



FALSIFYING THE RECORD: A FRESH LOOK AT ZIONIST DOCUMENTATION OF 1948

BENNY MORRIS

In trying to produce or maintain an unblemished record, nations and political movements sometimes rewrite not only their history but also, it appears, the documents upon which that historiography must necessarily be based. The Zionist movement and the State of Israel are no exceptions; indeed, they may be among the more accomplished practitioners of this strange craft.

Benny Morris is the author of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990; expanded edition 1994), and *Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). The present article is excerpted from a much longer essay covering documents from 1937 as well as 1948. The section pertaining to 1937 was published in *Ha'Aretz* on 4 February 1994 and in the Spring 1994 issue of our sister publication, *Revue d'études Palestiniennes*.

The author would like to thank Dr. Michael Heyman, former director of the Central Zionist Archives, and other officials of the archive; Uri Elgom, director of the Israel Defense Forces Archive; and the archivists of the David Ben-Gurion Archive at Sdeh Boqer, the HaShomer Archive in Kfar Gil'adi, and the HaShomer HaTza'ir Archive in Giv'at Haviva for helping him find much of the material for this essay.

This rewriting has revolved around the most sensitive subject of Zionist history—the conflict with the Arabs, and especially those events and policies in which the Zionist side thought or acted in a manner that could be construed as immoral. The Israeli archives' declassification of most state and political party papers during the past decade or so enables the historian to look afresh at the Zionist records. Much which has met the eye until now comes up short, if not downright mendacious.

This paper will examine a selection of documents, either central to Zionist historiography or revealing about major events, produced in a key, indeed revolutionary, year in the Zionists' conflict with the Arabs—1948. The first Arab-Israeli war, which erupted in December 1947 and formally ended in the summer of 1949, changed everything. The British withdrew from Palestine; the Arab world was thoroughly and humiliatingly defeated; the State of Israel was established, transforming the geopolitics of the Middle East; and Palestinian society was crushed and, in large part, dispossessed and driven into exile.

The events of 1948 spawned a huge body of documentation, the bulk of which came from the more literate and better organized Israeli side. Since then countless chroniclers, journalists, and historians, in part using this documentation, have produced a vast literature about the singular events of that year. Most of the documents, of course, were unavailable until the 1980s; some (primarily cabinet protocols and some military and intelligence records) remain classified.

Among the more important documents covering that year are three diaries—those of Yosef Weitz (1890-1972), David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), and Yosef Nahmani (1891-1965). We shall also briefly look at the protocols of two important meetings—that of the Israeli cabinet on 16 June and that of the Political Committee of Mapam on 11 November 1948.

Yosef Weitz's Diary

Born in Russia, Weitz immigrated to Palestine in 1908 and became a major figure in all aspects of Zionist land purchasing and settlement. He directed the Lands Department of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) from 1932 until 1967 and was a member of the JNF directorate from 1950. During 1948, while not a major decision maker, he sat on the crossroads of power when it came to the critical issues of land and Arabs. He represented the JNF on the Committee of the Directorates of the National Institutions, chaired the Negev Committee (the civil governorate of the Negev during the war), and sat on the Transfer Committees of 1937-38 and 1948-49, which deliberated the fate of Palestine's Arabs.

Weitz kept a diary from 1927 until 1964, jotting down his thoughts, conversations, and actions almost daily in a succession of small notebooks. In 1965, he published the diary, along with letters to his wife and children, in five volumes, entitled *Yomani Ve'Igrotai LaBanim* (My diary and letters to the [i.e., my] sons).¹ Journalists and historians subsequently made extensive use of these volumes.

The original handwritten notebooks became available to researchers only in the 1980s.² Even a cursory examination reveals significant differences between the notebooks and the published diary.³ As Weitz corrected sentences and paragraphs for style, he excised some trivial details. But more importantly, many passages connected with Jewish policy towards the Arabs, especially with regard to transfer, were radically changed or omitted from the published version.

