu Suaira, HA, 105/32.
- 37 SHAY reports on the evacuation of the hamlets Mir, Jarramla and Feja, 8 and 17 February 1948, HA, 105/215.
- 38 Protocol of MAPAM Political Committee meeting, 5 February 1948, MAPAM Archives, [1]66.90.
- 39 "Yavne" report to "Tene"/A on the situation in Ramallah, 26 February 1948, HA, 105/95.
- 40 "Yavne" reports, 27 January and 1 February 1948, HA, 105/215, and "Yavne" daily bulletin, 16 February 1948.
- 41 "Yavne" report, 25 January 1948, HA, 105/215; "Yavne" daily bulletins, 22 and 25 March 1948.
- 42 "Tzefa" reports, 24–25 February 1948, HA, 105/215.
- 43 News from "Tiroshi", 18–19 February 1948, *ibid.* and news from "Tiroshi" and "Amiqam", 26 February 1948, *ibid.*
- 44 "In the Arab Camp", 25 January 1948, IDFA, 500/48/29; *Haaretz*, 8 February 1948; "Hayogev" news of the same date, HA, 105/215, and "Tene"/A daily summary, 9 February 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 45 Palestine HQ intelligence review, 30 January 1948, PRO, WO 261/573.
- 46 "Avner" report on The Muslim Brethren in Jaffa, 2 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91, and "Seret" (another code name of SHAY Tel Aviv) review of the situation in Jaffa, 30 March 1948, *ibid.*
- 47 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 165, entry for 20 January 1948.
- 48 Protocol of Ben-Gurion's consultation with the *Haganah*'s high command, 9 January 1948, BGA, and his speech at the meeting of the Zionist Action Committee, 6 April 1948, quoted in: D. Ben-Gurion, *Be'Hilachem Israel* (While Israel Was Fighting, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1951, pp. 87–8.
- 49 A list of wealthy Arabs who had left the country, 4 February 1948, HA, 105/195; "Avner" to "Tene"/A, 20 February 1948, HA, 105/215, and summary of "Tene" news, 19 February 1948, BGA.
- 50 Minutes of Glubb's interview with General Packard (DMI), 30 January 1948, PRO, FO 371/68369.
- 51 "Yavne" News, 18–21 February 1948, HA, 105/215, and "Yavne" daily summaries, 5, 24 and 27 March 1948.
- 52 "Yavne" summary of information, 29 March 1948.
- 53 "Tene"/A daily summary, 4 March 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and "In the Arab Camp", 14 March 1948, CZA, S 25/7733.
- 54 "Yavne" daily summaries, 31 March and 3 April 1948.
- 55 "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 12 and 25 March and 12 April 1948, HA, 105/257.
- 56 "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 10, 14 and 17 March 1948, HA, 105/257.
- 57 Chief Secretary to Haifa district Officer about "the invasion of Shafa'amr by 800 inhabitants of Haifa on 30 March", attached to SHAY report of 21 April 1948, IDFA, 900/52/27.

- 58 "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 5 and 12 April 1948, HA, 105/257.
- 59 Goren, *From Destruction to Recovery*, pp. 141–3.
- 60 "Avner" memorandum to "Tene"/A, 4 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91, and GSO to Alexandroni, 11 March 1948, IDFA, 321/48/88.
- 61 Galili's circular letter to the brigades' commanding officers, 24 March 1948, IDFA, 5942/49/24.

6 *From a Civil War to Regular Warfare*

- 1 For a detailed analysis of these developments cf. Y. Gelber, *Gar'in LeTzava Ivri Sadir* (The Emergence of a Jewish Army, in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1986, pp. 73–109.
- 2 For a thorough discussion of the Arab League's preparations for war cf. A. Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, pp. 414–33.
- 3 A Summary of the Arab Press, 31 March 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504.
- 4 An appendix to CID summary of events for 9 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3857.
- 5 P. De Azcarate, *Mission in Palestine, 1948–1952*, Washington 1966, pp. 7–11.
- 6 Protocol of the committee for economic warfare's meeting, 12 April 1948, IDFA, 321/48/87.
- 7 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 27 March and 3 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 8 "Tene" daily summaries, 13 and 18 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and the bulletin "In Jaffa and the Adjacent Villages", 15 and 20 April 1948.
- 9 The committee for economic warfare's bulletin, 20 April 1948, BGA.
- 10 "Yavne" daily bulletin, 19–20 April 1948, and a review of economic conditions in Jerusalem, the committee for economic warfare's bulletin, 5 May 1948, BGA. Cunningham's appraisal of Arab Jerusalem's economic conditions was similar. Cf. his weekly intelligence appreciation, 25 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 11 "Avner" to "Tene"/A, 12 April 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 13 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 12 "Yavne" daily bulletins, 5–6 April 1948, and a report on the interrogation of a Palestinian defector who had taken part in the battles over Jerusalem, 29 May 1949.
- 13 "Yavne" report to "Tene"/A on the relations between the ALA and the Mufti's partisans, 15 April 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 14 Gelber, *Gar'in*, pp. 108–30.
- 15 "Albert" report, 7 April 1948, CZA, S 25/3569, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 13 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 16 F. Al-Qawuqji, *Memoirs, 1948*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1 (1971/2), pp. 37–47.
- 17 "Yavne" daily bulletin, 10 April 1948, and Galili to Ben-Gurion, same date, BGA.
- 18 J. B. Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs*, London 1957, p. 80.
- 19 "In the Arab Public", 13 April 1948.

- 20 "In the Arab Camp", 19 and 26 April 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 21 "Yavne" daily bulletin, 20 April 1948, and "Tene" daily bulletin, 21 April 1948, CZA, S 25/9209.
- 22 Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, pp. 444–5.
- 23 "In the Arab Camp", 11 April 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 24 Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, pp. 478–81.
- 25 Summary of the Arab press' news, 5–9 April 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504; Qawuqji's memoirs (note 16 above); and the review "The Military Operations in Palestine according to the Arab Press", 26 April 1948, CZA, S 25/8996.
- 26 Campbell to Cunningham, 15 April 1948, PRO, FO 141/1246, and Cunningham's reply, 17 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68542.
- 27 "In the Arab Public", 13 April 1948, "Tiroshi/Eitan" report, 18 April 1948, and Broadmead to FO, same date, PRO, FO 371/68370.
- 28 Broadmead to FO, 21 and 24 April 1948, *ibid.* and "The Arab Press' News", 22 April 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504.
- 29 W. R. Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945–1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States and Postwar Imperialism*, Oxford 1984, pp. 481–3.
- 30 Colonel Preice (MI3) to Balfour (Eastern Department), 29 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68370, and FO to Broadmead, 12 May 1948, *ibid.*
- 31 Galili to Ben-Gurion, 10 April 1948, BGA.
- 32 Ben-Gurion to Shertok, 16 April 1948, in: Yogev, *Documents*, no. 388, pp. 647–8, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 354, entry for the same date.
- 33 Sasson to Ben-Gurion and Caplan, 18 April 1948, BGA, and "Etzioni" (David Shealtiel) to Ben-Gurion, Galili and Yadin, same date, *ibid.* For the erroneous information cf. "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 19 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 34 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 358, entry for 20 April 1948.
- 35 Sakakini's diary, pp. 233–5.
- 36 "Yavne" daily bulletins, 30 April and 1 May 1948; "Yeruham" (SHAY Jerusalem branch new code name) report on the battle of Qatamon from the Arabs' viewpoint, 3 May 1948, HA, 105/92 and the above mentioned (note 12) report of an Arab defector.
- 37 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 25 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869; Cunningham to UKDEL, 30 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3926, and to Creech-Jones, 1 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/118.
- 38 Caplan to Ben-Gurion, 4 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9390.
- 39 "Yavne" daily bulletins of the first week of May 1948.
- 40 Cunningham to Broadmead, 14 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3926; Colonel Mathieson to Burrows, 16 April 1948, *ibid.* and Campbell to Cunningham, 13 April 1948, *ibid.*
- 41 Kirkbride to Bevin, 16 April 1948, PRO, FO 816/117, and to FO, 20 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68370.
- 42 S. Ya'ari's review "Military Operations in Palestine According to the Arab Press", 26 April 1948, CZA, S 25/8996.
- 43 "Yavne" daily bulletin, 21 April 1948; "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 28 April

- 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; Northern Sector HQ Daily Sitrep, 30 April 1948, PRO, WO 275/66. Cf. also Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, pp. 453–4.
- 44 Qawuqji's circular letter to the chairmen of the national committees and to the mayors, 24 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/56, and his order on enlisting the Arab policemen to the ALA, 30 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 45 *Da'at/A* review on the Druze in the Palestine war, 1 August 1948, IDFA, 957/52/13.
- 46 Stockwell's statement to Haifa's notables, 21 April 1948, HA, Hushi files, no. 4. For the considerations that had motivated this decision cf. appendix F to Stockwell's report, PRO, WO 32/15037.
- 47 Shiloah to Ben-Gurion, 22 April 1948, BGA; "Hillel" and Yadin to "Amitai", 23 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 48 "Yehuda" (a SHAY agent in the refineries) memorandum on petrol supplies to the Arabs in April 1948, and a memorandum on sabotaging the petrol supplies to Transjordan, the Triangle and other Arab areas, 4 May 1948.
- 49 "Tene"/A daily bulletins, 28–29 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 50 "Avner" reports on the situation in Jaffa, 27–28 April 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91, and Y. Bandman, *Hit'arvut Hatzava Habriti Behatkafat Haetzal 'Al Manshiya* (The British Army's interference in the IZL attack on Manshiya, in Hebrew), *Iyunim*, 2 (1992), pp. 279–316.
- 51 Qawuqji's instructions, 26–27 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/49.
- 52 Qawuqji's order to Tzafa to attack Petah-Tiqva, 25 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 53 Madlul Bek to Taha al-Hashimi, 26 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/10 and Qawuqji's memoirs, pp. 50–8.
- 54 "Avner" current reports on the situation in Jaffa, 1–13 May 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91.
- 55 "Sasha" (Yigal Alon) report to Yadin on his tour of Upper Galilee, 22 April 1948, IDFA, 957/52/25 and Northern Sector HQ report to Palestine HQ, 29 April 1948, PRO, WO 275/62.
- 56 Y. Cohen, *Leor Hayom Ubamachshach* (In Daylight and in Darkness, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1969, pp. 114–25.
- 57 Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, pp. 484–5; "Tene" daily summary, 12 May 1948, HA 105/94, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 13 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 58 Protocol of the People Executive's meeting, 12 May 1948, in: Israel State Archives, *The People Executive — Protocols*, 18 April–13 May 1948, Jerusalem 1978, p. 63.
- 59 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 410, entry for 11 May, and p. 413, entry for 13 May 1948. Cf. also protocol of the People Executive's meeting, 12 May 1948, pp. 80–104.
- 60 Wert's report on his visit to *Gush Etzion* on 14 May 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74.
- 61 "Hashmonai" report on the battle of *Gush Etzion*, 16 May 1948, *ibid*.
- 62 "Yeruham" daily bulletin, 15 May 1948, HA, 105/94.
- 63 Bulletin of the committee for economic warfare, 14 May 1948.
- 64 "Tene"/A undated review of the Jewish reprisals' impact on the Arabs, HA, 105/31.

- 65 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 1 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.

7 *Palestinian Society's Collapse*

- 1 Plan D, 10 March 1948, HA, 73/94, pp. 3–4.
- 2 Interrogation of an Arab defector on the fighting in Jerusalem, 29 May 1949.
- 3 CID summary of events for 9 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3857, and the High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 10 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869. MELF weekly sitrep (situation and intelligence report), 13 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3867, did not mention Dir Yassin.
- 4 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 17 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 5 "Yavne" to "Tene"/A, 12 April 1948, HA, 105/31, and "Yovav" (David Karon) to "Tene"/A, 14 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 6 "Yavne" bulletins, 9–14 and 20 April 1948.
- 7 "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 19 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and "Yavne" bulletin, 20 April 1948.
- 8 "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 20 April 1948, CZA, S 25/9209.
- 9 "Tene" daily bulletins, 14 and 22 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 10 "Zuri/Barkan" report to "Tene"/A, 27 April 1948, HA, 105/226, "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 3 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810 and the refugees' telegram to the AHC, 17 April 1948, quoted in "Zuri" report of 19 April 1948, HA, 105/31.
- 11 Herzog's report on his interview with Lund, 20 April 1948, CZA, S25/5634.
- 12 "Tene" daily bulletins, 24 and 29 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and "Tene" daily summary, 4 May 1948, HA, 105/94.
- 13 "Zuri" to "Tene"/A, 14 April 1948, HA, 105/31, and "Tene" daily summary, 18 April 1948, HA, 105/62. For a detailed description of the Arabs' departure from Tiberias cf. Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 70–2.
- 14 "Zuri" first report on Tiberias' evacuation, 20 April 1948, HA, 105/257, and a summary of "Zuri" information, 21 April 1948, HA, 105/31.
- 15 Golani's weekly intelligence summary, 1 May 1948, IDFA, 128/51/70, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 3 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 16 "Zuri" news in "Tene"/A circular letter, 19 April 1948, HA, 105/31.
- 17 Salomon's report to the Foreign Ministry's Political Department (the Mossad's predecessor), 1 April 1949, ISA, P/941/440.
- 18 "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 21 April 1948, HA, 105/31.
- 19 "Rachli" daily report to "Segal", 21 April 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/219.
- 20 A sample of safe conduct certificates signed by Salomon, 21 April 1948, ISA, P/932/313.
- 21 Uncovering of Khalil's role was given in detail in the diary of Yussuf Kafi, the head of the Arab intelligence and security service in Haifa, that was found a few days later, HA, 105/154, and cf. "Hiram" to Carmeli, 23 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 22 The national committee's memorandum to Stockwell and minutes of the delegation's interview with the General, 22 April 1948, ISA, P/940/437.
- 23 The *Haganah's* demands, 22 April 1948, *ibid*.

- 24 Stockwell's stipulations for a cease-fire, 22 April 1948, ISA, P/941/440/I.
- 25 Salomon's notes, based on the Arab temporary emergency committee's report to the AHC's office in Damascus on the events that had preceded the Arabs' departure from Haifa, 30 April 1948, ISA, P/940/437. Cf. also his report (note 17 above).
- 26 For a detailed description of the flight cf. Appendix F to Stockwell's report on the events in Haifa, PRO, WO 32/15037, and FSS 317 review, 28 April 1948, PRO, WO 275/79. A summary of the events from a Jewish viewpoint is given in "Hiram" to "Tene"/A on "the Arabs departure from Haifa", 28 May 1948, HA 105/252, and in Salomon's report (note 17 above). For Arab versions of Haifa's downfall and its population's flight see Nimr al-Khatib, *In the Wake of the Disaster*, in: S. Sabag (trans.), *Be'eini Haoyev* (In the Enemy's Eyes — Three Arab Publications on the War of Independence, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1954, pp. 22–7, and W. Khalidi, *The Fall of Haifa*, *Middle East Forum*, XXXV, 10 (December 1959), pp. 22–32. For an analysis based on most available sources see Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 73–94 and Goren, *From Destruction to Recovery*, pp. 147–58.
- 27 Khaiat and others to Stockwell, 23 April 1948, ISA, C/5566/4056.
- 28 Eliass Kossa and Farid Sa'ad's account of the events in Haifa, 30 April 1948, in: David Ariel, "The Arab States and the Refugee Problem — Documents and Testimonies on the Responsibility for Creating the Problem", 7 October 1951.
- 29 The Arab emergency committee in Haifa to Stockwell, 29 April 1948, ISA, C/5566/4056.
- 30 *Palestine Post*, 2 February 1949.
- 31 Minutes of the COS meeting with the Minister of Defense, 23 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3926 and minutes of a telephone conversation between the VCIGS and MELF chief-of-staff, Middle East, 23 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 32 "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 26 April 1948, HA, 105/31, and "Hiram" to Carmeli, 23 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 33 Haifa Arabs' emergency committee to Mayor Shabtai Levy, 23 April 1948, ISA, P/940/437.
- 34 Protocol of the meeting on 23 April 1948, ISA, P/941/440/I.
- 35 The emergency committee to Stockwell, 25 April 1948, ISA, P/940/437.
- 36 Protocol of the meeting on 25 April 1948, ISA, P/941/440/I. Cf. also "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 26 April 1948, HA, 105/31.
- 37 Salomon to "Yirmiah" (Jeremiaiah, Zalitzky's code name) and to "Amatzia" (Lublinsky), 29 April 1948, ISA, P/941/440.
- 38 "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 25 April 1948, HA, 105/31.
- 39 Northern sector HQ Daily Cositrep (Combined situation and intelligence report), 27 April 1948, PRO, WO 275/66; Northern Sector's special intelligence report, 29 April 1948, PRO, WO 275/62, and the emergency committee to Stockwell, same date, ISA, P/940/437.
- 40 "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 2 May 1948, HA, 105/224.
- 41 Northern Sector HQ intelligence report, 3 May 1948, PRO, WO 275/62.
- 42 Carmeli's report, 7 May 1948, IDFA, 128/51/70.
- 43 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 378–82, entry for 1 May 1948.

- 44 Protocols of the Jewish Agency executive meeting, 6 May 1948, CZA, and of MAPAI centre's meeting, 11 May 1948, LPA, 23/48.
- 45 Quoted from I Samuel, 15:19, in: Haifa Chamber of Commerce to the town's emergency committee, 18 May 1948, ISA, FO/2564/9.
- 46 FSS 317 Weekly Review, 28 April 1948, PRO, WO 275/79.
- 47 "Zuri" summary of information, 21 April 1948, HA, 105/92, and "Zuri/Hava" to "Tene"/A, 25 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 48 FSS reviews, 28 April and 5 May 1948, PRO, WO 275/79. On the *Haganah's* handling of Arab affairs in Haifa after its conquest cf. T. Goren, *Mitlut Lehishtalvut: Hashilton Hayisraeli Ve'arviyei Haifa* (From Dependence to Integration: Israeli Rule and the Arabs of Haifa, 1948–1950, in Hebrew), Haifa 1996, pp. 23–50.
- 49 Cf., for example: D. Goldberg, *Zichronot Ish Petah Tiqva* (Memoirs of a Petah Tiqva Veteran, in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1992, pp. 87–8, a report from Ein Gev on the situation in Samakh and the vicinity, 27 April 1948, HA, 105/92, and "Tiroshi/Alon" to "Tene"/A, same date, HA, 105/31.
- 50 A selection from the *Kol HaHaganah* and *Kol Israel* (The Voice of the *Haganah* and of Israel) broadcasts on the escape from 28 March to 14 May 1948, prepared by the Arab research branch of the Israeli Foreign Office, 4 September 1951, ISA, FO/2564/1.
- 51 "Tiroshi/Alon" to "Tene"/A, 27 April 1948, HA, 105/31; Barak battalion's weekly intelligence summary, 9 May 1948, IDFA, 128/51/70; "Zuri/Kochva" to "Tene"/A on the evacuation of Samakh, 10 May 1948, HA, 105/92.
- 52 Protocol of the Arab section's meeting, 22 April 1948, CZA, S 25/9664.
- 53 Sasson to Shertok, 22 and 25 April 1948, CZA, S 25/5634.
- 54 Shertok to Shiloah, 25 April 1948, CZA, S 25/1558.
- 55 "Yavne" bulletin, 20 April 1948, and the emergency committee's circular letter to the local committees of Jerusalem's Arab quarters, 22 April 1948, ISA, FO/2570/11.
- 56 "In the Arab Camp", 26 April 1948, HA, 105/124, and "Tene"/A daily summary, 28 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 57 "In the Arab Camp", 3 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 58 "Yavne" bulletins, 25–28 April 1948.
- 59 "Yavne" bulletins, 30 April and 5–6 May 1948, and "Tene" daily summaries, 5 and 9 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 60 "Yeruham" report to "Tene"/A on the situation in Bethlehem, 10 July 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 61 "Tiroshi/Dror" to "Tene"/A, 18 April 1948, HA, 105/24, "Avner" to "Tene"/A, 19 April 1948, HA, 105/31 and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 21 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 62 Hayogev's review of the situation in Jaffa in "Avner" to "Tene"/A, 18 April 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91.
- 63 "Tene" daily summaries, 25–26 April, IDFA, 1/57/810; "Avner" to "Tene"/A and D, 26 April 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91; Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 140–2.
- 64 Tel Aviv District's operational logbook, 25 April 1948, HA, 105/62; Summary of information on the IZL attack on Jaffa, in "Avner" to "Tene"/A

and D, 26 April 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91.

- 65 "Avner" review of the situation in Jaffa since the beginning of the attack, 6 May 1948, HA, 105/92.
- 66 "Yavne" bulletins, 28–30 April 1948; "In the Arab Camp", 3 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046, and the High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 8 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 67 Summary of events on the night of 29–30 April 1948 in "Avner" to "Tene"/A, IDFA, 321/48/91.
- 68 "Avner" to "Tene"/A on the situation in Jaffa and in Ramle, 3 May 1948, *ibid.*
- 69 "In the Arab Camp", 11 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 70 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 388–9, entry for 5 May 1948.
- 71 Shitrit's minutes, 17 May 1948, ISA, C/303/16, Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 445–6, entry for 21 May 1948, Chizik to Shitrit, 1 June 1948, ISA, FO/2564/9, and a report on Chizik's meeting with the IRC delegation, 22 June 1948, *ibid.*
- 72 "Tiroshi/Aran" to "Tene"/A, 27 April 1948, HA, 105/31.
- 73 "Avner" to "Tene"/A, 6 May 1948, IDFA, 321/48/91.
- 74 "Tene"/A daily summaries 2 and 9 May 1948, IDFA 1/57/810; summary of "Tiroshi" information, 4 May 1948.
- 75 *Ibid.* Alexandroni's intelligence summary, 28 April 1948; "Tene"/A daily summaries, 2 and 5 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; Daily monitoring report, 6 May 1948, BGA.
- 76 "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 2 May 1948, HA, 105/128; Carmeli's intelligence summary, 7 May 1948, IDFA, 128/51/50; "Tene"/A daily summaries, 3 and 9 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 77 PALMAH HQ's daily report to the General Staff, 4 May 1948, HA, 105/94, and Broadmead to FO of the same date, PRO, FO 816/119.
- 78 "Tene"/A daily summaries, 7 and 14 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and "Zuri/Dori" to "Tene"/A, 2 July 1948, HA, 105/227.
- 79 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 494–5, entry for 7 June 1948.
- 80 "Yavne" Summary, 6 May 1948; "In the Arab Camp", 11 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 81 "Tene"/A daily summary, 6 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; Carmeli's intelligence summary, 7 May 1948, IDFA, 128/51/70; the committee for economic warfare's report, 11 May 1948, BGA; The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 8 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 82 "Yavne" daily bulletin, 6 May 1948; "In the Arab Camp", 11 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 83 "Zuri/Shaanani" (Paltiel Kuris) to "Tene"/A on the conquest of Bisan, 14 May 1948, HA, 105/92, and Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 149–50.
- 84 "Doron/Elitzur" to "Tene"/A, 13 May 1948, HA, 105/92.
- 85 "Tene"/A daily summary, 13 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 86 "Tene"/A review on the impact of Jewish retaliations upon the Arabs, 11 May 1948, HA, 105/31.
- 87 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 8 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 88 "Tene"/A daily summary, 10 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810. Cf. also Morris,

The Birth, pp. 101–3 and 186–7.

