

Israel's "Plan Dalet": The Green Light for Zionism's Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine

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I find myself wondering how many of our present day leaders, President Obama in particular, are aware of what happened in Palestine that became Israel on 10 March 65 years ago today.

On that day in 1948, two months before Israel's unilateral declaration of independence in defiance of the will of the organized international community as it then was at the UN, Zionism's in-Palestine political and military leaders met in Tel Aviv to formally adopt PLAN DALET, the blueprint with operational military orders for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine.

Remembering



Deir Yassin

They did not and never would refer to the crime they authorised as ethnic cleansing. Their euphemism for it was "transfer".

As noted in an excellent anniversary briefing paper by IMEU (the American-founded Institute for Middle East Understanding), from the earliest days of modern political Zionism its advocates grappled with the problem of creating a Jewish majority state in a part of the world where Palestinian Arabs were the overwhelming majority of the population.

The earliest insider information we have on Zionism's thinking is from the diary of Theodor Herzl, the founding father of Zionism's colonial-like enterprise. He wrote:

“We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country... expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.”

Those words were committed to paper by Herzl in 1895 but they were not published (in other words they were suppressed) until 1962.

By August 1937 “transfer” was a discreet but hot topic for discussion at the 20th Zionist Congress in Zurich, Switzerland. All in attendance were aware that the process of dispossessing the Palestinian peasants (the *fellahin*) mainly by purchasing land from absentee owners had been underway for years. Referring to this David Ben-Gurion, who would become Israel’s first prime minister, said:

“You are no doubt aware of the (Jewish National Fund’s) activity in this respect. Now a transfer of a completely different scope will have to be carried out. In many parts of the country new settlement will not be possible without transferring the Arab *fellahin*...Jewish power (in Palestine), which grows steadily, will also increase our possibilities to carry out this transfer on a large scale.”

A year later Ben-Gurion told a meeting of the Jewish Agency that he supported compulsory transfer. He added:

“I don’t see anything immoral in it.”

In my view that’s a most revealing statement. It tells us – does it not? – that Ben-Gurion, the Zionist state’s founding father, was a man with no sense of what was morally right and wrong.

Joseph Weitz was the director of the Jewish National Fund’s Lands Department which was responsible for acquiring the land for Zionism’s enterprise in Palestine. One of his diary entries for December 1940 reads as follows:

“There is no way besides transferring the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, and to transfer all of them, save perhaps for (the Arabs of) Bethlehem, Nazareth and Old Jerusalem. Not one village must be left, not one (Bedouin) tribe. And only after this transfer will the country be able to absorb millions of our brothers and the Jewish problem will cease to exist. There is no other solution.”

Plan Dalet called for:

“Mounting operations against enemy population centres located inside or near our defensive system in order to prevent them from being used as bases by an active armed force. These operations can be divided into the following categories:

“Destruction of villages – setting fire to, blowing up, and planting mines in the debris – especially those population centres which are difficult to control continuously.

“Mounting search and control operations according to the following guidelines: encirclement of the village and conducting a search inside it. In the event of resistance, the armed force must be destroyed and the population must be expelled outside the

borders of the state.”

Before the Zionist state declared itself to be in existence on 14 May 1948, more than 200 Palestinian villages had already been emptied and about 175,000 Palestinians were already refugees. Some had fled in fear; others were expelled by Zionist forces.

The prime fear factor was the slaughter by Zionist terrorists of more than 100 Palestinian men, women and children at Deir Yassin near Jerusalem. As Arthur Koestler was to write, the “bloodbath” at Deir Yassin was “the psychologically decisive factor in the spectacular exodus of the Arabs from the Holy Land and the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem.”

It was, however, Menachem Begin, Zionism’s terror master and subsequently prime minister, who provided the most vivid description of how well the slaughter at Deir Yassin served Zionism’s cause. In his book *The Revolt*, he wrote:

“Panic overwhelmed the Arabs of Eretz Israel. Kolonia village, which had previously repulsed every attack of the Haganah (the underground Jewish military organization that became the Israeli Army), was evacuated overnight and fell without further fighting. Beit-Iksa was also evacuated. These two places overlooked the road and their fall, together with the capture of Kastel by the Haganah, made it possible to keep open the road to Jerusalem. In the rest of the country, too, the Arabs began to flee in terror, even before they clashed with Jewish forces... The legend of Deir Yassin helped us in particular in the saving of Tiberias and the conquest of Haifa... All the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter. The Arabs began fleeing in panic, shouting ‘Deir Yassin!’”

Three decades later, in an article for *The American Zionist*, Mordechai Nisan of the Truman Research Centre of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem expressed his concern about the failure to understand the major significance of terrorism in the struggle for Jewish sovereignty. He wrote: “Without terror it is unlikely that Jewish independence would have been achieved when it was.”

After the Zionist state declared itself to be in existence, its government set up an unofficial body known as the “Transfer Committee”. Its job was to oversee the destruction of Palestinian towns and villages and/or their repopulation with Jews. The purpose of this Zionist strategy was to prevent dispossessed Palestinians returning to their homes.

By 1949 more than 400 Palestinian towns and villages had been systematically destroyed or taken over by Israeli Jews; and at least 750,000 Palestinians were refugees, dispossessed of their land, their homes and their rights.

In his book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Ilan Pappé, Israel’s leading “revisionist” (meaning honest) historian, documents in detail Zionism’s systematic reign of terror which, from December 1947 to January 1949, included 31 massacres. (Deir Yassin was only the first). In a videoed conversation with me in 2008, which can be viewed in the *Hart of the Matter* series on my site (www.alanhart.net), Ilan said this:

“Probably more surprising than anything else was not the silence of the world as Zionist ethnic cleansing was taking place in Palestine, but the silence of the Jews in Palestine. They knew what had happened to Jews in Nazi Europe, and some might even have seen it for themselves, yet they had no scruples in doing almost the same thing to the Palestinians.”

On this 65th anniversary of the authorization of the ethnic cleaning of Palestine, the questions I would like to see put to our leaders today, President Obama in particular, are the following:

Are you aware of Plan Dalet?

If not, why not?

If you are aware of it, could it not said be said that your refusal to call and hold Zionism to account for its crimes makes you (and your predecessors) complicit in those crimes by default?

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