In preparing the notebooks for publication, Weitz ran lines through words and sentences and added passages in the spaces between the lines, but he left the original wording legible. It is not impossible that he wished the original version eventually to be salvaged by historians, since he was well known for his honesty and candor. (Indeed, his family maintains that of all the Yishuv's officials concerned with land purchasing and land confiscation, he was the only one not to have emerged with any personal gain.) Some of the differences between the original notebooks and the published version are worth examining for the light they shed both on 1948 and on the vagaries of the documentation from that war.

Among the first problems tackled by Weitz after the outbreak of the war was that of Arab tenant-farmers who lived on Jewish-owned land. During the Mandate, the British authorities had often prevented the Jews from evicting Arab tenant-farmers from lands bought by the JNF from Arab landowners. The outbreak of Jewish-Arab hostilities, as Weitz saw it, offered a golden opportunity to solve the problem. Weitz's

While Weitz's notebook entries abound with references to population transfer, such references are almost completely absent from the published diary.

activities in this regard were part and parcel of his transfer approach to the Arab problem, and as such, were highly sensitive. Hence, while his notebook entries abound with references to population transfer, such references are almost completely absent from the published diary.

On 12 January 1948, six weeks into the war, Weitz travelled to Yoqne'am, an agricultural settlement southeast of Haifa, where he discussed with Yehuda Burstein, the local Haganah intelligence officer, "the question of the eviction of [Arab] tenant-farmers from Yoqne'am and [neighboring] Daliyat [al-Ruha] with the methods now acceptable. The matter has been left in the hands of the defense people [the Haganah] and during the afternoon I spoke with the [Haganah] deputy district commander."⁴

This whole passage was omitted from the published diary, as was all reference to Weitz's "final discussion" on 22 February—apparently with JNF staff—about "the clearing [of tenant-farmers off] of our lands in Yoqne'am, Daliyat [al-Ruha], Qira wa Qamun and the south, and the means that must be employed."⁵

A similar problem existed north of Haifa, in the Zevulun Valley, where Ghawarina bedouin clans continued to occupy lands near the kibbutzim 'Ein Hamifratz and Kfar Masaryk. A member of Kfar Masaryk came to see Weitz in Tel Aviv and complained, "astonished," that these bedouin had not yet been evicted. Weitz promptly wrote a letter "to the [Haganah] commander there and to [Mordechai] Shachevitz [Weitz's land-purchasing agent in the area] to move quickly in this matter."⁶ A week later, Shachevitz informed Weitz that "most of the bedouins in the [Haifa] bay [area] had gone, [but] some 15-20 men had stayed behind to guard [the clans' property]. I demanded that they also be evicted and that the fields be plowed over so that no trace of them remains."⁷ Again, no trace of any of this is to be found in Weitz's published diary entries.

Weitz's prodding (which dovetailed with a general mood of greater militancy in the Yishuv) was quickly to have effect. On 26 April, he recorded that the northern part of the Zevulun Valley was completely clear of bedouin, their shacks destroyed, and their fields plowed over. But at the southern end of the valley "the operation must still be completed. In war, act as befits war." Weitz included this passage in his published entry for 26 April,⁸ but he omitted the following sentence: "We must be rid of these blackmailers and parasites."⁹ The following day Weitz "ordered" representatives of the two kibbutzim "to finish the job within five days."¹⁰ The published diary entry does not record the order. The following month, in a letter to JNF chairman Avraham Granovsky (Granott), Weitz wrote that the bay was at last completely clear of bedouin "and there is almost no trace of those who had trespassed on our lands."¹¹

Weitz took a similar tack regarding the Bet She'an (Baysan) Valley, where there were Jewish-owned lands inhabited by Arabs as well as state-owned and Arab-owned lands which the JNF coveted. On 4 May, he complained to the local Jewish leaders that "the valley was still seething with enemies . . . I said—the eviction [of the Arabs] from the valley is the order of the day."¹² The passage was deleted from the published diary.