- 89 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 1 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 90 Cunningham to the British ambassadors in the Arab capitals, 2 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/118, and Bevin to the ambassadors, 3 May 1948, PRO, FO 141/1246.
- 91 In a recently published book, Alon Kadish attempts to contradict the allegation of a massacre in Lydda altogether, relying on testimonies of IDF officers and soldiers who took part in the occupation of the town. Cf. A. Kadish, A. Sela and A. Golan, *Kibush Lod, 1948* (The conquest of Lydda), Tel Aviv 2000, pp. 43–6 and 54–6.

8 *The Arab Regular Armies' Invasion of Palestine*

- 1 On the inter-Arab discussions at the League's council meetings cf. Sela, *The Arab League and the Palestine Question*, pp. 261–75 and 341–75, and Khalidi, *The Arab Perspective*, pp. 110–20.
- 2 Campbell to FO, 3 January 1948, PRO, FO 816/115.
- 3 On the Arab armies before the war cf. P. J. Vatikiotis, *Politics and the Military in Jordan: A Study of the Arab Legion, 1921–1957*, London 1967; P. J. Vatikiotis, *The Egyptian Army in Politics*, Bloomington 1961; G. Torrey, *Syrian Politics and the Military*, Ohio State University Press, 1964; General Renton's semi annual reports on the Iraqi army, 30 September 1946, PRO, FO 371/52422, and 30 September 1947, PRO, FO 371/61670; RAF report on the Egyptian Air Force, 1 April 1947, PRO, AIR 20/6906; General Arbutnot's reports on the Egyptian army, 7 and 14 April 1947 and 8 May 1947, PRO, FO 141/1201 and the British mission's final report on the Egyptian army, 31 December 1947, PRO, FO 141/1265. On the Legion's reorganization cf. War Office's memorandum to COS committee, 19 January 1948, PRO, DEFE 5/10.
- 4 Sasson to Shertok and Epstein, 29 February 1948, BGA. Cf. also the Jewish Agency Arab section's memorandum, 1 March 1948, in: Yogev, *Documents*, no. 239, pp. 398–402.
- 5 R. Louis, *Britain in the Middle East*, London 1984, p. 503–13.
- 6 Herzog's report on his interview with Norman, 5 April 1948, CZA, S 25/5634.
- 7 The Jewish Agency's Executive to Shertok, 4 April 1948, CZA, S 25/1704, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 338, entry for the same date.
- 8 Protocol of the Arab section's meeting at Jerusalem, 8 April 1948, CZA, S 25/5634, and Sasson to Shertok of the same date, CZA, S 25/8996.
- 9 "In the Arab Camp", 19 April 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 10 Sasson to Shertok, 16 April 1948, CZA, S 25/8996.
- 11 Ben-Gurion to Shertok, 16 April 1948, Yogev, *Documents*, no. 388, pp. 647–8, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 354, entry for the same date.
- 12 Kirkbride to Bevin, 16 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904.
- 13 R. L. Jasse, Great Britain and Abdullah's Plan to Partition Palestine: A Natural Sorting Out, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22 (1986), p. 511, and Khalidi,

The Arab Perspective, pp. 128–9.

- 14 Kirkbride to Bevin, 19 April 1948, PRO, FO 816/117.
- 15 Kirkbride to FO, 9 February 1948, PRO, FO 816/116.
- 16 Kirkbride to FO, 17 April 1948, PRO, FO 816/117.
- 17 Kirkbride to Burrows, 17 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68852, and Kirkbride to FO of the same date, *ibid*.
- 18 “In the Arab Public”, 13 April 1948, “Tene” daily summary, 20 April 1948, CZA, S 25/9209, and Protocol of the Arab section’s meeting at Jerusalem, 22 April 1948, CZA, S 25/9664.
- 19 “The Arab Press News”, 22 April 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504, and S. Ya’ari’s review “Military Operations in Palestine According to the Arab Press”, 26 April 1948, CZA, S 25/8996.
- 20 Sasson to Shertok, 22 April 1948, CZA, S 25/5634.
- 21 Protocol of the Arab section’s meeting at Jerusalem, 22 April 1948, CZA, S 25/9664, and Sasson to Shertok, 25 April 1948, CZA, S 25/5634.
- 22 Commanders in Chief to Chiefs of Staff, 23 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3926.
- 23 Mack to FO, 24 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904 (no. 439).
- 24 Cunningham to Creech-Jones, 23 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68370, and Burrows’ minute, 24 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68852.
- 25 “Tene”/A daily bulletin, 24 April 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and “Yavne” to “Tene”/A and B, 26 April 1948, HA, 105/216.
- 26 Mack to FO, 24 April 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904 (no. 444).
- 27 Kirkbride to Bevin, 25 April 1948, PRO, FO 816/118.
- 28 “In the Arab Camp”, 26 April 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 29 Protocol of the People Executive’s meeting, 26 April 1948, in: Israel State Archives (Pub.) *The People Executive — Protocols, 18 April–13 May 1948*, Jerusalem 1978, p. 20.
- 30 “Yavne” daily bulletin, 28 April 1948.
- 31 “Yavne” report based on “Dekel” news from Amman, 27 April 1948.
- 32 Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, I, p. 373, entry for 27 April 1948, and “In the Arab Camp”, 3 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 33 Etzioni to Yadin, 27 April 1948 and “Yavne” daily bulletin, same date.
- 34 The emissaries in Baghdad to *Mossad Le’Aliyah*, 27 April 1948, BGA. Cf. also S. Hillel, *Ruah Kadim* (Eastern Wind, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1988, pp. 136–9.
- 35 “Hashmonai” to Yadin, 27 April 1948, BGA, and Sasson to Shertok of the same date, *ibid*.
- 36 Marshall to Douglas, 27 April 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948* (hereafter: *FRUS*), V, part 2, p. 865, and record of Douglas’ interview with Attlee and Bevin, 28 April 1948, PRO, PREM 8/859/III.
- 37 Minute of Lovett’s conversation with Lord Inverchapel, 28 April 1948, *FRUS*, V, pp. 868–9.
- 38 Douglas to Marshall, 29 April 1948, *FRUS*, V., pp. 876–7.
- 39 Kirkbride to FO, 27 April 1948, PRO, FO 816/118.
- 40 Kirkbride to Bevin, 28 April 1948, *ibid*.
- 41 “Aviezer” information in “Yavne” report, 28 April 1948.
- 42 Campbell to FO, 26 and 27 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68370.

- 43 Campbell to FO, 28 April 1948, PRO, FO 816/118; Trautbek to FO, 29 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68371, and Houston-Boswell to FO, 28 April 1948, *ibid.*
- 44 "Yavne" daily bulletins, 28–29 April 1948, "Tene"/A daily bulletins, 5–6 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 29 April 1948, PRO, FO 816/118.
- 45 Mack to FO, 28 April 1948, *ibid.* Kirkbride to Bevin of the same date and 4 May, *ibid.* and Mack to FO, 29 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68371.
- 46 *AKhir Sa'a*, 1 July 1953.
- 47 Kirkbride to Bevin, 29 April 1948, PRO, FO 816/118.
- 48 Kirkbride to Burrows, 1 May 1948, *ibid.*
- 49 *Ibid.* Kirkbride to FO, 1 May 1948, PRO, FO 371/68546 and Campbell to Kirkbride, 2 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/118.
- 50 Kirkbride to FO, 3 May 1948, *ibid.*
- 51 "In the Arab Public", 5 May 1948.
- 52 The Political Department in Jerusalem to Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv, 7 May 1948, ISA, FO/2424/18, Shertok to Marshall, 29 April 1948, and Shertok to Ben-Gurion, 28–30 April and 4 May 1948, *ibid.* Cf. also M. Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945–1948*, Princeton 1982, pp. 373–4.
- 53 Herzog to Shiloah, 3 May 1948, ISA, FO/2424/18.
- 54 "Zuri" reports, 2 and 4 May 1948, HA, 105/128; *Haaretz*, 4 May 1948 and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 28 April and 5 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 55 CO to Cunningham, 3 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904; "Hiram" report on the situation in Acre, 2 May 1948, HA, 105/128; "Tiroshi/Eitan" report, 3 May 1948, *ibid.* and PALMAH HQ daily report to the General Staff, 4 May 1948, HA, 105/94. Cf. also Y. Cohen, *In Darkness*, pp. 117–19.
- 56 North Sector HQ intelligence report, 3 May 1948, PRO, WO 275/62.
- 57 "In the Arab Camp", 3 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046 and Sasson to Shertok, 5 May 1948, CZA, S 25/5634.
- 58 Y. Cohen, *In Darkness*, pp. 127–8.
- 59 Amin al-Nafuri, Hatzava Hasuri Bemilhemet 1948 (The Syrian Army in the 1948 War, in Hebrew), *Ma'aravot*, 279–80, May–June 1981, pp. 30–1. Cf. also A. Sela, Transjordan, Israel and the 1948 War: Myth, Historiography and Reality, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28/4 (1992), pp. 647–8.
- 60 Kirkbride to Bevin, 8 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/119.
- 61 "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 7 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 397, entry for the same date.
- 62 Yadin's memorandum "Changes in Plan D", 11 May 1948, BGA.
- 63 Protocol of the People Executive's meeting, 12 May 1948; I. Pappé, *Britain and the Arab–Israeli Conflict, 1948–1951*, New York, 1988, p. 21.
- 64 News from Lebanon, 10 May 1948, HA, 105/126.
- 65 "Berman" (Baghdad) to *Mossad Le'Aliyah*, 10 May 1948, BGA.
- 66 Herzog to Shiloah, 11 May 1948, BGA.
- 67 "In the Arab Camp", 11 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 68 Mack to FO, 11 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/119, and Bevin to Kirkbride, same date, PRO, CO 537/3902.
- 69 Glubb, *A Soldier*, pp. 82–4, and A. Kirkbride, *From the Wings*, London 1976, pp. 14–16.

- 70 Bevin to Kirkbride, 5 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/119.
- 71 Kirkbride to Bevin, 15 May 1948, PRO, FO 141/1246.
- 72 On Abdullah's interview with Meyerson on 11 May 1948 cf. Y. Gelber, *Jewish–Transjordanian Relations, 1921–1948*, London 1996, pp. 280–2.
- 73 "News on the Palestinians according to Arab broadcasts", 13–14 May 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504.
- 74 Cunningham's weekly intelligence estimate for the Colonial Secretary, 8 May 1948, copy in "Yeruham" to "Tene"/M, 12 May 1948, IDFA, 900/52/9.
- 75 Campbell to FO, 12 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/119 and Kirkbride to Bevin of the same date, *ibid.* For a detailed account of the chain of events that led to Egypt's decision to join in the invasion, mixed with excuses and exaggerations, cf. Muhammad Hasnin Haikal's memoirs, *Akhir Sa'a*, May–June 1953.
- 76 BTE to MELF, 13–15 May 1948, PRO, FO 141/1246, and Campbell to FO, 14 May 1948, PRO, FO 371/68372.
- 77 "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 14 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 428, entry for 15 May 1948.
- 78 Oded Messer's testimony, HA, pp. 15–7.
- 79 Berman and Leo Cohn to Shiloah, 12 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9390.
- 80 Protocol of the Arab section's meeting at Jerusalem, 13 May 1948, CZA, S25/5634, and Y. Shimoni, *Hachanot Ha'Arvim Lemilhemet Israel–Arav, 1945–1948* (The Arabs' Preparations for the Israel–Arab War, 1945–1948, in Hebrew), in: *Hamizrah Hahadash*, XII (1962), pp. 208–11.
- 81 Nafuri, Htzava Hasuri, p. 31; Yiftah to "Zuri", 14 May 1948, HA, 105/128 and Y. Cohen, *In Darkness*, pp. 128–9.
- 82 Kirkbride to Bevin, 14 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/120.
- 83 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, loc. cit.
- 84 Kirkbride to Bevin, 15 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/120.

9 *Fighting and Flight after the Invasion*

- 1 Cf., for example, I. Ber, *Bithon Israel: Etmol, Hayom Umahar* (Israel's Security: Past, Present and Future, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1966. In 1948, Ber was Yadin's aide in the IDF directorate of operations and later director of planning. He was involved in MAPAM conspiracies against Ben-Gurion, and left the army. Subsequently, he became Ben-Gurion's favourite and was assigned the task of writing the war's history. Ber also held the Chair of Military History at Tel Aviv University. In 1960 he was charged with espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union, sentenced and jailed. He died in prison in 1976. In this book (pp. 125–35), Ber developed the thesis about an alleged conspiracy between Ben-Gurion and Abdullah. He had hinted of its existence already when he held office during the war. Avi Shlaim adopted this thesis as the basis of his study. He developed it further, critically examining Ber's arguments and repudiating some of them. Shlaim also accepted similar accusations that had been raised in Arab memoirs of the war, particularly by the Iraqi chief of staff, Salih Saib al-Juburi. However, a critical analysis of the

- military moves completely refutes the charges. Cf. A. Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*, Oxford 1988, pp. 231–56. Cf. also E. Oren, Matarot VeTotzaot BeMilhemet Ha'Atzmaut (Goals and Results in the War of Independence, in Hebrew), *Ma'aravot*, 279–280, May–June 1981, p. 17, and: T. Mayer, Arab Unity of Action and the Palestine Question, 1945–1948, in: *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22 (1986), pp. 345–7. Oren referred to previous works by Ber and by Meir Pa'il, who had relied on an erroneous intelligence estimate of the invasion written by Helmer on 9 May 1948, and on Y. Shimoni, The Arab Preparations for War in 1945–8, in: *Hamizrah Hehadash*, XII (1962), pp. 208–11. Egyptian newspapers (*Al-Masri* of 23 February 1950 and *Al-Mutzwar* of 19 May 1950) published polemic Arab versions of the invasion's plans, mentioning far more ambitious goals than those that had been broached at the time. They blamed Abdullah for deviating from these schemes. For a thorough discussion of the invasion, especially in the Legion's sector, cf. A. Sela, Transjordan, Israel and the 1948 War: Myth, Historiography and Reality, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28/4 (1992), pp. 647ff, and Y. Gelber, Plishat Tzivot Arav Ba-15 BeMai 1948 (The Arab Armies' Invasion on 15 May 1948, in Hebrew), *Iyunim*, III, 1993, pp. 23–74.
- 2 C. in C. MELF to WO, 17 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3926.
 - 3 Protocol of the provisional government's meeting, 16 May 1948, ISA, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 429–47, entries for 16–22 May 1948.
 - 4 Cf. Y. Cohen, *In Darkness*, pp. 129–32. For a detailed discussion of Lebanon's participation in the war cf. R. Erlich, The Policy of the Zionist Movement and Israel towards Lebanon, 1918–1958, Ph.D. thesis submitted to Tel Aviv University, 1997, pp. 103–52.
 - 5 The British Legation in Beirut's report on the situation in Lebanon in May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3986, and cf. also I. Pappé, *Britain and the Arab–Israeli Conflict, 1948–1951*, New York, 1988, pp. 28–9.
 - 6 Berman to Shiloah, 25 May 1948, ISA, FO/2570/5.
 - 7 Kirkbride's daily situation report on Palestine, 16 May 1948, PRO, FO 371/68372.
 - 8 Resolutions of the Arab League's Political Committee, 26 May 1948.
 - 9 "Palestine News according to Arab Broadcasts", 15–22 May 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 17 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/120.
 - 10 "Yeruham" daily summaries and "Tene" news, 18 May 1948, HA, 105/94. Cf. Also Qawuqji's memoirs, pp. 26–33, and Glubb, *A Soldier*, pp. 109–11.
 - 11 Kirkbride to FO, 18 May 1948, PRO, FO 371/68373.
 - 12 "Tzuri/Leshem" report on the interrogation of Syrian POWs captured at Samakh, 23 May 1948, HA, 105/132.
 - 13 The diary of Lieutenant Faiz Khadafi, that was found in a Syrian abandoned tank near Degania, HA, 105/128.
 - 14 Glubb, *A Soldier*, pp. 105–8.
 - 15 Shlaim, *Collusion*, pp. 240–2.
 - 16 Glubb's report on the situation in Transjordan, 12 August 1948, PRO, FO 371/68822.
 - 17 Kirkbride to FO, 17 May 1948, and FO reply, 19 May 1948, PRO, FO 371/68853; Kirkbride to Bevin, 19 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/120; Minutes

by Beith, Pyman and Burrows, 20 May 1948, PRO, FO 371/68829. Cf. also Glubb, *A Soldier*, pp. 110–15 and Kirkbride, *From the Wings*, pp. 31–5. For a detailed discussion of the decision-making process about the Legion's intervention in Jerusalem cf. Sela, *Transjordan, Israel and the 1948 War*, pp. 649–59.

- 18 Glubb to Kirkbride, 12 June 1948, PRO, FO 816/123.
- 19 Glubb's report, note 16 above.
- 20 Kirkbride to Bevin, 21 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/120.
- 21 Kirkbride to Bevin, 23 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/121.
- 22 Mack to FO and Kirkbride to FO, 22 May 1948, PRO, FO 371/68373.
- 23 For a detailed description of the first battle at Latrun cf. Maj. General (Ret.) S. Shamir, *Bechol Mechir — Yerushalayim* ("...No Matter What" — To Jerusalem), Tel Aviv 1994, pp. 149–268. Shamir formed the 7th brigade and commanded it in the battles of Latrun.
- 24 Kirkbride to Burrows, 24 May 1948, and to Bevin, 26 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/121. Cf. also Glubb, *A Soldier*, p. 132.
- 25 "Palestine in the Arab Broadcasts", 26–27 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9047.
- 26 Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp. 34–6.
- 27 Giv'ati's daily intelligence summaries, 23–31 May 1948; "Tene"/A daily summaries, 27–28 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; "Palestine in the Arab Broadcasts", 26/27 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9047; Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 471, entry for 30 May 1948, and Shiloah to Hirsch (Gershon Avner), 31 May 1948, CZA, S 25/4147.
- 28 "Tene"/A daily summaries, 4 and 6 June 1948, HA, 105/147; Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 484, entry for 4 June 1948, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 7 June 1948, PRO, FO 816/122.
- 29 Mack to FO, 28 May 1948, PRO, FO 141/1322, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 9 May 1948, PRO, FO 816/121.
- 30 Shamir, *Bechol Mechir*, pp. 269–406.
- 31 Y. Cohen, *In Darkness*, pp. 141–2.
- 32 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 471–3, entries for 30–31 May 1948.
- 33 "Zuri/Dori" review of the situation in Upper Galilee, 21 June 1948, HA, 105/222.
- 34 "Zuri/Kochva" (Emmanuel Friedman) report, 11 June 1948.
- 35 Qawuqji to Madlul Abbas, 11 June 1948, IDFA, 1/57/10.
- 36 "Zuri/Dori" report on the ALA, 20 June 1948, HA, 105/127.
- 37 Madlul Abbas to Taha al-Hashimi, 12 June 1948, IDFA, 1/57/10; al-Hashimi's reply, 21 June 1948, *ibid.*, and "the Communist" review of the ALA logistics, 7 December 1950.
- 38 "Seret" review of Lydda, 28 May 1948, HA, 105/228.
- 39 Daily intelligence summary for the southern and central fronts, 6 June 1948.
- 40 Golani and Oded brigades to Northern Front HQ, 10 June 1948, HA, 105/130; "Zuri" to "Tene"/A, 11 June 1948, *ibid.*; "Zuri/Kochva" report on the Syrian attacks on Sha'ar Hagolan and Samakh, 12 June 1948, HA, 105/127, and Oded's report on the battle of Mishmar Hayarden, 14 June 1948, HA, 105/92.
- 41 The British Legation's monthly situation report for June 1948, PRO, CO 537/3986.