In June, Weitz devoted a great deal of time to the self-appointed "Transfer Committee,"¹³ that he had founded the previous month and which he chaired. The committee's aim was to ensure that those Arabs who had left the country would no longer be able to return and, where possible, to facilitate further Arab flight. The committee functioned as a lobby vis-à-vis the cabinet ministers and the government bureaucracies,

including the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). At the same time, the committee itself organized a number of operations geared to promoting these ends, including the destruction of newly-abandoned Arab villages. Weitz sought official endorsement of the committee's existence and aims from the cabinet, but Ben-Gurion temporized: While Ben-Gurion was at one with the committee's purposes and, in private, endorsed its activities, he was loath to accord it official recognition and authorization. He did not want the Jewish state—or himself—clearly and officially identified with a policy of expulsion.

Hence, where Weitz's and Ben-Gurion's activities and schedules intersected that summer, we find severe elisions in both men's diaries. Ben-Gurion, ever wary of the historian who would at some point cull his diary, simply exercised self-censorship as he jotted down each entry; Weitz, less sophisticated, left the tampering to the 1960s, when he prepared the notebooks for publication.

The two men met before noon on 5 June in Ben-Gurion's office in Tel Aviv. Weitz presented a three-page memorandum, "Retroactive Transfer, A Scheme for the Solution of the Arab Question in the State of Israel,"¹⁴ in which the Transfer Committee proposed measures designed to block the Arab refugees' return, to facilitate the refugees' resettlement in Arab countries, and to encourage emigration by Arabs still in the country. Among the measures proposed were the "destruction of [Arab] villages"; the prevention of Arab cultivation and harvesting of crops; the renovation of specific villages and their settlement by Jews; the settlement of Jews in abandoned Arab urban neighborhoods; and the use of propaganda to prevent a refugee return. The committee also proposed purchasing land from Arabs willing to leave, negotiating with Arab countries about orderly resettlement of the refugees, and assessing the worth of abandoned Arab property (presumably with an eye to paying out compensation).

According to the original Weitz diary entry for 5 June, Weitz had informed Ben-Gurion that the committee had already begun "here and there destroying villages."¹⁵ In the published diary, Weitz had amended this to "here and there 'improving' villages" (the single quotes presumably designed to signal his more perceptive readers what was actually meant).¹⁶ In both versions, Weitz wrote that Ben-Gurion "gave his approval" to this work. Indeed, according to Weitz, Ben-Gurion had not only approved the "whole policy," but had thought that the proposed actions in Israel (destruction of villages, prevention of harvesting, settlement of Jews in abandoned sites) should take precedence over efforts to resettle the refugees elsewhere (meaning negotiating with Arab countries about resettlement, assessing compensation, and so forth). What Ben-Gurion meant was that the Yishuv should first make sure that the refugees' return was physically barred (razed villages meant that they would have nowhere to which they could return); later, perhaps, Israel

could worry about compensation and how to arrange orderly resettlement elsewhere.¹⁷

Such, at least, was Ben-Gurion's reaction to the Transfer Committee's proposals according to Weitz (and there is no reason to doubt the truthfulness of Weitz's account). But how did Ben-Gurion record the self-same meeting? "It is too early and untimely . . . to discuss with the Arab Governments help in resettling these Arabs in the Arab states Care should be taken now to cultivate and settle these villages until the end of the war . . .," he wrote. A "work battalion" should be set up to "clean up these villages, cultivate them [i.e., their lands] and settle [Jews in] them . . ." Ben-Gurion preferred that this work be organized by a nongovernmental (JNF-Jewish Agency) committee rather than directly by the government.¹⁸ There is no mention at all in Ben-Gurion's diary entry of three of the key Transfer Committee proposals—the destruction of villages, the prevention of Arab cultivation and harvesting, and the purchase of Arab land (to encourage emigration). Indeed, nowhere is there any mention, even oblique, of the Transfer Committee's existence. So great was Ben-Gurion's care to avoid leaving footprints of his own involvement in the committee's activities that on 16 June he recorded in his diary the destruction, recent and ongoing, of a series of Arab villages ("Mughar, near Gedera, Fajja, Biyar Adeis . . . Miska . . ."), without mentioning the source of the information, who was responsible, or in what connection the destruction was being carried out.¹⁹

A similar pattern emerges regarding the high-level meeting in Ben-Gurion's office on 18 August.²⁰ The meeting had been called to discuss the problem of the Arab refugees and ways to prevent their return. Ben-Gurion, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan, Minority Affairs Minister Bechor Shitrit, the OC IDF Military Government General Elimelekh Avner, Finance Ministry director general David Horowitz, and a handful of senior officials, including Weitz and special adviser at the Foreign Ministry Ezra Danin attended. Weitz, repeating his proposals of 5 June, spoke of the need to destroy Arab villages "so that they do not attract their refugees to return," to settle Jews in other abandoned villages, and to cultivate abandoned Arab fields. Both Shitrit and Weitz spoke of the need to buy land. As Shitrit put it, "There are many Arabs who wish to leave—they must be found and bought out." Kaplan and Horowitz opposed destroying villages; Kaplan even expressed reservations about settling Jews in Arab houses. Ben-Gurion said that it was best that as many Arabs as possible not return.²¹

Ben-Gurion's three-and-a-half-page diary description of that meeting completely omits mention of Weitz's proposals to destroy the villages and prevent Arab harvesting. It also fails to mention Weitz's and Shitrit's proposal to encourage Arab emigration through offers to purchase land and his own statement in favor of as few returnees as possible.²²

By the same token, in the published version of his diary, Weitz almost consistently omitted what he had written about organizing the destruction of the Arab villages. Generalities and coyness abound. For example, on 10 June he had written in his notebook, "Meanwhile, we are continuing our activities. [Yoav] Zuckerman [Weitz's land-purchasing agent in the southern coastal plain] today arranged the destruction in [i.e., of the village of] Mughar which will begin this morning."²³ This passage was abridged in the published version and rendered: "Meanwhile, the temporary [transfer] committee continues its activities."²⁴ The notebooks also contain progress reports, by Danin and Zuckerman, on the destruction (respectively) of Fajja and Mughar²⁵ but these were omitted from the published version.²⁶ But, curiously, Weitz included a paragraph on his 15 June visit to Mughar and carefully described how three tractors were busy demolishing the houses.²⁷ Clearly, the publication of the diary entailed a struggle between Weitz's wish to hide things which could be used in propaganda against Israel, and his desire to publicize his role in various, to his mind crucial, state-building activities. It was usually the propagandistic interest that won out, but not always.

Ben-Gurion's Diary

A retired senior Israeli official once described a meeting in the early 1950s with David Ben-Gurion:

You sat across from him and talked, and all you saw was the top of his head, with his two bushes of hair moving left and right. His face was to the paper and he was busy scribbling away. When he stopped scribbling and raised his head—and at last you saw his face—the interview was over.²⁸

So were produced Ben-Gurion's diaries, his almost daily, real-time record of events, conversations, and thoughts over five decades. They have furnished many scholars of Zionism and Israeli and Middle Eastern history with much of the grist for their works. A virtual treasure trove for the historian, one would have thought. But is it?²⁹

We have already noted some omissions in Ben-Gurion's diary entries for 1948: Things happened and were said in Ben-Gurion's presence, or by Ben-Gurion, which simply do not appear or are distorted in his entries. This is true for a number of sensitive subjects, particularly the expulsion and killing of Arabs, and the Arab exodus in general. Indeed, Ben-Gurion's discretion was such that Israeli government officials, declassifying the diary in the late 1970s and 1980s, found very little that needed to be kept secret. Altogether, in the thousand or so pages for 1948 there are only about a dozen items that were deemed secret and were blacked out. Most involve names of spies or of officials suspected of criminal or morally inappropriate behavior; here and there, lone

words or phrases are classified. In only three or four places are full paragraphs blacked out. Essentially, Ben-Gurion had exercised effective self-censorship decades before the official censors arrived on the scene.