- 42 A report on the Syrian–Israeli war in “Yanai” to *Da’at*, 22 April 1949.
- 43 Kirkbride to Bevin, 6 June 1948, PRO, FO 816/122, and to Burrows, 9 June 1948, *ibid*.
- 44 The Legion’s 4th Brigade’s orders to its sub-units, 8 June 1948, HA, 105/91, and DMO daily intelligence summary, 11 June 1948. The 4th brigade was not a military formation but an improvised administrative headquarters for dealing with all irregulars and auxiliaries in the Legion’s sector.
- 45 Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, II, p. 499, entry for 9 June 1948.
- 46 DMO’s mission to Giv’ati and “Sergei” (Negev brigade), 9 June 1948, and Yadin to the brigades, 10 June 1948.
- 47 Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, II, p. 491, entries for 6 and 8 June 1948, and p. 496, telegrams from Jerusalem, late May and early June 1948, BGA, and a report on the situation in Jerusalem, 8 June 1948, HA, Galili files, no. 25.
- 48 Calculated from the data in the official Memorial Book for the Fallen in the War of Independence, in Hebrew.
- 49 Gihon’s report, 11 June 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74. Gihon was Etzioni’s intelligence officer and later a famous military historian of the Roman period.
- 50 Glubb’s report (note 16 above).
- 51 “Tene”/A daily summary, 24 June 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and “In the Arab Public”, 27 June 1948, HA, 105/147.
- 52 Beeri to SM1 and SM7, 10 November 1948, and SM1 daily intelligence report, 13 November 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235.
- 53 Helmer’s memorandum titled “Summary of the Situation on the Eve of the Truce”, 11 June 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/340.
- 54 Dow to FO, 10 June 1948, PRO, FO 371/68641.
- 55 Cf., for example, communications intercepted by “Yeruham” on 15–16 June 1948, HA, 105/90.
- 56 Troutbek to FO, 5 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/127.
- 57 A list of truce violations attached to communicate from Shertok to Bernadott, 12 July 1948, ISA, FO/2424/21, and Helmer’s memorandum to Shiloah and Yadin on the entry of Arab troops to Palestine during the truce, 16 June 1948, ISA, FO/2426/9.
- 58 WO to MELF, 10 June 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904; Cyrenaica District to MELF, 11 June 1948, *ibid*., and 16 June 1948, PRO, CO 537/3938.
- 59 “Tene”/A daily summary, 30 June 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810; al-Jundi to Glubb, 3 July 1948, HA, 105/90, and “Yeruham” Arab bulletin, 4 July 1948, HA, 105/147.
- 60 Carl (Kosman) to Yigael (Yadin), 24 June 1948, and Qawuqji’s order, 30 June 1948, IDFA, 1/57/49.
- 61 “In the Arab Public”, 27 June 1948, HA, 105/147; “Tene”/A review, same date, *ibid*. “Zuri/Dori” review of the situation in Upper Galilee, 21 June 1948, HA, 105/222; his report to “Tene”/A, 30 June 1948, HA, 105/128; “Tene”/A daily summaries, 30 June and 2 July 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and “Hiram” report, 6 July 1948, HA, 105/227.
- 62 Telegrams on the AHC wave, intercepted on 18–21 and 27 June 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 63 SHAY al-Mughar village dossier, HA, 105/134, entries for 16–18 May 1948;

- Zarnuga dossier, *ibid.* entries for 10–30 May 1948; “Doron/Elitzur” to “Tene”/A, 19 May 1948, HA, 105/91; “Doron” to Giv’ati, 25 May 1948, *ibid.* and “Tene”/A daily summaries, 23 and 27 May 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 64 Shiloah to Hirsch, 25 May 1948, CZA, S 25/4147; Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, II, p. 476, entry for 1 June 1948; “Doron” memorandum to “Tene”/A on the occupation of villages in the southern front until the truce, 15 June 1948, HA, 105/92, and his report to “Tene”/A, 27 June 1948, HA, 105/124.
- 65 A. Gilat, *Hatevach BeTantura* (The massacre in Tantura, in Hebrew), *Ma’ariv*, 21 January 2000, based on T. Katz, *The Exodus of Arabs from Villages at the Foot of Southern Mount Carmel in 1948*, MA Thesis submitted to the University of Haifa, 1998.
- 66 Shitrit to Ben-Gurion, 31 May 1948, ISA, C/307/48, “Tene”/A daily bulletin, 9 June 1948, HA, 105/147, and Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 167–8.
- 67 “Zuri” to “Yirmiyahu”, 1 and 11 June 1948.
- 68 “Hiram” report on Acre after its conquest, 21 May 1948, HA, 105/92.
- 69 “Hiram” reports on conditions in Acre following its occupation, 20 May and 9 June 1948, *ibid.* and Yaeli’s notes on his visit to Acre on 29 May 1948, ISA, FO/2564/10.
- 70 “Hiram” to “Tene”/A, 16 May 1948, HA, 105/31; “Hiram/Yeshaayahu” (Hayim Auerbach) to “Tene”/A, 19 May 1948, HA, 105/92; “Hiram” to “Tene”/A, 27 May 1948, HA, 105/126, and “Tene”/A daily summaries, 31 May and 7 June 1948, HA, 105/147.
- 71 “The Sword” report on Nazareth in “Zuri/Barkan” to “Tene”/A, 4 June 1948, HA, 105/225, and Nazareth’s municipality to king Abdullah, 2 July 1948, HA, 105/90.
- 72 PALMAH HQ reports to the General Staff, 23, 25 and 27 May 1948, HA, 105/94; “Zuri/Dori” to “Tene”/A, 26 May 1948, HA, 105/31; “Tene”/A daily summary, 7 June 1948, HA, 105/147 and “Zuri/Dori” report on Abu Qassim’s journey to Raffid (on the Golan Heights), 30 June 1948, HA, 105/128.
- 73 “Zuri/Dori” reports to “Tene”/A, 26 and 31 May 1948, HA, 105/31, and “Tene”/A daily bulletin, 2 June 1948, HA, 105/147.
- 74 “Tene”/A daily bulletin, 9 June 1948, *ibid.*
- 75 “Tene”/A daily summaries, 31 May 1948, *ibid.* and 7 June 1948, ISA, FO/2570/6, and “Zuri” summaries of the same dates.
- 76 Daily report of the Northern Front HQ, 9 June 1948.
- 77 Mashbatz (Alexandroni’s adviser on Arab affairs) to Shitrit and to military intelligence on moods in Tulkarm, 21 July 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10.
- 78 “Tene”/A memorandum titled *Tenuat Hahagira shel Arviyei Eretz Israel* (The Emigration Movement of Palestine’s Arabs from 1 December 1947 until 1 June 1948, in Hebrew) 30 June 1948. Cf. B. Morris, *The Causes and Character of the Arab Exodus from Palestine: the Israel Defence Forces Intelligence Branch Analysis of June 1948* in: *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22 (1986), pp. 5–19, and S. Tevet, *The Palestinian Refugee Problem and Its Origin*, in: *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26 (2), 1990, pp. 216–18.

10 *The Ten-Day Campaign and the Second Truce*

- 1 For two opposing versions of the Altalena affair cf. S. Nakdimon, *Altalena* (in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1978, and U. Brenner, *Altalena* (in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1979.
- 2 Y. Gelber, *Lama Pirku Et HaPALMAH* (Why the PALMAH was disbanded, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1986, pp. 175–210.
- 3 Y. Gelber, *Gar'in LeTzava 'Ivri Sadir* (The Emergence of a Jewish Army, in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1986, pp. 188–90 and 270–2.
- 4 FO to the British Legations in the Arab countries, 6 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/125 and Troutbek to FO, 8 July 1948, *ibid*.
- 5 Kirkbride to Bevin, 7 and 8 July 1948, *ibid*.
- 6 Kirkbride to Bevin, 9 July 1948, *ibid*.
- 7 Troutbek to FO, 9 July 1948, *ibid*.
- 8 Karon's review of the situation in Negev, 17 June 1948.
- 9 Yadin to Ben-Gurion, Shertok and Shiloah, 16 June 1948, ISA, FO/2426/10.
- 10 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 533, entry for 18 June 1948.
- 11 E. Oren, *HaDerech El Ha'Ir* (The Road to the City, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1976, pp. 45–56 and appendix at pp. 262–3 (GSI's estimate of the enemy, 26 June 1948).
- 12 Summary of the Ten-Day Campaign, end of July 1948, IDFA, 854/52/236, p. 5.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 6 and Oren, *Baderech*, pp. 66–7.
- 14 Yadin's guidelines for operations in the northern front, 29 June 1948, IDFA, 1864/50/91.
- 15 On the battles in and around Jerusalem cf. I. Levy ("Levitze"), *loc.cit*.
- 16 For a detailed analysis of operation *DANI* cf. Oren, *loc.cit*.
- 17 Lydda's telegram to the Legion's HQ at Ramallah, afternoon of 10 July 1948 and *DANI* HQ listening reports for 11 July 1948.
- 18 Documents captured in Lydda and Ramle, distributed by "Tene"/A on 15–6 July 1948.
- 19 Cf. A. Kadish, A. Sela and A. Golan, *Kibush Lod, 1948* (The occupation of Lydda, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 2000, pp. 26–42.
- 20 Legion's telegrams from and to Lydda, intercepted on 11–13 July 1948, HA, 105/129 and 105/92, and *Jihad al-Muqadas*' telegrams intercepted on 11–12 July 1948. Compare them to the battle's description in Glubb, *A Soldier*, pp. 161–2.
- 21 Kirkbride to Bevin, 12 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/125.
- 22 Bevin to Kirkbride, 12 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/126.
- 23 Pirie-Gordon to FO, 14 July 1948, *ibid*.
- 24 Pirie-Gordon to Burrows, 25 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/127.
- 25 Pirie-Gordon to FO, 18 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/126.
- 26 Oren, *Baderech*, pp. 174–6 and 197–205.
- 27 Kadish, Sela and Golan, *Kibush Lod*, pp. 43–56.
- 28 Shitrit's report on his visit to Ramle, 12 July 1948, ISA, FO/2564/10.
- 29 Shitrit's report on his visit to Lydda, 26 July 1948, *ibid*.
- 30 Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 207 and note 26, p. 345.

- 31 Ibid., p. 204.
- 32 Mack to FO, 11 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68375, and “Hiram” report, 19 July 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 33 Mack to FO, 28 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/127, and Pirie-Gordon to FO, 29 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 34 Kirkbride to FO, 13 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68375.
- 35 “Hiram” reports, 22 June 1948, HA, 105/127 and 105/131.
- 36 “Information on Arabs in ‘Carmeli’ sector”, 8 June 1948, “Hiram” report on Ijsim, 4 July 1948, HA, 105/227, and “Tene”/A daily summaries, 2 and 5 July 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810.
- 37 “Hadari” report on the conquest of Tira and Ain Hud, 17 July 1948, HA, 105/31, and “Hiram” report on the interrogation of Tira’s POWs, same date, *ibid.*
- 38 Ladas to Shertok, 13 August 1948, ISA, FO/2426/11 and Harcavi to Shertok, 14 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 39 The testimonies and the observers’ report, enclosed to “Vardi” (Izhak Rose) to *Da’at*, 25 August 1948.
- 40 “Tzuri” report on communications between Ijsim and the Iraqis, 21 July 1948, HA, 105/92 and *Da’at*’s summary, 26 July 1948, HA, 105/147.
- 41 General Reiley’s report on the investigation, 8 September 1948, ISA, FO/2426/12, and Shertok to Bunch, 28 September 1948, *ibid.*
- 42 Operational order for *DEKEL*, 8 July 1948, IDFA, 721/72/310.
- 43 Operational order for *YA’AR*, 15 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 44 A participant’s oral testimony; an anonymous complaint to the Minister of Defense and the subsequent correspondence between the Minister’s private secretary, the Northern Front’s HQ and Golani CO, September 1948.
- 45 Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, II, pp. 591 and 599, entries for 15 and 18 July 1948.
- 46 “Zuri/Leshem” report on Nazareth’s conquest, 19 July 1948, HA, 105/92.
- 47 Kuris’ report on the situation in Lower Galilee, 29 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 48 A quarterly report on the military administration’s activities in Nazareth from 17 July to 17 October 1948, ISA, FO/2564/11.
- 49 Sikhnin’s letter of surrender, 20 July 1948, ISA, FO/2426/11, and a list of truce’s violations, no. 6, 26 July 1948, ISA, FO/2426/10.
- 50 An Iraqi report on the Lebanese army and on Qawuqji’s troops, 20 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68376, and MI comments on this memorandum, 29 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 51 Campbell to FO, 16 and 17 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/126.
- 52 Kirkbride to Bevin, 13 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 53 Pirie-Gordon to FO, 18 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68375, and *Da’at* review of the Legion’s situation, 19 July 1948, HA, 105/129.
- 54 A report on the American consul and military attaché’s visit to Amman on 15–18 July, 25 July 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 55 Glubb’s report on the situation in Transjordan, 12 August 1948, PRO, FO 371/68822. Cf. also A. Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*, Oxford 1988, pp. 261–7.
- 56 “In the Arab Public”, 20 July 1948, HA, 105/147, and Foreign Ministry to Eban, 24 July 1948, ISA, FO/94/10.

- 57 GSI summary of the Ten-Day Campaign, 21 July 1948, IDFA, 854/52/236, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 613, entry for the same date.
- 58 Bernadotte's instructions for organizing the truce's supervision, 20 and 23 July 1948, IDFA, 2168/50/72.
- 59 Mohn to Eitan, 29 August 1948, ISA, FO/94/11.
- 60 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 631, entry for 3 August 1948.
- 61 Y. Gelber, *Gar'in LeTzava Sadir* (The Emergence of a Jewish Army, in Hebrew), pp. 266–76.
- 62 Yadin's memorandum to Ben-Gurion and Dori, 1 August 1948, IDFA, 1864/50/91.
- 63 A report on Syria's war against Israel, in "Yanai" to *Da'at*, 22 April 1949.
- 64 Reports on the Palestinian bands in Galilee, August 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 65 SM intelligence report no. 4, 11 October 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/286.
- 66 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 655, entry for 18 August 1948.
- 67 MI2 review, 23 August 1948, PRO, WO 208/3240.
- 68 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 672, entry for 6 September 1948.
- 69 Yadin to the IDF units, 13 and 17 September 1948, IDFA, 854/52/236, and SM1 weekly report, same date, IDFA, 2384/50/10.

11 *The Palestinians' Decay*

- 1 Qassim (Rimawi) to the AHC office in Damascus, 12 July 1948, HA 105/31.
- 2 Abdullah's telegrams to Aref al-Aref, 7–8 August 1948.
- 3 *Da'at* daily summary, 21 July 1948, HA, 105/129, Pirie-Gordon to Burrows, 25 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/127, and a telegram from the Jewish underground in Baghdad, 29 July 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 4 Pirie-Gordon to FO, 14 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/126.
- 5 Kirkbride to FO, 5–6 August 1948, PRO, FO 371/68830.
- 6 Abdullah to Aref al-Aref, 8 August 1948, HA, 105/112.
- 7 Munir Abu Fadil to the Mufti, 21 August 1948, *ibid*.
- 8 *Da'at* review of the Hussaynis' position in Palestine, 10 August 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 9 Qassim to the AHC office in Damascus, 20 July 1948, *ibid*.
- 10 "Khalid" (al-Bakri) to the Mufti, 26 July 1948.
- 11 *Da'at* summaries, 15 and 21 July 1948, IDFA, 1/57/810, and compare with Glubb, *A Soldier*, pp. 163–4.
- 12 Qassim to the Mufti, 25–27 and 30 August 1948, and to "Khalid", 25 August 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 13 Qassim to the Mufti, 6 September 1948.
- 14 Munir (Abu Fadel) to the Mufti, 10 August 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 15 Munir to the Mufti and the Mufti to Azzam, 4 August 1948.
- 16 Hajj Amin to Ahmad Hilmi, 10 August 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 17 "Yeruham" weekly summary, 29 August 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/622.
- 18 Beaumont to FO, 17 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/136.
- 19 Ishak al-Hussayni to the Mufti, quoted in Gibli to Yadin, 19 August 1948.
- 20 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 655 and 663, entries for 18 and 26 August 1948; Kirkbride to Bevin, 19 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/136 and Campbell to Hashaba Pasha, 23 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/128.

- 21 Kirkbride to Bevin, 24 August 1948, PRO, FO 371/68376. Cf. also Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 663, entry for 26 August 1948.
- 22 Akram (Zu'aytar) to the Mufti, in: Toledano to Yadin, 15 August 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10; SM1 weekly summary, 26 August 1948, *ibid.* and Middle East Department to the Political Department, 31 August 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 23 The British embassy in Cairo weekly appreciation, 27 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/128, and Houston Boswell to FO, 28 August 1948, PRO, FO 371/68494.
- 24 Kirkbride to Bevin, 24-25 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/128.
- 25 Chapman-Andrews to FO, 31 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 26 Bevin to Mack, 2 September 1948, PRO, *ibid.*
- 27 Kirkbride to Bevin, 4 September 1948, *ibid.* and Mack to FO, 6 September 1948, *ibid.*
- 28 "Khalid" to the Mufti, 13 August 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10.
- 29 Exchange of telegrams between the Mufti and Rimawi, 21-23 August 1948, HA, 105/104.
- 30 Qassim to the Mufti, 22 and 24 August 1948.
- 31 Qassim to the Mufti, 25 August 1948, HA, 105/104, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 25 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/129.
- 32 "Abu Sa'id" to the Mufti, 26 August 1948, and Qassim to the Mufti, 28 August 1948.
- 33 Tmimi to the Mufti, 29 August 1948, and Qassim to the Mufti, 30 August, 3 and 12 September 1948.
- 34 Qassim to the Mufti, 2 August 1948.
- 35 SM1 daily reports, 11 and 20 November 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235.
- 36 Campbell to FO, 13 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68641; Hilmi to Azzam, 20 July 1948, HA, 105/104; and "In the Arab Public", same date, HA, 105/147.
- 37 Beaumont to FO, 3 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/127.
- 38 The British embassy in Cairo weekly appreciation, 27 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/128, and BMEQ to FO, 24 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68641.
- 39 *Da'at* review on the Hussaynis' position, 10 August 1948, HA, 105/104, and Shimoni to Eban of the same date, ISA, FO/2569/11.
- 40 FO to the British legations in the Arab countries, 19 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/128, Chapman-Andrews to FO, 20 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68861, and FO to the embassy at Cairo, 2 October 1948, *ibid.*
- 41 Kirkbride to Bevin, 18 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/128.
- 42 Qassim to Hajj Amin, 23 September 1948, HA, 105/112, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 29 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/129.
- 43 Kirkbride's report to Bevin, 4 October 1948, and its enclosures, PRO, FO 816/130, and a review of the Arab press' comments on the Gaza and Amman resolutions, 22 October 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1. On the Palestinian congresses cf. Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp. 89-93 and A. Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan, 1948-1957*, London 1981, pp. 11-12.
- 44 Bevin to Kirkbride, 29 September 1948, *ibid.* and Kirkbride to Bevin, 2, 4 and 6 October 1948, PRO, FO 816/130.
- 45 Kirkbride to Bevin, 12 October 1948, *ibid.*

- 46 Glubb to Burrows, 22 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68861.
- 47 Glubb's estimate of the situation, 5 October 1948, PRO, FO 816/130, and Kirkbride to Burrows, 6 October 1948, *ibid*.
- 48 Eitan to Epstein, 9 October 1948, ISA, FO/126/8, and a review of inter-Arab relations, 14 October 1948, ISA, FO/364/3.
- 49 Shiloah to Shertok, 10 October 1948, ISA, FO/182/3, and a Foreign Ministry's review titled "News from the Middle East Countries", 14 October 1948, ISA, FO/364/3.
- 50 Qassim to Hajj Amin, 23 September 1948, HA, 105/112.
- 51 Kamal Yussuf Tahir's report, 1 December 1948, IDFA, 1261/49/10.
- 52 Qassim and Khalid to the Mufti, 29 November 1948, SM1 daily intelligence reports, 30 November and 5–10 December 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74; SM1 weekly report, 19 December 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/256; Auerbach to SM1, 6 December 1948; Sokolowski's report of agents' news, 12 December 1948.
- 53 SM1 daily bulletin, 10 December 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74.
- 54 Stabler to the Secretary of State, 7 January 1949, attached to "Yeruham" report, 18 January 1949, ISA, FO/2569/12.
- 55 Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees*, pp. 12–4. Cf., for example, SM1 daily review, 5 December 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 8–9 December 1948, PRO, FO 816/142.
- 56 Reports from Jericho, Transjordan and Damascus on the Jericho Congress, 15 December 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/72.
- 57 Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees*, p. 14.
- 58 Gihon's review of the Palestinian combatants at Jerusalem front, 1 December 1948, IDFA, 1261/49/37.
- 59 SM1 daily summary, 12 November 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235.
- 60 SM1 daily summaries, 2 and 5 November, *ibid.*, and 6 December 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74.
- 61 Hajj Amin to Khalid and Qassim, 10 December 1948; Khalid to the Mufti, same date; Qassim to the Mufti, 11 December 1948, and "Rashid" to "Haidar", 30 January 1949. Cf. also "Yeruham" daily summaries, 1–4 January 1949.
- 62 Khalid to the Mufti, 9 December 1948.
- 63 SM1 daily summaries, 23–25 December 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74.
- 64 "Rashid" to "Haidar", 7 January 1949.
- 65 "Yeruham" daily summaries, 4 and 6 January 1949.
- 66 Khalid to the Mufti, 19 January 1949; Qassim to the Mufti, 20–21 January 1949; Vardinger's report on the event, 24 January 1949, and Qassim to the Mufti, 2 February 1949.
- 67 SM1 daily summary, 24 January 1949, IDFA, 7249/49/236.
- 68 Kemal Ariqat to the Mufti, 21 January 1949.
- 69 Ariqat to the Mufti, 12 February 1949; Daud al-Hussayni to the Mufti, 24 February 1949, and SM1 daily summary, 4 March 1949, IDFA. 7249/49/238.
- 70 Daud (al-Hussayni) to the Mufti, 20 January 1949.
- 71 Tmimi to the Mufti, 16 January 1949.
- 72 Campbell to Bevin, 22 February 1949, PRO, FO 371/75363.

- 73 J. W. Wall's report, 8 March 1949, *ibid.*
- 74 Sokolowsky's report on the situation in Gaza, 12 December 1948, and "Yeruham" daily bulletins, 8–9 January 1949.
- 75 Sami Bey's report to the Mufti on the conference, 1 February 1949.
- 76 M. Alami, The Lesson of Palestine, *The Middle East Journal*, 3/4 (October 1949), pp. 373–405.

12 *Diplomacy and Intrigues*

- 1 I. Pappé, *Britain and the Arab–Israeli Conflict, 1948–1951*, New York, 1988, pp. 38–48; E. Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914–1956*, London 1963, pp. 159–61, and Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, pp. 547–50.
- 2 General Hollis (secretary of COS committee) to Alexander (Minister of Defense), 8 June 1948, PRO, CO 537/3938; Minute by VCOAS, 14 June 1948, PRO, DEFE 5/11 and his memorandum to COS committee, 7 October 1948, PRO, DEFE 5/8.
- 3 Bevin to COS committee, 5 November 1948, *ibid.*
- 4 COS memorandum on SANDOWN, 1 July 1948, PRO, DEFE 5/11. For a detailed analysis of the plan and its political implications cf. M. Cohen, *Fighting World War Three from the Middle East*, London 1997.
- 5 Burrows' brief for Bevin's meeting with Douglas, the American ambassador to London, 5 August 1948, PRO, FO 371/68379, and Bevin to Franks, 7 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/127.
- 6 Bevin to Franks, 19 August 1948, *ibid.* and 23 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/128.
- 7 Bevin to the British legations in the Arab states, 6 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/125.
- 8 Comay's minutes of Eban's meeting with Beeley, 8 June 1948, ISA, FO/130/72. Eban to Shertok of the same date, in Y. Freundlich (ed.), *Documents on Israel's Foreign Policy, I, 14 May–30 September 1948*, ISA, Jerusalem 1981, no. 163, p. 140.
- 9 "Palestine in the Arab Broadcasts", 16–19 June 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504, Burrows to Kirkbride, 12 June 1948, PRO, FO 816/123, Kirkbride's reply, 16 June 1948, *ibid.* and Bevin to Kirkbride, 2 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/128.
- 10 Eitan's minutes of the discussions with the mediator, 17–18 June 1948, ISA, FO/95/2.
- 11 Shiloah and Leo Cohn to Shertok, 25 June 1948, ISA, FO/2424/20.
- 12 Minutes of an interdepartmental meeting on Palestine, 22 June 1948, PRO, FO 371/68374 and COS committee's memorandum on the future of Haifa port, 14 July 1948, PRO, DEFE 5/8.
- 13 Evans to FO, 12 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68494.
- 14 BMEQ to FO, 12 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/127. The Palestinian leader Mussa Alami expressed similar opinions. Cf. Houston Boswell to FO, 15 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/126.
- 15 Bevin to Kirkbride, 12 July 1948, *ibid.* and FO to the British legations in the Arab countries, 22 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68641.

- 16 Bevin to UKDEL, 11 and 12 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/126.
- 17 UKDEL to Bevin, 13 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 18 Beaumont to Burrows, 18 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68375.
- 19 Leo Cohn's minutes of his interview with Reedman, the mediator's assistant, 13 July 1948, ISA, FO/364/13
- 20 BMEQ to FO, 6 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/128.
- 21 BMEQ to FO, 23 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68861.
- 22 Kirkbride to Bevin, 8 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/128, and FO to Troutbek, 13 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68861.
- 23 Troutbek to FO, 11 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/128.
- 24 Troutbek to FO, 15–16 September 1948, *ibid.*
- 25 Bevin to Franks, 9 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/127, 28 August 1948 and 6 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/128; an unsigned memorandum (probably Burrows') on the situation in the Middle East, 8 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68379, and a secret annex to the Cabinet's Defense Committee's meeting, 13 September 1948, PRO, PREM 8/859.
- 26 On Israel's attempts to instigate a *putsch* in Syria in the summer and fall of 1948 cf. Y. Gelber, Druze and Jews in the War of 1948, in: *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31 (2), April 1995, pp. 243–9 and A. Shlaim, Husni Za'im and the Plan to Resettle Palestinian Refugees in Syria, in: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 15 (4), 1986, pp. 71–2. On Sasson's reservations, cf. Sasson to Shimoni, 27 September and 6 October 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 27 Cohn to Shertok, 22 July 1948, ISA, FO/2424/1.
- 28 Cohn to Shertok, 6 October 1948, ISA, FO/2443/2.
- 29 Bevin to Hugh Dow, 4 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/136.
- 30 Foreign Office to COS committee, 24 September 1948, PRO, DEFE 5/12, and Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp. 43–5.
- 31 Shertok to the cabinet's ministers, 10 September 1948, and protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting, 12 September 1948, pp. 1–26, ISA.
- 32 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 708–9, and III, p. 719, entries for 22–23 September 1948, and protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting, 26 September 1948, pp. 12–21, ISA.
- 33 Shertok to Eilat (formerly Epstein, the Israeli ambassador in Washington), 11 October 1948, ISA, FO/182/3.
- 34 Kirkbride to Bevin, 4 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/127.
- 35 Trautbek to FO, 2 October 1948, PRO, FO 141/1247.
- 36 Sasson to Shimoni, 30 June 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1, and Shertok to Shimoni, 11 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 37 Eitan to Shertok, 28 July 1948, and Cohn's remarks, ISA, FO/2424/21.
- 38 On Sasson's preliminary overtures cf. Y. Gelber, Jewish–Arab Talks during the War of Independence, in: *The Journal of Israeli History*, 15 (3), autumn 1994, pp. 283–312.
- 39 Sasson to Shimoni, 3 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1, Shertok to Sasson, 5 August 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13, and Shimoni's memorandum to Shertok, 18 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 40 Kirkbride to Bevin, 17 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/127.
- 41 Sasson to Haidar, 8 August 1948, *ibid.* Sasson to Shimoni of the same date,

- ISA, FO/2329/23, Sasson to Shimoni, 9 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1, and Shimoni to Sasson, 13 and 17 August 1948, ISA, FO/2329/23.
- 42 Shertok to Sasson, 17 August 1948, *ibid.* Shertok to Eilat, 18 August 1948, ISA, FO/4373/11, and Shimoni to Sasson, 19 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 43 Sasson to Haidar, 19 August 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13; Haidar's reply, 21 August 1948, *ibid.* and Sasson to Shimoni, 23 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 44 Abraham Nissan's (Israel's ambassador to Sweden) report on his interview with Bernadotte, 21 August 1948, ISA, FO/2425/1.
- 45 Sasson to Ben-Gurion, Shertok and others, 19 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 46 Sasson to Seti, 21 August 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13; Sasson to Haidar, 24, 26 and 30 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 47 Unsigned *Da'at* report on an interview with Nieuwenhuys, 1 September 1948, *ibid.* and Kirkbride to Bevin of the same date, PRO, FO 816/128.
- 48 Sasson to Seti, 30 August 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13, and Haidar to Sasson, 31 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 49 Shertok to Sasson, 30 August 1948, *ibid.*, and 9 September 1948, ISA, FO/2344/1.
- 50 Bevin to Kirkbride, 18 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/128, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 21 September 1948, *ibid.*
- 51 Kirkbride to Bevin, 29 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/129.
- 52 On "Gaza Government" cf. Shlaim, *Collusion*, pp. 296–303, and Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, pp. 81–9.
- 53 "Yeruham" report, 20 September 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 54 Shertok to Sasson, 19 September 1948, ISA, FO/2344/1.
- 55 Shertok to Shitrit, 8 August 1948, ISA, FO/2570/15.
- 56 Shimoni to Sasson, 10 August 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 57 Shimoni to Sasson, 19 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 58 Sasson to Shimoni, 20 August 1948, *ibid.* and Shimoni to Sasson, 26 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 59 Sasson to Shimoni, 1 September 1948, *ibid.* and Danin to Sasson, 22 September 1948, ISA, FO/2570/11.
- 60 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 739, entry for 8 October 1948.
- 61 Shimoni to Sasson, 2 November 1948, ISA, FO/2570/11.
- 62 Sasson to Shimoni, 16 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 63 Sasson to Shimoni, 23–24 August 1948, *ibid.* and Shertok to Shimoni, 1 September 1948, ISA, FO/2565/18.
- 64 Sasson to the Foreign Ministry, 23 September 1948, in Freundlich, *Documents*, no. 541, pp. 632–6, and Sasson to Shimoni, 27 September 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 65 Sasson's memorandum, 22 September 1948, attached to his above mentioned letter to the Foreign Ministry.
- 66 Sasson's proposals, 22 September 1948; his report on the interview with Riad, 2 October 1948; Riad's queries and Shertok's answers are all attached to Shertok to Eitan, 5 October 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 67 Shimoni to Sasson, 6 and 11 October 1948, *ibid.* and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 739, entry for 8 October 1948.
- 68 Sasson to Shertok, 2 November 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1, Shertok's circular

letter to the government's ministers, 4 November 1948, ISA, FO/2425/7, and Protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting, 4 November 1948, pp. 2–21, ISA.

69 Shertok to Eban, 4–5 November 1948, ISA, FO/2344/1.

13 *Operations in the Negev*

- 1 A summary of the Ten-Day Campaign, end of July 1948, IDFA, 854/52/236, p. 8, and a bulletin of truce violations, 28 July 1948, ISA, FO/2426/10.
- 2 Beeri to Yadin, 18 August 1948, and SM1 weekly reviews, 26 August and 1 September 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10.
- 3 SM1 summary of the forces in the Egyptian-occupied territories, 28 September 1948, *ibid.*
- 4 Minutes by the military and air attaches, 7–11 October 1948, PRO, FO 141/1246, and minutes by various members of the embassy's staff, 11 October 1948, PRO, FO 141/1265.
- 5 Protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting on 8 September 1948, pp. 10–11, ISA.
- 6 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 627–9, entries for 1–2 August 1948.
- 7 Yadin's memorandum to Ben-Gurion and Dori, 1 August 1948, IDFA, 1864/50/91.
- 8 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 691–700, entries for 15–17 September 1948.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 720 and 722, entries for 24 and 26 September 1948, and protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting, 26 September 1948, pp. 23ff. ISA.
- 10 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 728, entry for 29 September 1948.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 732–3, entries for 5–6 October 1948.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 735–6, entry for 6 October 1948, and protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting, same date, pp. 33–4, ISA.
- 13 D. Horowitz to Shertok, 7 October 1948, ISA, FO/2425/2 and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 741, entry for 10 October 1948.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 736–7, entry for 7 October 1948.
- 15 Ben-Gurion's review at the protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting on 10 October 1948, p. 11, ISA, and SM1 daily sitreps (situation reports) for 9–10 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/12.
- 16 SM1 daily reports, 7 and 10 October 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235, and a statistical Analysis of the IAF operations in YOAV, 9 May 1949, IDFA, 6/137/51/431.
- 17 SM1 daily sitrep, 16 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/12.
- 18 Summaries of Arab broadcasts, 17–18 October 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/499.
- 19 SM1 sitreps for 17–18 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/12; Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 750–3, entries for the same dates, and Arye Simon's (deputy chief of SM1) estimate of the situation, 18 October 1948.
- 20 Cf. R. Pundak, *Deciphering the Egyptian Code* (in Hebrew), *Haaretz*, 8 January 1993.
- 21 SM1 daily reports, 19–21 October 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235.
- 22 Quoted in Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 756, entry for 20 October 1948. Cf. also Shiloah to Shertok, 21 October 1948, ISA, FO/2344/1.

- 23 Minutes of the air attaché in Cairo, 28 October 1948, PRO, FO 141/1246.
- 24 Kirkbride's daily reports to FO on the situation in Palestine, 18–19 and 21 October 1948, PRO, FO 816/131.
- 25 Beaumont to FO, 20 October 1948, PRO, FO 371/68698, and Kirkbride to Bevin, 21 October 1948, PRO, FO 816/131.
- 26 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 766, entry for 23 October 1948; Kirkbride to Bevin, 30 October 1948, PRO, FO 816/132; SM1 daily report, 12 November 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235, and an account of the Legion patrol's CO on the skirmish in "Yeruham" to *Da'at*, 28 December 1948.
- 27 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 760, entry for 22 October 1948.
- 28 Protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting on 27 October 1948, p. 33, ISA, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 761, entry for 22 October 1948.
- 29 SM intelligence report, 26 October 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/286.
- 30 SM1 sitrep, 22 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/12.
- 31 A summary of the Iraqis' deployment attached to SM1 daily report, 1 November 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235.
- 32 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 762, entry for 22 October 1948, and SM1 daily reports, 24 and 29 October and 1 November 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235.
- 33 A summary of the enemy's action in Lajun's sector, 25 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/11; Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 779, entry for 27 October 1948; SM1 sitrep, 29 October 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235; Benjamin Winter's reports on the occupation of Hill 11 by the Arabs of Baq'a al-Gharbiya and on the Palestinian Sha'arwiya battalion, 1–2 November 1948, IDFA, 1041/49/26.
- 34 SM1 daily reports, 29 October and 18 November 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235.
- 35 Kirkbride to Bevin, 22 and 23 October 1948, PRO, FO 816/131.
- 36 Kirkbride to Bevin, 25 October 1948, *ibid.* and a daily summary of Arab broadcasts, 27 October 1948, ISA, FO/131/23.
- 37 Muhammad Hassanin Haikal, Who Sold "Damascus Plan" to the Jews? *Akhir Sa'a*, 15 February 1950. Haikal's description is generally in accord with contemporary IDF intelligence reports, which derived mainly from wireless communications with Cairo from the Egyptian liaison officer in Amman.
- 38 Kirkbride to Bevin, 3 November 1948, PRO, FO 816/132, and 13 November 1948, PRO, FO 816/133.
- 39 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 753, entry for 18 October 1948, and Kirkbride to FO of the same date, PRO, FO 816/131.
- 40 Negev District intelligence reports, 1–4 November 1948; Summaries of Harel reconnaissance reports, 3–11 November 1948, and A. Ayalon, *Hativat Giv'ati Mul HaPolesh HaMitzri* (Giv'ati brigade in face of the Egyptian invaders, in Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1963, pp. 566–7.
- 41 A POW interrogation report by Mordehai Bibi, 11 November 1948.
- 42 Summaries of Harel's reconnaissance reports, 3–11 November 1948.
- 43 Dori to Beeri, 5 November 1948; Beeri to Dori, 13 and 18 November 1948, and the enclosed testimonies.
- 44 Munir Abu Fadel's telegrams to Jerusalem, Gaza, Cairo, Damascus and Bir Zeit, 2 November 1948.
- 45 Abu Fadel to the Mufti, 7 November 1948 and Rafiq al-Tmimi to the Mufti, same date.

- 46 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 780, entry for 27 October 1948, and pp. 807–8, entry for 10 November 1948.
- 47 Herzog to SM1, 12 October 1948.
- 48 Berdichewsky to Machnes, 4 November 1948, ISA, C/297/60.
- 49 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 787 and 789–90, entries for 30–31 October 1948, and Protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting, 31 October 1948, pp. 4–9, ISA.
- 50 DINA operational order, 14 November 1948 and SM1 weekly intelligence report, 17 November 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/16.
- 51 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 799, entry for 5 November 1948, and operational order "C", 9 November 1948.
- 52 Shimoni to Sasson, 2 November 1948, ISA, FO/2570/11.
- 53 *Da'at* bulletin, 12 November 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/84.
- 54 Protocol of the Provisional Government's meeting on 10 November 1948, pp. 2–3, ISA, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 808, entry for the same date, and pp. 831–2, entries for 17–18 November 1948.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 824, entry for 14 November 1948 and p. 830, entry for 17 November 1948, and a mission for operation LOT, 19 November 1948.
- 56 Kirkbride to Bevin, 29 November 1948, PRO, FO 816/133, and MELF operational order no. 290, 11 December 1948, PRO, WO 261/549.
- 57 Kirkbride to Bevin, 2, 6 and 14 December 1948, PRO, FO 816/133, and SM1 daily report, 11 December 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74.
- 58 Protocols of the Provisional Government's meetings on 17 November 1948, pp. 3–18, and on 18 November 1948, evening meeting, pp. 2–19, ISA.
- 59 Letter to the king from the General Staff's officers, 3 December 1948, attached to "Yanai" to *Da'at*, 25 December 1948, and Brigadier Thikness' minutes, 14 December 1948, PRO, FO 141/1246.
- 60 Front C Planning instruction for operation SELA, 18 December 1948, front B operational instruction for SELA, 22 December 1948, IDFA, 854/52/236, SM1 daily summaries, 18, 21 and 23 December 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/256, and a captured Egyptian operational order dated 19 December 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/127.
- 61 Eitan to Reiley, 22 December 1948, ISA, FO/4373/11.
- 62 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 896–7, entry for 23 December 1948.
- 63 *Ibid.*, p. 900, entry for 24 December 1948 and Alexandroni's after action report, 28 December 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/284.
- 64 Exchange of telegrams between the Egyptian HQ and the besieged brigade in Faluja, 29 December 1948, and SM1 to Southern Front, 2 January 1949.
- 65 Mission for HOREV's second phase, 30 December 1948.
- 66 An appendix to Southern Front's daily intelligence summary, 4 January 1949.
- 67 SM1 daily sitreps, 29–31 December 1948, IDFA, 854/52/236; the Egyptian HQ to the General Staff in Cairo, 3 January 1949; SM1 daily report, same date, IDFA, 2384/50/16, and SM1 summary of HOREV, 6 January 1949.
- 68 SM1 to Fronts' HQ, 23 December 1948, and SM1 daily reports, 25 and 28 December 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74.
- 69 Minutes of various diplomats in the Legation at Baghdad, 29 December

- 1948, PRO, FO 624/126 and SM1 daily reports, 27–28 December 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74.
- 70 SM1 daily report, 29 December 1948, *ibid.* A report on the battles near Ramat Hakovesh, 3 January 1949, and SM1 sitrep, same date, IDFA, 854/52/236.
- 71 SM military intelligence report, 20 January 1949. This specific item relied on the Iraqi general's report to Baghdad.
- 72 Tmimi to the Mufti, 29 December 1948, and Eitan to Eilat, 6 January 1949, ISA, FO/2454/10, and to Eban, 8 January 1949, *ibid.*
- 73 The Mufti to Akram (Zu'aitar), 1 January 1949; SM1 daily reports, 3 and 7 January 1949, IDFA, 2384/50/16; "Yeruham" daily summary, 6 January 1949 and *Da'at* weekly report, 9 January 1949.
- 74 Campbell to FO, 29 December 1948, PRO, FO 141/1321, and Brigadier Thikness' minutes, 4 January 1949, PRO, FO 141/1246.
- 75 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 914–18, entry for 31 December 1948; Weizmann to Truman, 3 January 1949, ISA, FO/2454/10 and Shertok's telegrams to Eilat, 4–6 January 1949, *ibid.*
- 76 MELF to WO, 14 January 1949, PRO, FO 371/75381.
- 77 SM1 daily sitreps, 4 and 8 January 1949, IDFA, 854/52/236, and Southern Front to SM1, 6 January 1949.
- 78 Shertok to Lourie, 6 January 1949, ISA, FO/3006/5; Eitan's minutes of his meeting with Vigier on 7 January 1949, *ibid.* and Baruch to Reiley, same date, *ibid.*
- 79 Air Marshall Tedder's minute, 21 December 1948, PRO, DEFE 5/9.
- 80 AOC Mediterranean to Air Ministry, 29 December 1948, PRO, FO 371/75380; RAF to AOC Mediterranean, 1 January 1949, *ibid.* and Alexander to Attlee, same date, PRO, FO 371/75399.
- 81 Campbell's minute, 1 January 1949, PRO, FO 141/1329.
- 82 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 934–5, entries for 7–8 January 1949, and IAF daily intelligence summaries, 24–25 January 1949, IDFA, 6/137/51/288.
- 83 The British commission of inquiry's report attached to Air Ministry to FO, 7 March 1949, PRO, FO 371/75247.
- 84 Basil Herman's minute, 8 January 1949, IDFA, 6/137/51/459.
- 85 AOC Mediterranean to RAF Vice Chief of Staff, 7 January 1949, PRO, FO 371/75399; Campbell to FO, 9 January 1949, *ibid.* FO to Campbell, 5 January 1949, PRO, FO 141/1329; Burrows' memorandum, 10 January 1949, PRO, FO 371/75381 and protocol of the Defense Committee's meeting, same date, PRO, CAB 131/8.
- 86 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 939, entry for 9 January 1949.
- 87 SM1 summary of HOREV, 6 January 1949; Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 936, entry for 8 January 1949, and MELF to WO, 14 January 1949. PRO, FO 371/75381.
- 88 Ester Herlitz's minute, 18 February 1949, ISA, FO/2426/5; Berdichevsky's weekly report to Machnes, 3 March 1949, ISA, C/297/60, and Yadin to Shiloah, 4 March 1949, ISA, FO/2431/1.
- 89 Minutes of the Cabinet Defence Committee's meeting, 3 January 1949, PRO, CAB 131/8; Campbell to FO, 7 January 1949, PRO, FO 141/1329; FO to

- the British legations in the Middle East, 8 January 1949, *ibid.* Troutbek to FO, 13 January 1949, *ibid.* and “Notes on the History of Force O, January 1949 to July 1957”, PRO, WO 106/6009.
- 90 Bevin (in Washington) to FO, 5 January 1949, PRO, FO 141/1329; Bevin to Franks, 11 January 1949, *ibid.* and Franks to FO, 13 January 1949, *ibid.*
- 91 McNeil’s minute, 14 January 1949, PRO, FO 371/75337, and Bevin to Franks, 3 February 1949, *ibid.*
- 92 Ben-Gurion’s *War Diary*, III, p. 972, entry for 3 March 1949.
- 14 *The End of the War with Lebanon and Syria*
- 1 GSO summary of the Ten-Day Campaign, end of July 1948, IDFA, 854/52/236, and Yadin’s memorandum to Ben-Gurion and Dori, 1 August 1948, IDFA, 1864/50/91.
- 2 “Zuri/Yosef” to *Da’at/A*, 24 August 1948, and Zeid’s report, 10 September 1948.
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- 4 “Yanai” to *Da’at*, 22 April 1949.
- 5 SM1 weekly reports, 26 August, 9 and 30 September 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10.
- 6 7th brigade intelligence report, 29 September 1948, IDFA, 2289/50/128.
- 7 SM1 summary of the enemy’s forces in the north, 12 September 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/161, SM1 weekly report, 24 September 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10, and SM1 daily reports, 5–6 October 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235.
- 8 Bachar’s report to SM1, 1 October 1948; Shapira’s report to SM1, 7 October 1948, and SM1 daily reports, 5 and 10 October 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235, SM1 weekly report, 7 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10, and SM report, 11 October 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/286.
- 9 Eitan to Shertok and Sasson, 11 October 1948, ISA, FO/182/3.
- 10 Documents captured at Kafr Manda on 6 October 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/146, and SM1 daily reports, 5 and 7 October 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235. Cf. also note 3 above.
- 11 Kuris to *Da’at/A*, 8 September 1948; Shapira to SM1, 24 September 1948; *Da’at* to Yadin, 27 September 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10, and SM1 weekly report, 30 September 1948, *ibid.*
- 12 Emmanuel Friedman and Rafael Abu’s report on their meeting with the delegation from Hunin, 13 August 1948, ISA, C/310/36, and Shitrit to Ben-Gurion and Shertok, 18 August 1948, ISA, FO/2564/9.
- 13 Protocol of the Advisory Committee’s meeting, 2 September 1948, ISA, FO/2564/11.
- 14 Abu’s weekly report to the Ministry of Minorities’ Affairs, 13 September 1948, ISA, C/310/36.
- 15 7th Brigade’s report on operation MATATE, 31 July 1948.
- 16 Mashbatz’s correspondence with Shitrit, 8–10 July 1948, ISA, C/307/48.

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- 18 Summaries of Damascus radio's broadcasts, 19 and 26 October 1948 and SM1 daily report, 27 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/11.
- 19 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 761 and 769–70, entries for 22–23 October 1948, and SM1 sitrep, 24 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/12.
- 20 SM intelligence report no. 5, 26 October 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/286.
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- 22 Shimoni to Rafael, 31 October 1948, ISA, FO/131/23.
- 23 "Fatah" to "Nimr", 30 October 1948, SM1 daily reports, 29–30 October, 2 and 5 November 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/235, and SM fortnightly intelligence summary, 8 November 1948.
- 24 SM1 weekly reports, 25 November 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74, and 19 December 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/256.
- 25 Field Security's report on *HIRAM*, attached to Beeri to Dori and Yadin, 19 November 1948.
- 26 Beeri to SM1, 10 November 1948.
- 27 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 828, entry for 16 November 1948.
- 28 Shimoni to Sasson, 12 November 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1, and Shimoni to Eitan, 18 November 1948, ISA, FO/186/17.
- 29 SM1 daily report, 7 November 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/16, and David Gurfinkel's reports, 16–20 December 1948, IDFA, 2289/50/288. Gurfinkel was 7th brigade's IO, and on that time the brigade garrisoned south Lebanon.
- 30 Cf. Y. Gelber, *Antecedents of the Jewish–Druze Alliance in Palestine*, in: *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28 (2), April 1992, and 'Druze and Jews in the War of 1948', in: *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31 (2), April 1995.
- 31 Shimoni to Sasson, 12 November 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1, his memorandum to Eitan, 18 November 1948, ISA, FO/186/17, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 839, entries for 10, 15 and 22 November 1948.
- 32 Cf. note 28 above.
- 33 Cf. note 25 above.
- 34 Yadin to Dori, 4 November 1948, IDFA, 2433/50/17; Shapira's report to Beeri on the massacres in Galilee villages, 8 November 1948, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 807, entry for 10 November 1948.
- 35 *Ibid.*, pp. 820 and 832, entries for 12 and 19 November 1948.
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- 37 Spector's report on 'Ilabun and Shnurman's report on Majd al-kurum, 12 November 1948, IDFA, 1261/49/4; Shnurman to Baruch, 17 November 1948, *ibid.* For the villagers' version of events in 'Ilabun cf. their petition to Shitrit, 21 January 1949, ISA, FO/2564/10 and correspondence from 1949 on the repatriation of 'Ilabun's refugees in ISA, C/302/80.
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- 39 SM1 daily reports, 9 and 11 December 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/56.

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- 41 SM1 weekly report, 17 November 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/16 and SM intelligence report no. 7, 23 November 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/286.
- 42 Shertok to Eitan, 30 November 1948, ISA, FO/182/3.
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- 44 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 911, entry for 29 December 1948; Shiloah to Arazi, same date, ISA, FO/182/2, and Baruch's (chief liaison officer to the UN) report on the meeting, 30 December 1948, ISA, FO/2425/5.
- 45 Kirkbride to FO, 5 January 1949, PRO, FO 371/75380.
- 46 SM military intelligence report, 27 January 1949.
- 47 Maklef's report to Dori, 14 January 1949, ISA, FO/2425/5, and Sasson to Arazi and Divon, 20 January 1949, ISA, FO/3749/2.
- 48 SM1 daily report, 17 February 1949, IDFA, 7249/49/11.
- 49 Shertok to Shiloah, 2 March 1949, ISA, FO/2950/1, and to Eban, 3 March 1949, ISA, FO/2454/12, and Eban's memorandum to the UN General Secretary, 8 March 1949, ISA, FO/3008/2.
- 50 Yadin to Eitan, 11 March 1949, ISA, FO/2425/5, and Rosen to Sasson, 13 and 15 March 1949, ISA, FO/2950/1.
- 51 Yadin to Shiloah, 8 March 1949, *ibid.* and Sasson to Eitan, 17 March 1949, ISA, FO/87/24.
- 52 Rosen to Eban, 16 March 1949, ISA, FO/2329/3, and to Shiloah of the same date, ISA, FO/2425/5.
- 53 Shiloah to Eitan, 16 March 1949, *ibid.* and Sasson to Eitan, 18 March 1949, ISA, FO/87/24.
- 54 Eitan to Shiloah and Sasson, 17 March 1949, ISA, FO/2425/5, Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 977, entry for the same date, and protocol of the government's meeting, 20 March 1949, pp. 7–8, ISA.
- 55 Eitan to Sasson, 18 March 1949, ISA, FO/4373/12, and to Eban, 19 March 1949, ISA, FO/2329/3; Eitan to Maklef, 18 March 1949, ISA, FO/2425/5, and Rosen to Shertok, 21 March 1949, *ibid.*
- 56 Shiloah to Eitan, 18 and 19 March 1949, ISA, FO/4373/12, and Sasson to Eitan, 20 March 1949, ISA, FO/87/24.
- 57 Shiloah to Eitan, 20 February 1949, ISA, FO/2451/10.
- 58 Shiloah to Rafael, 22 March 1949, ISA, FO/71/19, and Rosen to Ben-Gurion, Shertok and others, 24 March 1949, ISA, FO/2425/5.
- 59 Rosen's memorandum to Eitan, Shiloah, Yadin and Maklef, 31 March 1949, ISA, FO/2953/3, and Eitan to Shiloah, 2 April 1949, ISA, FO/2948/3.
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- 64 *Ibid.* entry for 30 April 1949, BGA.

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- 67 McDonald to SoS, 4 May 1949, *FRUS*, VI, p. 977, and Keeley to SoS, 5 May 1949, *ibid.*, p. 980.
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- 72 Protocol of the government's meeting on 24 May 1949, pp. 26–7, ISA, and operation OREN plan, 20 May 1949.
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- 79 Protocol of the government's meeting on 7 June 1949, pp. 10–1, ISA.
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15 *Ending the War with Egypt and Transjordan*

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- 3 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 947–8, entry for 11 January 1949.

- 4 Chapman-Andrews' minutes of his meeting with Egypt's Foreign Minister, 21 January 1949, PRO, FO 141/1329.
- 5 Eitan to Shertok, 13 and 15 January 1949, ISA, FO/2453/16 and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 951–8, entries for 15–17 January 1949.
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- 8 Eitan to Shertok, 30 January 1949, in: Rosenthal, *Documents*, III, no. 75, p. 94, Yadin to Ben-Gurion, Shertok and Dori of the same date, ISA, FO/4373/11, Eitan to Shertok of the same date, *ibid.* and Shertok to Eitan of the same date, ISA, FO/2453/17.
- 9 Bevin to Campbell, 3 February 1949, PRO, FO 141/1329; Shertok to Eitan, 9 and 11 February 1949, ISA, FO/2453/17, and Shertok to Eban, 10 February 1949, ISA, FO/2329/3.
- 10 Cf. Caplan, *A Tale of Two Cities*, pp. 10–11, and Colonel Shelby's (a UN observer) summary of Faluja's evacuation, 1 March 1949.
- 11 SM1 daily reports, 6, 10 and 12–13 March and 8 April 1949, IDFA, 7249/49/238.
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- 13 Shertok to Eilat, 29 October 1948, ISA, FO/131/23.
- 14 Sasson to Abu al-Huda, 28 October 1948, PRO, FO 816/132; the Premier's reply, 31 October 1948, *ibid.* and Kirkbride to FO, 1–3 November 1948, *ibid.* Cf. also Freundlich, *Documents*, II, no. 74, pp. 109–10.
- 15 Kirkbride to Bevin, 3 November 1948 (1305 PM), PRO, FO 816/132.
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- 19 Kirkbride to FO, 14 November 1948, PRO, FO 816/133.
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- 27 Shiloah to Shertok, 2 and 5 December 1948, ISA, FO/2234/1; Kirkbride to Bevin, 5 December 1948, PRO, FO 816/133, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 864, entry in for the same date.

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- 29 Bevin to Kirkbride, 24 and 28 November 1948, *ibid.*
- 30 Kirkbride to Bevin, 6 December 1948, *ibid.*
- 31 Chapman-Andrews to FO, 16 December 1948, PRO, FO 816/142.
- 32 Kirkbride to FO, 14 December 1948, PRO, FO 371/68862, McNeil to Bevin, 15 December 1948, *ibid.* and FO to Kirkbride, same date, PRO, FO 816/142, and 16–17 December 1948, *ibid.*
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- 34 Ibid., p. 873, entry for 12 December 1948, and Kirkbride to FO, 12–13 December 1948, PRO, FO 371/68512.
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- 36 Sasson to Shertok, 19 December, and to Arazi, 29 December 1948, ISA, FO/2344/1.
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- 39 BME0 to FO, 22 December 1948, *ibid.*
- 40 Troutbek to FO, 31 December 1948, PRO, FO 371/75330, Houston Boswell to FO, 1 January 1949, *ibid.* and Bevin (from Washington) to FO, 4 January 1949, PRO, FO 141/1329.
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- 42 Protocol of a meeting with the American ambassador, 20 December 1948, PRO, FO 371/68512, and FO to Franks, 22 December 1948, *ibid.*
- 43 Kirkbride to FO, 20 December 1948, PRO, FO 816/142, and to Bevin, 28–29 December 1948, *ibid.*
- 44 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 911, entry for 29 December 1948.
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- 49 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 955–6, entry for 17 January 1949; Shertok to Eilat, 18 January 1949, ISA, FO/2454/10; and Sasson to Arazi and Divon, 20 January 1949, ISA, FO/3749/2.
- 50 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 963, entry for 26 January 1949, and p. 966, entry for 1 February 1949; Sasson's report on the interview with the king, same date, ISA, FO/4373/11; and Shertok to Eban, 2 February 1949, ISA, FO/2329/3.
- 51 *Da'at's* summary of information, 8 December 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/84.
- 52 SM1 daily summaries, 8–11 December 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/256, SM report, 20 January 1949, and SM5 report on moods in Nablus throughout

- the war, 9 September 1949. This report stemmed from interrogations of Samaritans that had moved to Israel after the armistice.
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 - 54 SM1 daily summary, 16 January 1949, IDFA, 7249/49/236, SM review, 20 January 1949, SM weekly report, 27 January 1949, Vardinger's report, 31 January 1949, and SM1 to Arye Simon at Rhodes, 4 February 1949.
 - 55 SM1 daily summary, 7 February 1949, IDFA, 7249/49/121; "News from the Triangle" in Bachar's report, 22 February 1949; and Middle East Department's review on the administration in the Hashemite occupied territories of Palestine, 8 February 1949, ISA, FO/2565/9.
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 - 57 Dayan to Shertok and Yadin, 11 February 1949, ISA, FO/4373/11, and SM1 to Harcavi at Rhodes of the same date.
 - 58 Shimoni's report on the meeting, 14 February 1949, ISA, FO/2569/12, and Shertok to Eitan and Sasson, 15 February 1949, ISA, FO/2453/17.
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 - 60 Shiloah to Shertok, 3 March 1949, *ibid.*
 - 61 Shiloah to Shertok, 2 and 9 March 1949, *ibid.*
 - 62 Shiloah to Shertok and Yadin, 9 March 1949, *ibid.* and Yadin to Shiloah, 10 March 1949, *ibid.*
 - 63 Shertok to Abdullah, 11 March 1949, *ibid.* and Eitan and Yadin to Shiloah and Dayan, 10–11 March 1949, *ibid.*
 - 64 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 976, entry for 14 March 1949; Eitan to Abdullah, 15 March 1949, ISA, FO/4373/12, and Eitan to Shiloah of the same date, *ibid.* and Protocol of the government's meeting, 20 March 1949, p. 3, ISA.
 - 65 Burrows to Bevin, 15 March 1949, PRO, FO 371/75382.
 - 66 FO to Pirrie-Gordon, 18 March 1949, *ibid.*
 - 67 Abdullah to Shertok, 14 March 1949, ISA, FO/4373/12, and Eitan to Eban, 16 March 1949, ISA, FO/2329/12.
 - 68 Minutes of Eitan's meeting with Knox of the American embassy, 15 March 1949; MAMAN/9 (formerly: SM9) reports, 27 and 29 March 1949, IDFA, 580/51/11.
 - 69 Sasson to Eitan, 17 March 1949, quoting the king's telegrams to himself of 14 and 16 March, ISA, FO/87/24.
 - 70 Ben-Gurion's review in the protocol of the government's meeting on 20 March 1949, pp. 4–6, ISA, and Pirie-Gordon to FO, 19 and 21 March 1949, PRO, FO 371/75386.
 - 71 Abdullah to Eitan, 19 March 1949, in Rosenthal, *Documents*, III, no. 240, pp. 458–9; Dayan to Eitan, 20 March 1949, ISA, FO/2431/1; Ben-Gurion's

- War Diary*, III, p. 979, entry for the same date, and Eitan to Shiloah of the same date, ISA, FO/4373/12.
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- 73 Eitan to Shertok, 20 March 1949, ISA, FO/2180/34, and Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 980–1, entry for 22 March 1949.
- 74 Ibid., p. 982, entry for 24 March 1949, and Eitan to Shertok, 23–24 March 1949, ISA, FO/4373/12.
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- 76 Shiloah to Eitan, 23 March 1949, ISA, FO/2948/3; Dayan to Eitan, 24 March 1949, *ibid.* Eitan to Shiloah, 26 March 1949, *ibid.*
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- 78 Nur al-Din Mahmud to "Walid" (Baghdad), 27 March 1949.
- 79 Harcavi to Shiloah, 27 March 1949, ISA, FO/2948/3, and Ben-Gurion's review in the protocol of the government's meeting on 29 March 1949, p. 7, ISA.
- 80 Eitan to Shiloah, 28 March 1949, ISA, FO/2948/3; Eitan to Shertok and Sasson, 29 March 1949, ISA, FO/4373/12, and Sasson to Eitan, 30 March 1949, Rosenthal, *Documents*, III, no. 264, p. 495.
- 81 Truman to Abdullah, 29 March 1949, *FRUS*, 1949, VI, pp. 878–9.
- 82 Shune accord, 30 March 1949, ISA, FO/4373/12; in Rosenthal, *Documents*, III, no. 265, pp. 496–7, the date is 31 March and the signing might have taken place after midnight. Cf. also Eitan to Shertok and Sasson, 31 March 1949, *ibid.* Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 984, entry for the same date; Stabler to the State Department of the same date, *FRUS*, VI, pp. 886–7, and Protocol of the Israeli and Transjordanian delegations meeting at Rhodes, 3 April 1949, in: Rosenthal, *Documents*, III, no. 269, pp. 502–5.
- 83 MAMAN/1 daily bulletin, 1 April 1949, IDFA, 7249/49/238; MAMAN/1 circular letter, 4 April 1949; Kuris' report to MAMAN/1 of the same date, IDFA, 1261/49/10, and Vardinger's report, 17 April 1949.
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- 86 An undated Israeli intelligence's review (probably from August 1949) on the history of the Iraqi Expeditionary Force.
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- 16 *Welcoming the Refugees in the Arab States*
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- 2 "News from Beirut", 30 January 1948, CZA, S 25/4054, and a review of the situation in Transjordan in February 1948, PRO, CO 537/3962.
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- 4 "Yavne" bulletin, 4 April 1948, "In the Arab Camp", 5 April 1948, HA, 105/124, "Tene" news of the same date, HA, 105/62, and "Hiram" to "Tene"/A, 15 April 1948, HA, 105/257.
- 5 T. Goren, *Madu'a Azvu Hatoshavim Ha'arvim Et Haifa: 'Iyun BeSugia Hatzuia* (Why Did the Arab Residents Leave Haifa, in Hebrew), *Cathedra*, 80, 1996, p. 182.
- 6 Campbell to FO on his interview with Egypt's Foreign Minister, Hashaba Pasha, 27 April 1948, PRO, FO 371/68370.
- 7 The High Commissioner's weekly intelligence appreciation, 8 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3869.
- 8 Broadmead to FO, 4 and 5 May 1948, PRO, CO 537/3904, and Cunningham to Creech-Jones, 6 May 1948, *ibid*.
- 9 "In the Arab Camp", 3 May 1948, CZA, S25/9046.
- 10 "In the Arab Public", 5 May 1948.
- 11 "In the Arab Camp", 11 May 1948, CZA, S 25/9046.
- 12 Yoland Harmer's report, 28 May 1948, ISA, FO/2570/5.
- 13 "In the Arab Public", 11 June 1948, HA, 105/147, and Yusuf Sabagh's report on his errand to Lebanon and Syria, 24 June 1948, ISA, FO/2408//16.
- 14 "Tzuri/Dori" report, 24 May 1948, HA, 105/125, and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 31 May 1948, HA, 105/147.
- 15 "Hiram" report, 27 May 1948, HA, 105/126, and "Tzuri" to "Yirmiyahu" (The Northern Front HQ), 7 June 1948.
- 16 Zeid's report on "Ma'aluli's wife" mission to Beirut and Damascus, 4 July 1948, HA, 105/277.
- 17 Daily bulletin of monitored radio broadcasts, 6 May 1948, BGA; "News on the Palestinians according to Arab broadcasts", 7 May 1948, *ibid*. "Tene"/A daily summary, 4 June 1948, HA, 105/147, and "In the Arab Public", 11 June 1948, *ibid*.
- 18 The Arab League Political Committee's resolutions, 26 May 1948, and "Palestine in the Arab Radio Broadcasts", 5–6 July 1948, CZA, S 25/9047.
- 19 *Al-Masri*, 7 July 1948, quoted in "News from the Arab Press", 22 July 1948, ISA, FO/2570/6.
- 20 "Palestine in the Arab Radio Broadcasts", 7 and 16–17 June 1948, CZA, S 25/9047.
- 21 *Al-Nasr* (Amman), 21 June 1948, in an Arab press digest, 28 June 1948, CZA, S 25/5635, and Ramallah radio broadcast, 29 June 1948, IDFA, 4944/49/504.
- 22 *Da'at's* report, 2 August 1948, HA, 105/112.
- 23 *Al-Hayat* (Beirut), 24 June 1948, in an Arab Press Digest, 28 June 1948, CZA, S 25/5635.
- 24 "Tene"/M review, 6 July 1948, IDFA, 980/85/55.
- 25 Azcarate's report to Bernadotte on his interview with Azzam, 8 July 1948, ISA, FO/94/9.
- 26 *Da'at/A* summary "In the Arab Public", 20 July 1948, HA, 105/147.

- 27 Pirie-Gordon to FO, 16 July 1948, PRO, FO 371/68375.
- 28 A telegram from Bethlehem to the AHC in Cairo, 16 July 1948, and the Legion's 4th brigade to the Legion HQ in Amman, 14 July 1948.
- 29 *Da'at's* summary of information, 26–27 July 1948, HA, 105/147 and Shapiq's report on his tour of the East and West banks, 15 September 1948, HA, 105/130.
- 30 Hana Halaf, Deputy Mayor of Ramallah, to Abdullah, and the king's reply, 21 July 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 31 Jericho's telegram to Nabi Salah, 26 July 1948, and "Yeruham" report, 23 July 1948, HA, 105/147.
- 32 "Palestine in the Arab Broadcasts", 10–11 August 1948, CZA, S 25/9047.
- 33 "Berman" (Baghdad) report, 29 July 1948, ISA, FO/2569/13.
- 34 Pirie-Gordon to FO, 24 July 1948, PRO, FO 816/127.
- 35 Glubb's report on the situation in Transjordan, 12 August 1948, PRO, FO 371/68822.
- 36 Glubb to Burrows, 7 September 1948, PRO, FO 816/130.
- 37 Kirkbride to Bevin, 4 August 1948, PRO, FO 816/127.
- 38 Cf., for example, a daily summary of Arab broadcasts, 7 August 1948, and Glubb to Burrows, 22 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68861.
- 39 IO Haifa district to GSI, 18 August 1948.
- 40 "Tzuri/Morris" to SM1, 3 September 1948, "Tzuri/Yosef" to *Da'at/A*, 8 September 1948, and Herzog to *Da'at*, 19 September 1948.
- 41 Summary of informers' news, 16 September 1948.
- 42 A report on Arab radio broadcasts, 28 August 1948. On the IRC in Palestine Cf. D. Guneau, *The International red Cross in Palestine, 1948–1952*, London 1997.
- 43 "Yeruham" to *Da'at*, 29 August 1948.
- 44 Houston Boswell to FO, 14 August 1948, PRO, FO 371/68494.
- 45 Beaumont to Burrows, 18 July, PRO, FO 371/68375, and Clayton to Burrows, 23 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 46 Burrows' memorandum on the situation in the Middle East, 8 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68379.
- 47 Beeley's memorandum, 8 October 1948, *ibid.* and Wright's memorandum, 11 October 1948, *ibid.*
- 48 American embassy in Baghdad to the State Department, 11 October 1948, copy in ISA, FO/2569/12, and Morris, *The Birth*, p. 282.
- 49 Coastal plain military district's weekly intelligence summary, 18 September 1948, HA 105/119, and a summary of informers' news prepared by Front D intelligence section, 20 September 1948.
- 50 6th Brigade report, 21 August 1948, IDFA, 5254/49/74.
- 51 A report on a skirmish between returnees to infiltrators in Hula marshes, 26 October 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/191.
- 52 Intelligence summary of Carmeli/23 battalion, 27 August 1948, *ibid.* and Shapira's report, 14 September 1948, IDFA, 7249/49/146.
- 53 Sokolowsky's report on life in the Egyptian occupied area, 9 October 1948, and *Da'at* to SM, 2 December 1948.
- 54 Arazi to Shimoni, 20 October 1948, ISA, FO/2565/12, and his report on the interview with Hakim, 26 October 1948, ISA, FO/2563/21.

- 55 Beeri to Gutman, 3 December 1948.
 - 56 Rappaport's report on Samaria, 13 December 1948, and Kuris' report on Transjordan, 29 December 1948.
 - 57 *Da'at* bulletin, 12 November 1948, IDFA, 6/137/51/84.
 - 58 Arazi's report (note 54 above).
 - 59 Shitrit to Shertok, 28 October 1948, ISA, FO/2564/10, and SM to *Hashachar*, 3 December 1948.
 - 60 Kemal Ariqat to the Mufti, 15 January 1949, and "Rashid" to "Haidar", 17 January 1949.
 - 61 Winter's report on the situation in Samaria, 24 March 1949.
 - 62 Glubb to Burrows, 22 September 1948, PRO, FO 371/68861.
 - 63 SM1 daily bulletin, 8 January 1949, IDFA, 7249/49/236.
 - 64 "Yeruham" daily bulletin, 8 January 1949; Kuris' report, 19 January 1949; SM1 daily summaries, 14 January and 17 February 1949, IDFA, 2384/50/16; Digest of Arab press, 24 January 1949, IDFA, 2384/50/11. Cf. also Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 418–21.
 - 65 Abraham Cohen's report, 17 February 1949.
 - 66 Kuris' report, 26 March 1949, and SM1 to *Da'at*, 31 March 1949.
 - 67 SM1 report to *Da'at* on the refugees' situation in the area occupied by Egypt, 6 April 1949.
 - 68 Sokolowsky's report, 24 March 1949.
 - 69 Winter's report, note 82 above.
 - 70 Vardi's report, 28 March 1949.
 - 71 SM1 to *Da'at*, 26 March 1949.
 - 72 Dan Ram to Orel Katz (SM officer in charge of psychological warfare), 11 March 1949.
 - 73 Kemal Hussayn's news in Shapira's report, 15 March 1949, and *Hashachar* to Herzog, 27 March 1949, IDFA, 580/51/11.
 - 74 Rafiq al-Tmimi to the Mufti, 23 and 28 March 1949. Cf. also Sasson to Eitan, 22 March 1949, ISA, FO/2565/4.
 - 75 Houston-Boswell's reports on the PCC deliberations at Beirut, March 1949, PRO, FO 371/75454.
 - 76 Review of the PCC's "Technical [Clapp] Committee" summaries, November 1949, ISA, FO/2447/16.
 - 77 The IRC report to the Clapp Committee on the refugees' census in Samaria, attached to Vardi's report, 14 June 1950.
 - 78 *Da'at*'s review of the "Technical Committee" recommendations, November 1949, ISA, FO/2447/16.
 - 79 M. Kidron's memorandum, 6 November 1952. Kidron was at that time the director of the International Organizations' Department in Israel's Foreign Ministry.
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- 17 *From Flight to Refugeeism: Blocking the Return*
 - 1 Shitrit's report at the People Executive's meeting, 3 May 1948, in: ISA, *Protocols*, pp. 32–3.
 - 2 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, pp. 390–3, entries for 5–6 May 1948.

- 3 A summary of Ben-Gurion's meeting with Machnes and Gwartz, 6 May 1948, BGA.
- 4 "Ikar" (peasant, Machnes' code name) to "Amitay" (Ben-Gurion), 10 May 1948, *ibid.*
- 5 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 399, entry for 8 May 1948.
- 6 Minutes of the advisers on Arab affairs' meeting at Netanya, 9 May 1948, BGA.
- 7 Shitrit's memorandum of 10 May 1948, attached to the government's secretary, Zeev Sherf, to the ministers, 7 June 1948, ISA, FO/2541/12.
- 8 Hana Prager's proposal for organizing a section for Arab affairs in the ministry of police and minorities' affairs, June 1948, ISA, C/303/16, and an undated memorandum, probably from July 1948, on the Ministry for Minorities' Affairs, *ibid.*
- 9 Weekly intelligence reports of Golani/13 battalion, 22 and 29 June 1948, IDFA, 1044/50/16, and 6 July 1948, IDFA, 128/51/70; "Zuri" (Paltiel) to *Da'at/A*, 5 August 1948, HA, 105/154.
- 10 Northern Front HQ's daily intelligence bulletin, 8 June 1948; Friedman to "Tene"/A, 12 June 1948, HA, 105/127, and Weekly intelligence report of Golani/15 battalion, 5 July 1948, IDFA, 128/51/70.
- 11 Shapira's report on the Arab refugees from Hula valley, 7 June 1948, ISA, FO/2570/6; News from "Zuri/Dori", 14 June 1948, HA, 105/92 and 27 June 1948, HA, 105/147; News from "Zuri", 17 June 1948, HA, 105/128 and "Tene"/A daily bulletin, 2 July 1948, HA, 105/147. Cf. also E. Shoufani, *The Fall of a Village, Journal of Palestine Studies*, I, 1972, pp. 116–18.
- 12 Helmer's memorandum on the entrance of Arab troops into the country during the truce, 16 June 1948, ISA, FO/2426/9.
- 13 Helmer's memorandum to Yadin and Ratner titled "The Harvest", 17 June 1948, IDFA, 2315/50/17.
- 14 Helmer to Shiloah, 16 June 1948, ISA, FO/2426/9.
- 15 Yadin to Shertok, 14 August 1948, ISA, FO/2444/19.
- 16 Herzog to Yadin, Avner, Saharov and *Da'at*, 17 October 1948.
- 17 Lublini's circular letter, 29 June 1948, and his review of the Arabs' situation in Haifa, 22 September 1948.
- 18 SM1 weekly reports, 26 August, 30 September and 7 October 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/10.
- 19 "Zuri/Paltiel" to *Da'at/A*, 1 August 1948, HA, 105/154.
- 20 SM's report no. 2, 15 September 1948; SM3 (Field Security) monthly report, 21 October 1948, and Beerli's memorandum to Yadin and Avner, titled "Infiltration, weapons, smuggling etc. in the occupied zones", 26 October 1948.
- 21 Minutes of Avner's meeting with Shitrit, 4 August 1948, ISA, C/308/9.
- 22 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 639 and 648, entries for 8, 15 and 16 August 1948.
- 23 Shlomo Shamir's (Director of Staff Duties) memorandum on the military government, 27 August 1948, IDFA, 580/56/248, and Yosef Yizraeli to Shamir, 30 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 24 Protocols of the meetings of the Advisory Committee to the Military Governor, 29 August, 2 and 23 September 1948, ISA, FO/2564/11.

- 25 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 692, entry for 15 September 1948.
- 26 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 740, entry for 9 October 1948, and Avner's memorandum to Ben-Gurion titled "The Role and Authority of the Military Government in the Occupied Territories", 17 October 1948, ISA, FO/2564/11.
- 27 Ya'eli to Lublini, 13 July 1948, and to Moshe Itah, the local representative of the Ministry of Minorities' Affairs, 18 July 1948. Cf. also correspondence on Mahmud al-Madi's case, August–September 1948, ISA, FO/2570/1, and Shitrit to Itah, 30 November 1948, ISA, FO/2564/9.
- 28 Minutes of the talks with Bernadotte on 17–18 June 1948, ISA, FO/95/2, and "In the Arab Public", 20 July 1948, HA, 105/147.
- 29 Bilbie's report in the *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 June 1948, and Komay to Shertok, 21 July 1948, ISA, FO/94/10.
- 30 Shitrit to Shertok, 25 June 1948, ISA, FO/364/13.
- 31 Salomon's report on his meeting with Hakim, 26 June 1948, ISA, FO/2563/21, and Shitrit to Ben-Gurion, 6 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 32 Ya'acov Eyal's memorandum titled "The Refugees' Hostile Mood against the AHC Leaders", 15 August 1948, ISA, FO/2566/13.
- 33 "Voice of Israel" Arabic broadcasts, 20 and 28 July 1948, ISA, FO/2564/1.
- 34 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, I, p. 398, entry for 7 May 1948.
- 35 Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 188–9.
- 36 Ariav to Machnes, 13 July 1948, ISA, C/307/48; Shitrit to Alexandroni, same date, *ibid.* Mashbatz to Shitrit, 15 July 1948, *ibid.* and Benjamin Goldstein (Zur) to the Ministers of Defence, Minorities' Affairs and the Treasury, 17 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 37 Shertok's minutes of his interview with Weitz, 28 May 1948, ISA, FO/2564/20.
- 38 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 487, entries for 5–6 June 1948, and Y. Weitz, *Yomani Velgrotai LaBanim* (My Diary and Epistles to my Sons, in Hebrew), III, Ramat Gan 1965, p. 293.
- 39 Protocol of the provisional government meeting, 16 June 1948, ISA.
- 40 Shitrit's memorandum to Ben-Gurion titled "The Arabs' Escape", 25 February 1949, ISA, C/307/52.
- 41 Shitrit's memorandum to Shertok, 30 June 1948, and Shertok's comment on its margins, ISA, FO/2563/11.
- 42 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 603, entry for 19 July 1948. The list, from 21 July, is attached to Argov (Ben-Gurion's military secretary) to Caplan, 16 August 1948.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 618, entry for 23 July 1948.
- 44 Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 191–2.
- 45 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 572 and 622, entries for 1 and 25 July 1948, Shitrit to Ben-Gurion, 5 July 1948, ISA, FO/2564/9, and protocols of the advisory committee to the military governor, 9 and 23 September 1948, ISA, FO/2564/11.
- 46 Shimoni to Shertok, 7 July 1948, ISA, FO/2569/12, and Shimoni to Shitrit, 13 July 1948, *ibid.*
- 47 Shitrit to Shimoni, 13 July 1948, ISA, FO/2564/10.

- 48 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 710, entry for 22 September 1948.
- 49 Weitz to Shertok, 4 August 1948, ISA, FO/2564/20.
- 50 Danin and Shimoni's memorandum titled "Urgent Actions Connected to Frustrating the Return of Arab Refugees to Israel until the Adoption of a Final Policy on This Issue", 5 August 1948, ISA, FO/2566/13.
- 51 Shertok to Eban, 15 July 1948, ISA, FO/94/10.
- 52 Shitrit's memorandum to Ben-Gurion, Shertok, Grinbaum (Minister of the Interior) and Rosen, 18 July 1948, and Shertok's notes in its margins, ISA, FO/2569/12.
- 53 Bernadotte to Shertok, 26 July 1948, ISA, FO/2425/2.
- 54 Shertok's review at the provisional government's meeting, 29 July 1948, ISA, FO/2446/9, and Shertok to Bernadotte, 1 August 1948, ISA, FO/2446/2.
- 55 Protocol of the provisional government's meeting, 11 August 1948, ISA.
- 56 Cohn to Shertok, 5 August 1948, ISA, FO/2425/1.
- 57 Protocol of the Israeli delegation's meeting with the Mediator and his assistants, 5 August 1948, *ibid.* and reports on the UN delegation's visit to Nazareth, 8 August 1948, ISA, FO/2567/10 and FO/2426/6.
- 58 The chapter on the refugees problem in Bernadotte's report to the General Secretary, 16 September 1948, ISA, FO/2425/2.
- 59 Shimoni to Sasson, 19 August and 16 September 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1; Eitan to Lourie, 11 August 1948, ISA, FO/94/11 and Eban to Cordier, 12 August 1948, *ibid.*
- 60 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, pp. 652–4, entry for 18 August 1948, and Shimoni's minutes of the meeting, same date, ISA, FO/2566/13. For a detailed analysis of this consultation, based on Ben-Gurion's and other testimonies, but not on Shimoni's minutes, cf. Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 204–6.
- 61 Shertok to the ministers, 10 September 1948, and protocol of the provisional government's meeting, 12 September 1948, ISA.
- 62 A report on the State Council's Committee for Foreign Affairs' meeting with Ben-Gurion and Foreign Ministry's officials, 7 October 1948, ISA, FO/64/15.
- 63 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 683, entry for 13 September 1948.
- 64 Part III of Bernadotte's report, 16 September 1948, ISA, FO/2425/2.
- 65 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, II, p. 683, entry for 13 September 1948.
- 66 Sasson to Shimoni, 23 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 67 SM's monthly intelligence report no.1, 30 August 1948, IDFA, 2384/50/8.
- 68 MAPAM Political Committee's resolutions of 15 June, in the party secretariat's diary, 23 June 1948, MAPAM Archives, and Shimoni to Sasson, 19 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 69 Protocol of MAPAM Centre's meeting, 15–16 September 1948, *ibid.*
- 70 Aram to Shitrit, 11 August 1948, ISA, FO/2546/9; Shitrit to Ben-Gurion, 13 August 1948, *ibid.* and Jaffa's governor weekly report, same date, IDFA, 580/56/252.
- 71 Note 69 above.
- 72 Protocols of MAPAM centre's meetings, 14 July and 15–16 September 1948, MAPAM archives.
- 73 Protocol of MAPAM centre's meeting, 24 July 1948, pp. 43–8, LPA, 23/48, and protocol of the Provisional State Council's meeting, 29 July 1948, ISA, FO/2451/13.

- 74 Danin to Izhak Avira, 16 August 1948, ISA, FO/2570/11.
- 75 Sasson to Shimoni, 16 and 20 August 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 76 Shimoni to Shertok, 13 September 1948, ISA, FO/2564/1.
- 77 Danin to Sasson, 22 September 1948, ISA, FO/2570/11, and undated report on the committee's progress, ISA, FO/2570/1.
- 78 Goren's memorandum on the Palestinian refugees problem, 27 September 1948, ISA, FO/364/3.
- 79 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 721, entry for 26 September 1948.
- 80 Shimoni to Sasson, 12 November 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 81 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 776, entry for 26 October 1948.
- 82 Shitrit to Ben-Gurion and Shertok, 16 September 1948, ISA, FO/2564/18; Shimoni to the Political Department, 21 September 1948, *ibid.* and Shitrit to Shimoni, 26 September 1948, *ibid.*
- 83 Shimoni to Sasson, 23 November 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1.
- 84 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, p. 863, entry for 3 December 1948.
- 85 Weitz, Danin and Lif's report and appendices, December 1948, ISA, FO/2445/3.
- 86 Arazi to Hakim, 28 January 1949, ISA, FO/2569/12.
- 87 "Lebanon Cedar" association to Shitrit, 27 February 1949, ISA, C/1318/24.
- 88 Ben-Gurion to Shapira, 10 April 1949, BGA.
- 89 Shimoni to Sasson, 23 November 1948, ISA, FO/3749/1, and the Political Department to Shimoni, 30 November 1948, ISA, FO/2567/10.
- 90 Ben-Gurion's *War Diary*, III, pp. 844–5, entry for 25 November 1948.
- 91 Shertok to Eban, 10 February 1949, ISA, FO/2329/3.
- 92 Herlitz to Eilat, 24 February 1949, ISA, FO/2454/10; Summary of Danin's lecture to McDonald, ISA, FO/366/9, and Morris, *The Birth*, pp. 421–2.
- 93 Arazi to Shertok and Shomron to the Political Department, 23 May 1949, ISA, FO/2329/6.
- 94 Shertok to Sasson, 10 May 1949, ISA, FO/2442/7, and Ben-Gurion's diary, entries for 8 May and 18 June 1949, BGA (not in the published version).
- 95 Protocol of the Government's meeting, 14 March 1949, pp. 4–8, ISA.

Glossary

- Abd al-illah (?–1958)** King Ghazi's brother and regent of Iraq (1939–52).
- Abdullah Ibn Hussayn (1882–1951)** Born in Mecca, the second son of Sharif Hussayn. Amir (1921–46) and King (1946–51) of Transjordan. Was assassinated in 1951.
- Abu al-Huda, Tawfiq (1895–1956)** Jordanian politician of Palestinian origin. Born in Acre. Served in the Ottoman Army and in Sharif Faysal's army (1918–20). In 1922 joined the Transjordanian administration. Intermittently served as chief minister, foreign minister and chairman of the senate (1938–55).
- Abu Daya, Ibrahim (1917–52)** A Palestinian military leader. Active in revolt of 1936–9 and commander of *Jihad al-Muqadas* in the southern front of Jerusalem in 1948. After the war moved to Beirut and lived there until his death.
- Abu Dis** An Arab village south-east of Jerusalem
- Abu Ghosh** An Arab village west of Jerusalem on Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road.
- Abu Kabir** An Arab village east of Jaffa. Now, a neighbourhood of Tel Aviv.
- Abu Sa'ud, Hassan** A Palestinian Muslim religious leader. Mufti of Jerusalem in 1919. General inspector of Muslim religious courts (1936). Arrested in 1937, released and left Palestine. In World War II lived in Iraq and in Germany and served as counsellor and treasurer for Hajj Amin al-Hussayni. Member of the AHC (since 1947). Vice-chairman of National Council in Gaza (September 1948).
- Acre** A historic mixed Jewish–Arab town in western Galilee.
- Achdut Ha'avoda** A Zionist left-wing party that seceded from MAPAI in 1944 and united with *Hashomer Hatza'ir* to form MAPAM in January 1948. Split again from MAPAM in 1954 and united with MAPAI in 1969 to form the Israeli Labour party.
- Adina** The codename of Eliass Sasson.
- Ain Fit** An Arab village on the western slopes of the Golan Heights. In ruins since 1967.
- Ain Ghazal** Until 1948, an Arab village on the western slope of Carmel Mountain. Since 1949, a Jewish settlement by the name of Ein Ayala.
- Ain Hussub** A desert police building in the northern Arava. Now, a Jewish agricultural settlement by the name of Hatzeva.

- Ain Qinya** A Druze village on the western slopes of the Golan Heights.
- Ain Karim** Until 1948 an Arab village south-west of Jerusalem. Now, a Jewish suburb of Jerusalem called Ein Kerem.
- Ajur** Until 1948 an Arab village on the western slopes of Judea Mountains. Since June 1950 a Jewish settlement by the name of Agur.
- Al-Arish** The name of a wadi in Sinai Peninsula and the principal town of this Egyptian district.
- Alexandroni** An IDF brigade (no. 3). Recruited and fought in the coastal plain and later in the Faluja enclave.
- Al-Hama (Hamat Gader)** Formerly, a small town on the Palestine-Transjordan-Syria border. Annexed by Syria in 1951, abandoned and occupied by Israel in 1967. Famous for its warm springs.
- Allenby bridge** The principal bridge over Jordan River, near Jericho.
- Alon Yigal (1918-80)** Israeli military and political leader. Born in Palestine and from 1937 a member of kibbutz Ginossar. Veteran of the *PALMAH* and its commander from 1945. Commanding officer of operations *YIFTAH* and *DANI* and of South front (1948-9). Member of *Knesset* (1955-80). Served on various ministerial posts (1961-77).
- Altman, Arye (1902-82)** Israeli politician. Born in Russia and immigrated in 1924. President of the Revisionist Zionist movement in Palestine after Jabotinsky's death in 1940. Member of *Knesset* (1951-65).
- Al-Zib** A ruined Arab village in Galilee, on the Mediterranean coast. Nearby, a resort and kibbutz by the name of Gesher Haziv, founded in 1949.
- Antonius, George (1892-1942)** An Arab historian. Born in Egypt and after Word War I emigrated to Palestine. Served on various administrative posts in the Mandate government (1921-30). Member of the Palestinian delegation to London conference (1939).
- Aqaba** A town and harbour at the southern tip of Jordan. Until 1926 belonged to Hijaz.
- Arab Higher Committee (AHC)** The representative body of the Arab community in Palestine (1936-7 and 1946-8). Was dominated by the Mufti, but included all Arab parties and public organizations.
- Arab League** an international organization of Arab countries. Founded in Cairo in 1945 by Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen and joined later by all Arab countries after they became independent.
- Aran (Aharonowitz), Zalman (1899-1970)** An Israeli politician. Born in Poland and immigrated in 1926. Secretary of *MAPAI* (1948-51); member of *Knesset* (1949-69); Minister without portfolio (1953-5) and Minister of Education (1955-60, 1963-9).
- Arazi, Tuvia (1913-73)** Israeli diplomat. Born in Poland and immigrated to Palestine in 1924. Worked in the political department of the Jewish Agency. After attainment of statehood, served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as counsellor for Arab affairs, consul in Istanbul and ambassador to Cyprus and Peru.
- Aref, Aref al- (1892-1973)** Palestinian historian. Editor of the first Arab nationalist newspaper in Palestine *Suriya al-Janubiyya* in 1919. Exiled by the British to Syria in 1920. Returned in 1921 and began a career as a civil servant in the

- Mandatory and Jordanian administrations. Mayor of Jerusalem (1949–55). Wrote the first comprehensive Arab history of the 1948 war.
- Ariqat, Kemal** (1907–?) Born in Abu Dis, near Jerusalem. Served in the Palestine Police (1926–41). An activist of the Arab Palestinian party and commander of its paramilitary organization *Al-Futuwa* (1946). Deputy of Abd Al Qadir al-Hussayni (1947–8). Took part in battles in Jerusalem and *Gush Etzion*. After the war was a deputy in and chairman of the Jordanian Parliament.
- As'ad, Ahmad Bek** Leader of the influential Shi'ite family in South Lebanon during the first half of the twentieth century. Delegate to the Lebanese parliament (1937–60). Held various ministerial posts.
- Atarot** A Jewish settlement north of Jerusalem. Founded in 1914 and evacuated in 1948. Near the site — Jerusalem airport, bearing the same name.
- Avner** Codename of the *SHAY*, Tel Aviv branch.
- Avner Elimelech** (1897–1957) Born in Russia and immigrated to Palestine in 1913. Served in the Ottoman Army (1915–8), deserted and joined the Jewish battalions of the British Army (1918–20). Commanding officer of the *Haganah* in Tel Aviv (1934–41). In 1948 was appointed chief military governor.
- Ayalon Zvi** (1911–97) Born in Russia and immigrated to Palestine in 1923. Member of the *Haganah* from youth. Deputy chief-of-staff and commanding officer of the Central Front. Later a deputy director of the Ministry of Defence and Israeli ambassador to Romania.
- Ayelet Hashahar** A kibbutz in Upper Galilee, north of Rosh Pina, founded in 1918.
- Azzam, Abd al-Rahman** (1893–1976) An Egyptian diplomat. First secretary of the Arab League (1945–52).
- Balad al-Sheikh** Formerly, an Arab village east of Haifa. Now, a neighbourhood of the Jewish town Nesher, called Tel Hanan.
- Banias** An Arab village on the Syrian side of the Palestine–Syria border and one of the three tributaries forming the Jordan River. Occupied by Israel in 1967.
- Baq'a** A formerly Arab quarter in south-west Jerusalem.
- Basa** Prior to 1948, a large Arab village in western Galilee. At present, a small Jewish town by the name of Shlomi, founded in 1950.
- Bauer (Beeri), Eliezer** (1914–85) Israeli orientalist. Born in Germany. Immigrated to Palestine in 1937 and joined kibbutz Hazore'a. An activist in *MAPAM* in the field of Jewish–Arab relations.
- Ben-Gurion, David** (1886–1973) Born in Poland and immigrated in 1906. General secretary of the *Histadrut* (1920–35). Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive (1935–48). Israel's first prime minister (1948–53 and 1955–63).
- Ben-Zvi, Izhak** (1884–1963) Born in Russia and immigrated in 1907. A leading figure in the Labour Zionist Movement. Chairman of the *Yishuv's* National Council (1931–48) and the second president of Israel (1952–64).
- Berman** Codename of the Zionist underground movement in Iraq.
- Bernadotte, Count Folke** (1895–1948) Swedish diplomat. Vice-president (1943–6) and president (1946–8) of the Swedish Red Cross. UN mediator in the Israeli–Arab conflict (1948). Murdered in Jerusalem by members of *LHI*.
- Bet Dajan** Formerly an Arab village on the Jaffa–Jerusalem road. Abandoned in April 1948 and settled by Jews since October of the same year, under the name Bet Dagon.

- Bet Daras** An Arab village and British military barracks in southern Palestine. The village was abandoned in May 1948.
- Bet Jala** A small Christian Arab town near Bethlehem.
- Bet Jubrin** Formerly a large Arab village on the western slopes of Mount Hebron. Abandoned and occupied by the IDF in 1948. Since 1949, kibbutz Bet Govrin.
- Bet Makhsir** Formerly an Arab village in Judea Mountains. Since 1950 a Jewish settlement by the name of Bet Meir.
- Bet Naballah** Formerly an Arab village and a British Army depot near Lydda. Since 1950, a Jewish settlement named Bet Nechemia and the site of an adjacent IDF camp.
- Bet Naquba** Formerly an Arab village on the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road. In 1948 the residents moved to adjacent Abu Ghosh and in 1949 a Jewish settlement named Bet Nekofa was founded on the site.
- Bet Suriq** an Arab village in Judea Mountains, north of the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road.
- Bet Zafafa** In 1948, an Arab village south of Jerusalem. Between 1949 and 1967 split between Israel and Jordan and now a suburb of Jerusalem.
- Bevin, Ernest (1881–1951).** A British statesman of the Labour party. Minister of Labour (1940–5) and Foreign Minister (1945–51).
- Bint al-Jbail** A small town in South Lebanon, close to the Israel–Lebanon border.
- Birsaba** A regional centre for the Negev Bedouin, established by the Turks at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since 1948, a Jewish town called Beer Sheba.
- Bir Zeit** A small Arab town in Samaria, near Ramallah, the site of the principal Palestinian University.
- Bisan** A small mixed town in the northern part of the Jordan Valley. The Jews left in 1936 and the Arabs in 1948. Since the Arabs' departure, a Jewish town by the name of Bet Shean.
- Bludan** A town in south-western Syria, the site of several Arab summit conferences (1937, 1946 and 1951).
- Bqa'a** A valley in central Lebanon, separating Lebanon Mountain from the Anti Lebanon Mountain.
- Bunch, Ralph (1904–71)** Afro-American diplomat. Born in Detroit. Taught political science at Howard University, Washington (1928–50). Director of the UN Trusteeship department (1947–54). UN mediator in Palestine (1948–9). Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1950). UN under secretary for special political affairs (1954–67), and under secretary-general (1968–71).
- Caplan, Eliezer (1891–1952)** Israeli politician. Born in Russia. One of MAPAI top leaders. Treasurer of the Jewish Agency (1933–48) and Israel's first Minister of Finance (1948–52).
- Carmeli** An IDF brigade (no. 2), recruited in Haifa and fought around the town and later in Jenin and Galilee.
- Chetniks** Serbian nationalists that fought against the Croats and Tito's partisans during World War II.
- Clayton, Sir Iltyd (1886–1955)** British officer and diplomat. Political officer in

- Middle East GHQ (1939–42). Adviser on Arab affairs in the office of the British Resident Minister in Cairo (1943–4). Head of British Middle East Office (1945–8).
- Cohen, Aharon (1910–80)** Israeli orientalist. Born in Bessarabia and immigrated to Palestine in 1937. Joined kibbutz Sha'ar Ha'Amakim. One of the leaders of MAPAM and *HaKibbutz HaArtzi*. Also authored several books on Middle Eastern history and Jewish–Arab relations.
- Cohn, Leo (1894–1961)** Israeli diplomat. Born in Germany and immigrated in 1921. Returned to Germany in 1928 and re-immigrated in 1939. Shertok's senior counsellor in the Jewish Agency's political department and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Creech-Jones, Arthur (1891–1964)** British politician of the Labour party. Deputy Colonial Secretary (1945–6). Colonial Secretary (1946–50).
- Cunningham, Sir Allan (1887–1983)** British military leader. Commanding officer of British troops in East Africa (1940–1) and commanding officer of the Eighth Army (1941). Last British High Commissioner in Palestine (1945–8).
- Da'at** A codename for the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs' political department, responsible for evaluating political intelligence and gathering all categories of intelligence abroad. Established in July 1948 and dissolved in April 1951 to be replaced by the Intelligence Authority and later the *Mossad*.
- Da'at/A** The Arab section of *Da'at*
- Damya** A village on the Eastern Bank of and a bridge across Jordan River, on the Nablus–Amman road.
- Dan** Codename of Ya'acov Dori, the *Haganah* and IDF first chief-of-staff.
- Danin, Ezra (1903–85)** An Israeli spymaster. Born in Jaffa. Operated an intelligence network in Samaria for the *Haganah* and the British (1936–9). Founder of the SHAY Arab section (1940). Adviser on Arab affairs to the Jewish Agency and the *Haganah* (1940–8). Director of broadcasts in Arabic and adviser on Arab affairs to Foreign Minister Golda Meir.
- Dayan, Moshe (1915–81)** Israeli military leader and statesman. In 1948, commanded a raiding battalion and later a brigade in the Jerusalem front. Commanding officer Southern Command (1950–2) and Northern Command (1952). Conducted negotiations with Jordan (1949–51) and Syria (1952). DMO&I (1952–3). Chief-of-Staff (1953–7). Member of *Knesset* (1959–81). Minister of Agriculture (1959–64); of Defence (1967–74) and Foreign Minister (1977–9).
- Degania** A name of two kibbutzim: Degania-Alef (founded in 1909) and Degania-Bet (founded in 1920) in Jordan valley, on the southern edge of lake Kinnereth.
- Dir al-Balah** An Arab town in the Gaza Strip.
- Dir Yassin** An Arab village west of Jerusalem. On 8 April 1948, it was conquered by IZL and LHI forces that slaughtered 100–110 of its inhabitants. Now, an asylum for mentally ill persons.
- Dori** Codename of Benjamin Shapira, SHAY officer in Hula Valley.
- Dori Ya'acov (1899–1973)** Israeli military leader. Born in Russia and immigrated in 1906. Served in the British army's Jewish battalions in World War I. Commander of the *Haganah* in Haifa (1931–9). First chief-of-staff of the

- Haganah* (1939–45 and 1947) and of the IDF (1948–9). President of Haifa Technion (1951–65).
- Duwaima** Until 1948, an Arab village south of Bet Jubrin. Since 1955 a Jewish settlement by the name of Amatzia.
- Eban (Even) Aubrie (Abba)** (1915–) Israeli statesman. Born in South Africa and educated at Cambridge. Served in the SOE in the Middle East during WW II. Joined the Jewish Agency's Political Department staff in 1946. Ambassador to the United Nations (1948–59) and to the United States (1950–9). Member of the *Knesset* (1959–88). Minister of Education (1960–3), deputy Prime Minister (1963–6) and Foreign Minister (1966–74).
- Ein Gev** Kibbutz on the eastern shore of lake Kinnereth, founded in 1937.
- Ein Harod** Kibbutz in the Yizra'el valley, founded in 1921.
- Eitan, Walter** (1910–). Israeli diplomat. Born in Germany. During World War II served in the British cryptographic centre at Bletchley. In 1946 immigrated to Palestine and joined the staff of the Jewish Agency. Director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1948–59). Israel ambassador to France (1960–70) and chairman of Israel Broadcasting Authority (1970–4).
- Eizenstat, Fritz (Eshet, Shalom)** (1915–67). Born in Austria and immigrated in 1938. Graduated from the Austrian military academy. Ben-Gurion's military adviser in 1948. COS, Eastern Front (1949); director of planning (1949–51) and commander of the artillery corps. Retired in 1957.
- Eskhol (Shkolnik), Levy** (1895–1969). Israeli politician. Born in Ukraine and immigrated in 1913. Minister of Development and Agriculture (1951); and of Finance (1952–63). Prime Minister (1963–9) and concurrently Minister of Defence (1963–7).
- Faluja** A large Arab village on the Majdal–Hebron road. Evacuated by Egyptian troops and the civilian population after the armistice agreement in February 1949.
- Faradiya** Formerly, an Arab village in central Galilee. Since 1949, a kibbutz by the name of Parod.
- Faruq Ibn Fuad** (1920–65) King of Egypt (1936–52). Forced to abdicate in the wake of the "Free Officers" revolution.
- Fauzi, Mahmud** (1900–80). Egyptian diplomat and politician. Ambassador to the UN (1945–52) and to Britain (1952–3). Minister of Foreign Affairs (1953–61). Vice President (1967–8). Prime Minister (1970–2) and again Vice President as well as adviser to President Sadat on political affairs (1972–4).
- Feja** Until 1948, an Arab village in centre of Palestine. Later, a neighbourhood of the Jewish town Petah-Tiqva.
- Furaydis** An Arab village in south-western Carmel Mountain, near Zichron Ya'acov.
- Futuwa** An Arab paramilitary organization in Palestine, founded in 1946 and loyal to the Hussayni faction.
- Galili, Israel** (1911–86) Born in Ukraine and immigrated in 1914. Member of the *Haganah* High Command (1941–8). Chairman of its Command Council (1947–8). Member of the *Knesset* (1949–51 and 1955–77). Minister without portfolio (1966–77).
- Gaza** An Arab town in Palestine's southern coastal plain.

- Gesher** A kibbutz in the northern Jordan Valley, opposite Naharayim electric power plant. Founded in 1939.
- Giv'ati** An IDF brigade (no. 5), recruited in 1948 in Tel Aviv and in the settlements south of the city. Fought in Latrun, against the Egyptian army in the Negev and against the Iraqis in Sharon area.
- Glubb, Sir John Baggot (1897–1985)** British officer. Deputy commander of the Arab Legion (1930–8) and its commander-in-chief (1938–56).
- Golani** An IDF brigade (no. 1), recruited in 1948 in Yizra'el and Jordan valleys and Lower Galilee. Fought in the northern front and in the Negev.
- Khadra, Subhi al- (1896–?)** An Arab Palestinian politician. Born in Safed. Officer in the Turkish army (1914–18). One of the founders (1932) and activists of the *al-Istiqlal* party. In 1947–9 assistant of Hajj Amin al-Hussayni.
- Hadad** Tuvia Arazi's codename in the Jewish Agency's corerspondence.
- Haganah** The Jewish paramilitary underground organization in Palestine. Founded in 1920.
- Haifa** A town in Israel, mostly Jewish. A port city and a centre of heavy industry.
- Haikal, Muhammad Hassanin (1923–)** Egyptian journalist. Chief editor of *al-Ahram*, Egypt's most prestigious daily (1957–74). A close adviser and confidant of President Nasser. In 1970, served for a few months as minister of information and national guidance. After Nasser's death, fell out with President Sadat and in 1974 was dismissed from *al-Ahram*. Published several books on Egyptian and Middle East politics.
- Haikal Yussuf** Palestinian politician. Mayor of Jaffa until 1948 and thereafter Jordan's ambassador in the United States (1951–4).
- Hakim, Bishop George (1908–?)** Born in Egypt. Ordained as a priest in 1930. Archbishop of Haifa and Galilee from 1943. Leader of the Greek-Catholic community in Israel.
- Hamdan, Faris (1910–66).** Born in Palestine in the village Baqa al-Gharbia. Chairman of Baqa al-Gharbia's local council (from 1944) and Member of *Knesset* (1949–51).
- Hanagid** Codename of Ahmad al-Khalil, a SHAY agent in Haifa.
- Hanoch** Codename of SHAY Haifa branch before the war.
- Han Yunis** An Arab town in the Gaza Strip.
- Haram al-Sharif** The area of the holy mosques (Al-Aqsa and Omar) in the Old City of Jerusalem.
- Harcavi, Yehoshafat (1921–95)** Israeli officer and intellectual. Born in Haifa. Served in the British army (1943–6). In the foreign ministry's staff (1948–50). DDMI (1950–5) and DMI (1955–9). After his retirement from the army lectured on international relations at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.
- Harzfeld, Abraham (1891–1973)** A settlement activist. Born in Ukraine and immigrated in 1914. Member of the board of the *Histadrut's* Agricultural Centre. Member of *Knesset* (1949–69).
- Hashachar** Codename of a PALMAH unit trained to pose as Arabs.
- Hashim, Ibrahim al- (1884–1958)** Transjordanian politician of Palestinian origin. Born in Nablus. Minister of Justice (1922–31) and Chief Minister (1933–8, 1947, 1956 and 1957–8). Murdered while paying a visit to Baghdad during General Kassim's *putsch*.

Hashimi, Taha al- (1888–1961) Iraqi officer and politician. Officer in the Ottoman army (1909–18). Chief-of-staff of the Iraqi army (1929–36). Minister of Defence (1938–40). Prime Minister (1940–1). Inspector-general of the Arab Liberation Army (1948). Chairman of the Arab League's Development Council (1953–8).

Hashmonai Codename of the *Haganah's* Jerusalem district HQ.

Hashomer paramilitary Zionist group in Palestine. Founded in 1908. Dissolved and merged into the *Haganah* in 1920.

Hashomer Hatzair Zionist youth movement. Founded in 1913–4 in Poland. After World War I adopted Marxist ideology. In 1946 turned into a political party. In 1948 united with *Achdut HaAvoda* to form MAPAM.

Hauari, Muhammad Nimr al- Palestinian politician. Born in Nazareth, studied law and lived in Jaffa. In 1945 founded the paramilitary organization *Najada*. In 1948 emigrated to Jordan. In 1949 organized a delegation of refugees to the PCC conference at Lausanne. In 1950 was allowed to return to Israel. Having failed to establish an Arab political party, practised law, subsequently serving as justice in the Peace and District courts.

Hauwasa An Arab village east of Haifa. Abandoned in 1948. Now, a neighbourhood of the Jewish town Neshet named Ben Dor.

Hazbaya A small Druze town and religious centre in South Lebanon.

Hayogev Codename of Abd al-Ghani al-Karmi, a Palestinian journalist, confidant of king Abdullah and *SHAY* agent in Jaffa.

Hebron A mixed Jewish–Arab town south of Jerusalem. Following a massacre in 1929, the Jewish population left the town, which remained exclusively Arab until 1967.

Herzog, Chayim (Vivian) (1918–97) Born in Ireland and immigrated in 1935. Served as intelligence officer in the British Army (1940–7). Liaison between the Jewish Agency and the British Army in Palestine (1947–8). DDMI (1948) and DMI (1948–50). Military attaché in Washington (1950–7). COS Southern Command (1957–9). DMI (1959–61). Military governor of occupied Jerusalem (1967). Ambassador to the UN (1975–80). Member of *Knesset* (1981–83). President of Israel (1983–93).

Hilel Codename of Israel Galili.

Hilmi, Ahmad Palestinian financier and politician of Albanian origin. Born in Saida. Manager of the Hijaz railway. Founder and managing director of the Arab Bank and Arab National Fund. Member of the AHC (1936–7). Deported to Seychelles Islands and returned in 1940. Member of the new AHC (1946–8) and Prime Minister of "All Palestine" Government (1948–9).

Hiram The codename of *SHAY* Haifa branch.

Hissas Until 1948 an Arab village in Hula Valley. Kibbutz Hagoshrim settled on the site in September 1948.

Histadrut The Jewish workers' organization in Palestine. Founded in 1920.

Hourani, Akram (1914–?) Syrian politician. Born in Homs. In 1943 and 1947, elected to Parliament. In 1948 volunteered for service in the ALA. Re-elected to Parliament in November 1949 and served in various ministerial posts in different governments (1949–51). In 1950, founded the Arab Socialist Party that merged in 1953 with the *Ba'ath*. In 1957, became president of Parliament. vice-president and Minister of Justice of the United Arab Republic (1958–9).

- During the *Ba'ath* officers' *coup d'état* in 1963 was arrested, and upon release went into exile in Lebanon.
- Hulda** Kibbutz near the 1948 Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road. Founded in 1907, razed by Arab rioters in 1929 and re-established in 1931. Used by the *Haganah* as an operational base for securing Jewish transportation on the road.
- Huliqat** Until 1948 an Arab village east of Majdal. Seized by the Egyptian army that used it to block the road to Jewish settlements in the Negev. Occupied by the IDF in October 1948. In 1950 a Jewish settlement by the name of Heletz was founded near the site.
- Hunin** A Shi'ite Arab village on Palestine–Lebanon border, west of Metula. The village was abandoned in 1948, and in 1955 a Jewish settlement by the name of Margaliot was founded on the site.
- Hussayni, Hajj Amin** (1895–1974) Leader of the Palestinian national movement. Born in Jerusalem. Officer in the Ottoman Army (1915–8). Sponsor and leader of the riots in Jerusalem (1920). Exiled to Damascus, but returned (1921) to be appointed Mufti of Jerusalem. Chairman of the Muslim Supreme Council (1922–37). Chairman of the AHC (1936–7) and leader of the Arab revolt (1936–9). Escaped to Beirut (1937), to Baghdad (1939) and to Germany (1941). Returned to Cairo (1946) and led the Palestinians up to and during the war of 1948.
- Hussayni, Abd al-Qadir** (1907–48) Born in Jerusalem. Led a gang (1936–9) in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Escaped to Iraq (1939). Deported to Saudi Arabia (1944). Moved to Egypt and joined Hajj Amin (1947). Leader of the *Jihad al-Muqadas* (1948). Killed in the battle of Qastel (April 1948).
- Hussayni, Jimal** (1893–1982) Born in Jerusalem. Secretary of the Arab Action Committee (1921–34) and the Muslim Supreme Council. Founder (1935) and chairman of the Palestinian Arab party and its delegate to the AHC (1936–37). Escaped to Syria (1937) and to Baghdad (1939). Arrested by the British (1941) and exiled to Rhodesia. Released (1945) and returned to Palestine (1946). Chairman of the new AHC (1946–7). Head of the Palestinian delegation to the UN (1947–8).
- Ibrahim, Rashid al-Hajj** (1888–1953) Businessman and politician. Born in Haifa. One of the founders of *al-Istiqlal* party (1932) and member of the AHC. President of the Arab National Committee in Haifa (1947–8).
- 'Id al-Fitr** A Muslim holiday, ending the month-long fast of *Ramadan*.
- Ijsim** An Arab village near Haifa (before 1948). Now, a Jewish settlement by the name of Kerem Maharal.
- 'Ilabun** An Arab village in Lower Galilee. Its Christian residents were deported in operation *HIRAM*, but after intervention by the Vatican were allowed to return in 1949.
- Iraq Suydan** An Arab village and an adjacent police fortress near kibbutz Negba, on the Majdal–Hebron road, scene of several fierce battles between the IDF and the Egyptian army.
- Isdud** Until 1948 an Arab village in southern Palestine where the advance of the Egyptian army was halted. Now, a Jewish city named Ashdod, founded in 1955.
- 'Issawiya** An Arab village on the north-eastern slope of Mount Scopus.

- Istiqlal** The Pan-Arab movement. Its Palestinian branch was founded in 1932.
- Itai** Codename of Iser Beeri, Head of the SHAY and later chief of the IDF's intelligence service.
- 'Izariya** An Arab village east of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho.
- Ja'abri, Muhammad Ali (1900–80)** Palestinian politician. Mayor of Hebron from 1930. One of the founders of Arab Palestinian party (1935). Member of the AHC (from May 1946). After the war and the West Bank's annexation took part in Jordan's political life and was a deputy of Parliament and a minister in several Jordanian governments.
- Jab'a** An Arab village in Samaria, between Nablus and Jenin.
- Jabal Amal** A mountainous area in southern Lebanon with mainly Shiite population.
- Jabal Druze** A region in southern Syria, populated mainly by Druze.
- Jaffa** A formerly Arab town adjacent to Tel Aviv and now part of it.
- Jenin** An Arab town in northern Samaria.
- Jericho** An Arab town in the southern part of Jordan valley, east of Jerusalem.
- Jihad al-Muqadas** Originally a Palestinian gang, organized in the early 1930s by Abd al-Qadir al-Hussayni and active during the 1936/9 rebellion. Al-Hussayni followers adopted this name also in 1948 until the Legion dispersed them early in 1949.
- Kabri** An Arab village in western Galilee. The villagers took an active part in the ambush of the convoy to Yechi'am in March 1948 and, fearing revenge, evacuated the site in May 1948. In 1949 a kibbutz by the same name was established on the site of the abandoned village.
- Kafr Qassim** An Arab village east of Petah-Tiqva. Held during the war by the Iraqi army and according to the armistice agreement with Transjordan handed over to Israel in May 1949. Unaware of a curfew imposed by the IDF because of the Sinai Campaign, on 29 October 1956, forty-nine village's residents were killed by the Israeli border police.
- Kafr Manda** An Arab village in Galilee, at the foot of Atzmon mountain.
- Kaukab al-Hauwa** A crusader fortress and Arab village in Lower Galilee overlooking Jordan valley. The village was abandoned in 1948 and the fortress was reconstructed in the 1960s and declared a national park.
- Kfar Darom** A Jewish settlement in Gaza area, founded in 1946. In July 1948 the settlers withdrew and the Egyptian army took over the site. After occupation of Gaza Strip in the Six-Day War, the settlement was re-established (1970).
- Kfar Saba** A Jewish town in Israel, in the Sharon area. An adjacent Arab hamlet by the same name was abandoned and occupied in May 1948.
- Kfar-Szold** kibbutz in Hula valley, founded in 1942.
- Khair, Abdullah (1907–77)** Born in the village Abu Snan. Studied at the American University in Beirut. Founded and led a Druze faction in opposition to the dominant Ta'arif family (1932–4). Excommunicated by his community, served in the mandate's administration in Tulkarm, Nablus and Safed. After the founding of the State of Israel, retired from political activity and public life.
- Khalil, Ahmad al- (1914–?)** Lawyer from Haifa. Judge in Haifa District Court (1940–8). In April 1948 moved to Beirut, and organized a committee to represent and take care of the refugees. In 1949, moved to Jordan and was

designated successively as governor of Samaria, Jordan's delegate to the mixed armistice commission and supreme court judge.

Khalidi, Hussayn (1894–1962) Born in Jerusalem. Served as a doctor in the Ottoman army (1916–8). Mayor of Jerusalem (1934–7). Founder and leader of the Reform Party (1935) and its representative to the AHC (1936–7). Deported by the British to Seychelles Islands (1937–45). Member of the new AHC (1946–8) and its deputy in Jerusalem at the beginning of the war. Minister of health in the "All Palestine Government" in Gaza. (1948). Since 1950 held various posts in the Jordanian administration.

Khalsa Until 1948 an Arab village in the Hula valley. Since 1949, a Jewish town named Kiryat Shmona.

Khatib, Nimr al- A Muslim preacher from Haifa. Leader of the local Muslim Brethren's branch and member of the AHC (from 1946) and the national committee in Haifa (1947–8). Wounded in an attempt on his life and evacuated to Beirut.

Kirkbride, Sir Alek Seath (1897–?) A British colonial official and diplomat. An officer in Army of General Allenby (1916–21). A Governor of Acre and Galilee district (1922–7 and 1937–9). Deputy resident in Transjordan (1927–37) and resident (1939–46). Ambassador in Amman (1946–51) and in Libya (1952–4).

Knesset (1) The Parliament of Israel; (2) Codename of the *Haganah's* supreme command.

Laskov, Haim (1919–82) Israeli military leader. Born in Russia and immigrated in 1924. Joined the *Haganah* in 1932 and served in the British Army (1940–45), reaching the rank of major. In 1948 commanded the *Haganah's* officer training course, the IDF's first armoured battalion and the 7th brigade. DMT (1948–51). Commanding officer of the Israel Air Force (1951–3). Deputy chief-of-staff (1955–6). Commanding officer of an armoured division in the Sinai Campaign (1956). Commanding officer of Southern Command (1956–8). IDF chief-of-staff (1958–61). Director-general of Israel Ports' Authority (1961–70). From 1972 to his death — IDF ombudsman.

Latrun A village and a monastery on the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road. The site of four fierce battles between the IDF and the Arab Legion in 1948.

Lifta A deserted Arab village on the western entrance to Jerusalem, abandoned in 1948.

Lydda A mixed (formerly Arab) town in Israel.

McDonald, James (1886–1964) American diplomat. Appointed by the League of Nations High Commissioner of Refugees from Germany (1933–5). Member of the Anglo-American commission of inquiry (1946). United States' representative (1948) and first ambassador in Israel (1949–51).

Mafraq A town in Jordan, near the Iraq–Haifa petrol pipe.

Machnes, Gad (1893–1954) Born in Petah-Tiqva. Citrus grower. A member of the Association of farmers' executive. Active in the Arab department of the SHAY. After the founding of the State of Israel, Director-general of the Ministry for Minorities' Affairs (1948–9).

Majdal An Arab town on the Mediterranean coast, north of Gaza. Evacuated by the Egyptian army and most residents in October 1948. The rest of the residents moved to Gaza strip in the fall of 1950. A Jewish town by the name of Ashkelon was founded on the site.

Maklef, Mordehai (1920–78) An Israeli military leader. Joined the *Haganah* in his youth and served in British Army (1940–5) reaching the rank of major. Commanding officer of Carmeli brigade and COS Northern Front (1948–9). Deputy chief-of-staff (1949–52) and chief-of-staff (1952–3). After retirement from the IDF, chairman of Israel Electrical Company and other Israeli companies.

Malkha An Arab village south-west of Jerusalem, occupied in July 1948. Now, a Jewish neighbourhood of the city.

Mardam, Jamil A Syrian politician. Activist of the Arab National Movement from 1913. One of the leaders of Syrian National Bloc and prime minister (1936–7 and 1947–8).

Marcus, Colonel David (1902–48) Jewish American officer, graduate of West Point military academy. During World War II served in US Army in Norway and in the Pacific front. In 1948 came to Palestine as a volunteer and advised the *Haganah* high command on military matters. Later appointed commanding officer of Jerusalem front. Shot and killed by accident on 10 June 1948.

Masmiya An Arab village in south of Palestine. In 11 July 1948 captured by IDF and abandoned by Arab villagers. In 1949, a Jewish settlement by the name of Bnei Re'em was founded on the site.

Meyerson (Meir) Golda (1898–1978) Born in Russia. Emigrated to the USA (1906) and thence to Palestine (1921). Member of the *Histadrut* Action Committee since 1934 and head of its political department (1936–46). Deputy head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department (1946–8). Ambassador to the USSR (1948–9). Minister of Labour (1949–55) and Foreign Minister (1956–66). General secretary of *MAPAI* party (1966–8). Prime Minister (1969–74).

Metula A Jewish settlement in north Israel, near Israel–Lebanon border, founded in 1896.

Military Operations

Brosh an abortive attack on the Syrian bridgehead, July 1948.

Dani occupation of the Lydda–Ramle area, July 1948.

Dekel occupation of Lower Galilee, July 1948.

Hametz occupation of villages around Jaffa, April 1948.

Hiram occupation of central Galilee, October–November 1948.

Horev offensive against the Egyptian army, December 1948–January 1949.

Kedem an abortive attempt to break into the Old City of Jerusalem, July 1948.

Kilshon taking over the evacuated British security zones in Jerusalem, May 1948.

Nahshon opening the road to Jerusalem, April 1948

Tooth for Tooth a planned (but not executed) operation to occupy the Iraqi positions in Samaria, March 1949.

Uvda occupation of the southern Negev and opening the road to Eilat, March 1949.

Yevussi several attacks, mostly abortive, in Jerusalem and its vicinity, April 1948.

Yoav opening the road to the Negev and bisecting the Egyptian army, October 1948.

- Mishmar Ha'emek** Kibbutz in Yizrael valley, near Haifa–Megido road, founded in 1930.
- Mishmar Hayarden** A Jewish settlement in Upper Galilee. Founded in 1890. Captured and destroyed by the Syrian Army in June 1948. In 1949, returned to Israel and the settlement was restored.
- Mizrahi** Codename of Izhak Navon, head of the Arab section of the *SHAY* in Jerusalem and later President of Israel (1978–83).
- Mulqi, Fauzi** (1910–62) Jordanian politician and diplomat. Graduate of the American University of Beirut and Edinburgh University. Foreign Minister (1948) and defence minister (1949–50). Ambassador to Britain (1951–3) and Prime Minister (1953–4).
- Muslim Brethren** A Suni-Muslim fundamentalist organization. Founded in 1929 in Egypt that subsequently spread to Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.
- Nabatiya** A Shi'ite town in south Lebanon.
- Nabi Daniel** A Holy place for Muslims (believed to be the grave of the Prophet Daniel) in Judea Mountains, near Bethlehem.
- Nabi Rubin** A sacred place for Muslims in the centre of Israel, near Rishon Le'Zion (believed to be the Grave of Reuben, son of Ya'acov).
- Nabi Samuwil** An Arab village and the Arab name of a holy place north-west of Jerusalem, believed to be the grave of the Prophet Samuel.
- Nablus** An Arab town, the principal city of Samaria district.
- Naharayim** An electric power plant and workers' quarters where Yarmuk River joins the Jordan River. Founded in 1928.
- Nahariya** A Jewish town north of Acre. Founded in 1934 by immigrants from Germany.
- Najada** A Palestinian paramilitary organization, established in 1945.
- Noqrashi, Mahmud Fahmi** (?-1948) Egyptian politician. Expelled from the *Wafd* and founded the Saadist party (1938–9). Prime Minister (1945–6 and 1947–8).
- Nashashibi, Azmi** (1903–?). A Palestinian journalist and diplomat. Born in Jerusalem. Joined the mandate's administration (1930). Director of the Government Press Office in Jaffa (1939–44). Inspector of Arab broadcasts in Radio Jerusalem (1944–8). Deputy-governor of Ramallah and director of Radio Ramallah (1948–50). Jordan's delegate to the Mixed Armistice Commission (1951–3).
- Nasr al-Din** An Arab village near Tiberias. Occupied and abandoned in April 1948. Now, a neighbourhood of upper Tiberias.
- Negev Brigade** —An IDF brigade (no. 12) in the Independence War, based on *PALMAH* units that were dispatched to the Negev at the beginning of the war.
- Neve Ya'acov** A Jewish settlement north of Jerusalem, founded in 1924. Evacuated on 16 May 1948 and rebuilt as a neighbourhood of Jerusalem in 1968.
- Nirim** Kibbutz in north-western Negev, opposite Rafah. Founded in 1946.
- Nitzanim** A kibbutz near the coastal road between Majdal and Isdud. Founded in 1943. Occupied by the Egyptian army in June 1948 and rebuilt after the Egyptians' retreat.

- Oded** IDF brigade (no. 9). Recruited in Galilee and fought in Galilee and in the Negev.
- PALMAH** A fully mobilized elite unit of the *Haganah*. Founded in 1941 for guerrilla warfare in case of Axis occupation and trained by the British SOE in 1942. Had a principal role in the *Yishuv's* anti-British struggle (1945–1946). During the War of Independence built three of the IDF's brigades. The *PALMAH's* separate HQ was disbanded in October 1948.
- Palmon, Joshua** (1913–94). Born in Tel Aviv. Joined the *SHAY* Arab section (1940). Chief of *Da'at's* Arab section (1948–9). Ben-Gurion's adviser on Arab affairs (1949–55).
- Petah-Tiqva** The first modern Jewish settlement in Palestine, founded in 1879. Since 1937 — a town.
- PICA** Palestine Jewish Colonization Association. Founded in 1924 by Baron Rothschild. Took part in land purchases, establishing new Jewish settlements and developing the infrastructure.
- Qalansawa** An Arab village in Palestine, in Sharon plain. Handed over to Israel in the wake of the armistice agreement in 1949.
- Qalqilia** An Arab town and a refugee camp in Sharon, adjacent to Kfar Saba.
- Qanir** An Arab village north-west of Wadi Ara, adjacent to kibbutz Regavim. Abandoned in April 1948.
- Qassam, 'Iz al-Din** (1880 [1871?]-1935). A Muslim religious leader. Born in northern Syria. Fought against French rule in Syria and in 1920 was sentenced to death. Escaped to Palestine and settled in Haifa where he was assigned the post of Imam (1922). Founded the Young Muslim Association (1928). Based on this organization, founded a secret organization that carried out several terrorist attacks on Jews in northern Palestine (1931–2). In 1935, resumed his terrorist activity. Subsequently, he was pursued and killed by Palestine police.
- Qassamites** Followers and disciples of 'Iz al-Din Qassam
- Qastel** An Arab village controlling the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem road. Site of several fierce battles in 1948, it was abandoned by the residents. A Jewish settlement by the name of Ma'oz Zion was established on the site (1951).
- Qatana** A small town and military centre south-west of Damascus.
- Qawuqji, Fauzi** (1890–?). An Arab military leader. Born in Tripoli (Lebanon). Served in the Ottoman Army. Took part in the anti-French revolt in Syria (1925–1926). Led the Palestinian rebellion (1936). In 1941 escaped to Germany. Returned to Syria (1947). Commander of Arab Liberation Army in Palestine (1948).
- Qiryati** An IDF brigade (no. 4). Recruited and fought in the vicinity of Tel Aviv and in the Central Front.
- Qula** an Arab village in centre of Palestine north of Lydda. Abandoned in 1948.
- Qumi** An Arab village in Yizrael valley, near kibbutz Ein Harod. Abandoned in 1948.
- Qunaitra** A town in southern Syria, the district capital of the Golan. Abandoned by its Circassian residents and occupied by the IDF in 1967. Returned to Syrian rule after the 1973 Yom Kippur War.
- Rabin, Izhak** (1922–95) Israeli military leader and statesman. Born in Jerusalem. Member of the *PALMAH* from 1941. Commanding officer of Harel

- brigade and chief-of-staff of the *DANI* operation and South Front (1948–9). DMO (1950–2) and DMT (1954–6). Commanding officer of the Northern Command (1956–9), chief of operations (1959–61), deputy chief-of-staff (1961–4) and chief-of-staff (1964–8). Ambassador to the United States (1968–73). Member of *Knesset* (1973–95). Minister of Labour (1974). Prime Minister (1974–7). Minister of Defence (1984–90) and Prime Minister (1992–5), assassinated in office by a Jewish extremist.
- Rafah** An Arab town on the Palestine–Egypt border, south of Gaza, divided between Egypt and the Palestinian Authority.
- Ramallah** A Christian Arab town north of Jerusalem.
- Ramat Yohanan** Kibbutz in Zvulun valley, north-east of Haifa. Founded in 1932.
- Rame** A mixed Arab–Druze village in Galilee, on the Acre–Safed road.
- Ramle** A formerly Arab and now mixed town in central Israel, east of Tel Aviv and adjacent to Lydda.
- Rantiya** an Arab village in the centre of Palestine, between Petah-Tiqva and Lydda. Abandoned by Arab villagers in 1948. A Jewish settlement by the name of Rinatya was founded on the site in 1949.
- Ras al-Ain** A pumping station at the headwaters of the Yarkon and British army barracks east of Petah-Tiqva. Since 1950, a Jewish settlement by the name of Rosh Ha'Ayin.
- Ras al-Naqura** A border crossing between Israel and Lebanon on the Mediterranean coast and a Lebanese village north of the checkpoint. In January 1949 a kibbutz by the name of Rosh Hanikra was established south of the checkpoint.
- Ratner Yohanan** (1891–1965) Israeli Architect and military leader. Born in Russia. Served as an officer in the Czarist army (1915–17) and in the Red Army (1918–20). Immigrated in 1923. Founder of the Technion's faculty of architecture in Haifa and member of its staff (1930–63). Chairman of the *Haganah* Supreme Command Council (1938–9). Military adviser to Ben-Gurion (1947–8). Director of planning (1948–9). Military attaché in the USSR (1949–50).
- Rosen, Pinhas (Felix)** (1887–1978) Israeli politician. Born in Berlin. President of the Zionist Federation in Germany. In 1931 immigrated to Palestine. Leader of the new immigrants' party *Alijah Chadasha* (1942–48) and the Progressive party (1948–65). Minister of Justice (1948–51 and 1952–61). Member of *Knesset* (1949–69).
- Rosh Pinah** A Jewish settlement in Galilee, east of Safed. Founded in 1882.
- Rutba** A town in Iraq on the pipeline route, adjacent to the Iraqi–Jordanian border.
- Sade Izhak** (1890–1952) Israeli military leader. Born in Poland. Served in the Russian army in World War I and was active in Jewish self-defence organisations during the civil war. Immigrated in 1920. Founder and first commanding officer of the *PALMAH* (1941–5). Chief-of-staff of the *Haganah* (1945–6). In 1948–9 commanded the 8th (armoured) brigade. Resigned from the IDF in 1949.
- Safed** A formerly mixed Arab–Jewish town and district capital of central Galilee. The remaining Arab population fled following the retreat of the ALA garrison in May 1948.

- Safuriya** an Arab village in Lower Galilee, west of Nazareth. Abandoned in July 1948. A Jewish settlement by the name of Tzipori was founded on the site in 1949.
- Safwat, Isma'il** An Iraqi officer. Began his career in the Ottoman Army and assigned to the post of deputy-chief of the Iraqi Army's General Staff. Military adviser to the Arab League and commander of the Arab Liberation Army (1947-8).
- Saida** The principal district town in Lebanon, on the Mediterranean Sea coast.
- Sa'id Nuri (1888-1958)** Iraqi statesman. Officer in Sharif Faysal's Arab forces (1916-20). First chief-of-staff of the Iraqi Army (1921-2). During the 1920s served several times as Minister of Defence. Between 1930 and his murder during General Qassim's revolution, served several times as foreign, defence and prime minister.
- Salameh, Hassan (1910-48)** Palestinian military leader. Led a gang in the 1936-9 rebellion. Escaped to Syria (1939) and thence to Iraq. Fled with the Mufti to Germany (1941). Parachuted as a German agent near Jericho (1944). Commanded the *Jihad al-Muqadas* in the Jaffa-Lyddá area (1948).
- Samakh** Until 1948 a small Arab town in Jordan Valley, at the southern edge of lake Kinneret.
- Sarafand** A base depot of the British Army in central Palestine, near Ramle. Since 1948 — an IDF depot and barracks.
- Sasson, Eliass (1902-78).** Israeli diplomat and politician. Born in Damascus. Immigrated in 1920 and worked as a journalist for Syrian newspapers. In 1934 joined the Jewish Agency staff. Director of the Arab section (1939-48). Director of the Foreign Ministry's Middle Eastern Department and ambassador to Turkey, Italy and Switzerland (1949-60). Minister of the Post and Telegraph services (1961-7), and Minister of Police (1967-9).
- Sejera (Ilaniya)** a Jewish settlement in Lower Galilee. Founded in 1899.
- Sha'ar Hagolan** A kibbutz in Jordan valley. Founded in 1937.
- Shafa'amr** A mixed Arab-Druze town in Lower Galilee, north-east of Haifa.
- Shealtiel, David (1903-69)** Israeli officer and diplomat. Born in Germany. Immigrated in 1935. Emissary of the *Haganah* in Europe (1937-9) and of the Jewish Agency in North Africa (1944-5). Head of the *SHAY* (1940-2 and 1946-8). Commander of the *Haganah* in Haifa (1942-3). Commanding officer, Jerusalem military district (February-July 1948). General Inspector of the IDF (1948-9). Commanding officer of the Frontier Force (1949-50). Military attaché in France (1950-2). Ambassador to Brasil, Mexico and Holland.
- Shapira, Moshe Haim (1902-70)** Israeli politician. Born in Poland and immigrated in 1925. Leader of the religious Zionist movement *HaPo'el HaMizrachi*. Member of the Jewish Agency Executive (1935-48). Member of *Knesset* and holder of various ministerial posts (1949-70).
- Sheikh Badir** An Arab village in west Jerusalem The first village abandoned in 1948. Now called Giv'at Ram — site of the *Knesset*, the Supreme Court, the Bank of Israel and the Israeli government offices.
- Sheikh Jarah** An Arab neighbourhood in northern Jerusalem. Until 1967, the residence of Palestinian elite families.
- Shertok (Sharett), Moshe (1894-1965)** An Israeli statesman. Born in Russia and

- immigrated in 1895. Joined the Jewish Agency's staff (1931). Head of its political department (1933-48). Foreign Minister (1948-56) and Prime Minister (1954-5). Chairman of the Zionist Executive (1960-5).
- Shiloah (Zaslani), Reuven (1909-59)** Israeli spymaster and diplomat. Born and educated in Jerusalem. In 1936 joined the Jewish Agency's staff as liaison with the British security services, a post he held intermittently until December 1947. In charge of the *Yishuv's* co-operation with the Allies' secret services during World War II. On mission to the USA (1945-6). Ben-Gurion's assistant for intelligence affairs (1948-9). Head of the *Mossad* (1949-53).
- Shimoni, Ya'acov (1915-97)** Born in Germany and immigrated to Palestine in 1935. Served in SHAY HQ (1941-5) and in the Arab section of the Jewish Agency (1945-8). Held various posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and lectured on international relations at the Hebrew University.
- Shishakli, Adib (1909-64)** Syrian military and political leader. Served in the *Troupes Speciales* until 1946. Commanded an ALA regiment (1948) and returned to the Syrian army. As deputy chief-of-staff (1949-51) and chief-of-staff (1951-2) he was practically the ruler of Syria. Seized power openly and became prime minister (1952) and president (1953). Deposed and exiled in 1954. Murdered in Brazil in 1964.
- Shitrit, Behor (1895-1967)** Israeli politician. Born in Tiberias. Police officer (1922-35) and justice of peace (1935-48). Minister of minority affairs (1948-9) and police (1948-61). Member of *Knesset* (1949-61).
- Sidqi, Isma'il (1875-1950)** Egyptian statesman. Prime Minister (1930-3 and 1946-7).
- Stockwell, General Sir Hugh (1903-88)** British officer. Commander of brigade (1940-5). Commanding officer, 6th airborne division (1945-8). Commander of the British Army in northern Palestine (1948). Military Governor of Malaya (1952-4). Commanding officer, British Forces in Germany (1954-6). Commanded British troops in the war against Egypt in 1956. Military secretary of the Minister of Defence (1957-9). Deputy commander of NATO forces in Europe (1960-4).
- Sulh, Riad al- (1894-1951)** Lebanese Muslim politician. Intermittently prime minister (1943-51). Murdered while on a visit to Amman.
- Tabenkin, Izhak (1887-1971)** The leader of the *Hakibbutz Hameuchad* movement in Palestine. Born in Russia and immigrated in 1912. Lived in kibbutz Ein Harod (from 1921). A dominant figure in MAPAI (1930-44), *Achdut HaAvoda* (1944-8 and 1954-69) and MAPAM (1948-54).
- Tal, Abdullah al- (1919-?)** Jordanian officer. Born in Irbid. In 1948 took part in battles in Jerusalem area. Governor of Jerusalem (1948-9). In 1949 was involved in an abortive conspiracy against the king and escaped to Egypt, where he continued to conspire against the Jordanian regime. Returned to Jordan (1965), and retired from politics.
- Talal Ibn Abdullah (1935-72)** King of Jordan (1951-2). Abdicated due to mental illness in favour of his son, King Hussayn.
- Tantura** an Arab village on the Mediterranean coast, opposite the southern edge of Carmel ridge. Occupied in May 1948.
- Tarshikha** an Arab village in western Galilee, occupied in October 1948.

- Tayba** An Arab town in Israel, in Sharon area, near Tulkarm.
- Tel Aviv** A Jewish city in centre of Israel, founded as a suburb of Jaffa in 1909.
- Templars** A German Protestant sect, founded in the 19th century. Its members settled in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa and established several agricultural settlements in Palestine. Most were deported during World War II.
- Tene** codename of the *SHAY* in *Haganah*'s internal correspondence
- Tene/A** codename of the *SHAY*'s Arab section.
- Tiberias** A formerly mixed Jewish-Arab town on the western coast of lake Kinneret. The Arab population abandoned the city in April 1948.
- Tira** an Arab village in Carmel area, south of Haifa. Abandoned in 1948. At present, a Jewish town by the name of Tirat Hacarmel.
- Tirat Zvi** A religious kibbutz in Jordan Valley, south of Bisan. Founded in 1938.
- Tiroshi** Codename of the *SHAY* branch in the central district.
- Tmimi, Rafiq (1890–1957)** Palestinian Politician. Born in Nablus. A school headmaster in Jaffa (1920–5), Hebron (1925–9) and Jaffa (1929–39). Member of the AHC (1947) and the Palestinian National Council in Gaza (1948). Head of the AHC office in Damascus.
- Triangle** Nablus–Jenin–Tulkarm, an Israeli nickname to Samaria region.
- Tubas** an Arab village in Samaria mountains, east of Nablus.
- Tubi, Tawfiq (1922–)** Israeli Arab politician. Born in Haifa. In 1940 joined the Palestine communist party. Member of the Central Committee, the Political Bureau and the secretariat of Israel Communist Party (from 1948). Editor-in-chief of the communist newspaper in Arabic *al-Ittihad*. Member of *Knesset* (1948–90).
- Tulkarm** An Arab town in western Samaria.
- Tuqan, Sulayman (1890–1958)** Palestinian politician. Mayor of Nablus during the Mandatory period, founder and leader of the National Defence Party (1934). Led the anti-Hussayni opposition (1945–8). In 1949 joined the Jordanian administration, serving in various ministerial positions until he was murdered.
- Tzefa** Codename of the *SHAY* northern district branch until 1 April 1948.
- Tzurif** an Arab village in Judea mountains, west of Gush Etzion.
- Uja al-Khafir** A checkpoint on Israel–Egypt border. During the British Mandate, a regional centre for the Bedouin population. Now, a Jewish settlement by the name of Nitzana.
- Usha** A kibbutz in Zvulun valley, north-east of Haifa, founded in 1937.
- Ustasha** a Croatian nationalist organization (1929–45). After the occupation of Yugoslavia by the German army in 1941 this organization founded a puppet government that committed genocide against Jews and Serbs.
- Wahab, Shakib (1888–?)** Druze military leader. Born in Lebanon. Participated in the Druze revolt (1925–6) and in the 1936–9 rebellion in Palestine. Served in the Druze Regiment of the British Army (1942–4) and Commanded the ALA's Druze battalion in 1948.
- Weitz, Yosef (1890–1972)** Born in Russia and immigrated to Palestine in 1908. From 1932 Director of the JNF's Land and Forests Department. Director of Israel State Land Authority (1960–4).
- Yadin, Yigael (1917–84)** Israeli General, archaeologist and politician. Born in

- Jerusalem. Director of military operations (1947–9). Chief-of-staff (1949–52). Lectured at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Deputy Prime Minister (1978–81).
- Yad Mordechai** Kibbutz in the northern Negev, Between Gaza and Majdal. Founded in 1943, and named after Mordechai Anylewicz the leader of Warsaw ghetto uprising in the same year.
- Yanai** Codename of the *SHAY* and, later, *Da'at* branch in Europe.
- Yavne** The codename of the *SHAY* Jerusalem branch until 1 April 1948.
- Yazur** An Arab village in central Palestine, on the Jaffa–Jerusalem road. Abandoned in 1948. Now, a Jewish settlement by the name of Azor.
- Yechiam** Kibbutz in Western Galilee, east of Nahariya. Founded in 1946.
- Yeruham** Codename of the *SHAY* Jerusalem branch from 1 April 1948.
- Yibna** An Arab village in central Palestine, west of Rechovot. Abandoned in 1948. Now, a Jewish town by the name of Yavne.
- Yiftah** IDF *PALMAH* Brigade (no. 11). In 1948 fought in Galilee, Lydda–Latrun area and the Negev.
- Yirmiyahu** Codename of Moshe Zalitzky (Carmel) and Northern Front HQ.
- Yovav** Codename of David Karon, the *SHAY* officer in the Negev.
- Za'im, Husni** (1890–1949) Syrian military leader of Kurdish origin. Served as an officer in the Ottoman Army and in the *Troupes Speciales*. In late May 1948 appointed chief-of-staff. In March 1949, deposed president Kuwatli, dissolved parliament and established military rule. Murdered during Sami al-Hinawi's *coup d'etat* on 14 August of the same year.
- Zalitzky (Carmel), Moshe** (1911–) Israeli military leader and politician. Born in Poland and immigrated in 1924. Commander of the *Haganah* in Haifa (1946–7). Commanding officer of Carmeli brigade (1947–8) and the Northern Front (1948–9). Member of *Knesset* and Minister of Transport (1955–1969).
- Zarhi** Ezra Danin's Codename in the Jewish Agency's correspondence.
- Zarnuga** An Arab village in central Palestine. Abandoned in 1948. Now, a suburb of Rechovot.
- Zichron Ya'acov** a Jewish settlement in southern Carmel Mountain. Founded in 1882.
- Zuri** Codename of the *SHAY* northern district branch from 1 April 1948.

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