Ben-Gurion spent almost all of 1–2 January 1948 consulting with his top advisers on Arab (and related political and military) affairs, including Ya'akov Dori, the Haganah's chief of staff (soon to be named the first chief of general staff of the IDF); Yigael Yadin, the Haganah's chief of operations; Yisrael Galili, the chief of the Haganah's National Staff; Yigal Allon, the commander of the Palmah (the Haganah's elite shock companies); Moshe Dayan, then a Haganah Arab affairs expert; Moshe Shertok (Sharett), the director of the Jewish Agency's Political Department (and soon to become Israel's first foreign minister); Reuven Shiloah, a senior Jewish Agency official (soon to be the founder-director of the Mossad); Ezra Danin, senior officer of the Haganah; and Gad Machnes, another Arab affairs expert (soon to be named director general of the Ministry of Minority Affairs). The meeting was called to discuss developments in the Palestinian Arab community and possible Yishuv responses. There are two main sources for what was said at this important consultative and policy-determining get-together: thirteen pages of Ben-Gurion's diary and an eighty-one-page stenographer's typescript of the proceedings that has recently surfaced among Galili's papers.³⁰ The differences between what was said according to the stenographic record and what Ben-Gurion jotted down in his diary are few but telling.

Machnes kicked off the discussion by stating: ". . . The Arabs were not ready when they began the disturbances. Moreover, most of the Arab public did not want them."³¹ Ben-Gurion, in his diary, rendered this passage thus: "The Arabs were not ready"—completely omitting Machnes's opinion that "most" of the Arabs did not want the disturbances.³² Machnes went on to enjoin the Haganah to retaliate against Arab provocations "with strength and brutality," even hitting women and children. Ben-Gurion duly conveyed this in his diary entry. But he had also queried, "Hitting certain personalities [i.e., Arab political leaders] as well?" To which Machnes responded: "Yes, also hitting certain personalities, but after thorough consideration."³³ In other words, Ben-Gurion had asked whether the Haganah should add political assassination to its retaliatory repertoire; Machnes had answered in the affirmative. This exchange is completely omitted from Ben-Gurion's diary. Presumably, he had preferred not to leave evidence that he had suggested or condoned political assassination. Ben-Gurion similarly omitted Yigal Allon's statement supporting political assassinations: ". . . Eliminating a few personalities at the right time—is very impor-

Essentially, Ben-Gurion had exercised effective self-censorship decades before the official censors arrived on the scene.

tant." (Allon had specifically proposed assassinating a leading Palestinian figure visiting France, but the operation was never carried out.)³⁴

Two other entries in Ben-Gurion's diary for 1948 are worth examining. The first deals with his meeting with Weitz on 26 September (before Operation Hiram and just after the publication of UN Mediator Count Folke Bernadotte's peace plan proposing that the Jews be given the Galilee and the Arabs the Negev Desert). Weitz raised the problem of the Arab refugees living in the northern Galilee pocket still being held by the Arab Salvation (or Liberation) Army: These refugees would soon be joined, he argued, by other refugees then living in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. If the area were eventually transferred to Israeli rule—as provided for in Bernadotte's plan—then Israel would end up having to absorb a great many refugees. Weitz proposed that these refugees—and others, living in the south, around Faluja—be "harassed" into moving off northward and eastward, into Lebanon and Jordanian-held territory. The harassment, he proposed, should be overseen by Reuven Shiloah, assisted by Weitz's Transfer Committee, and carried out in part by Lebanese and Syrian gendarmes (who would be offered appropriate financial inducements). According to Weitz, "[Ben-Gurion] noted down [my proposal] and promised to act in accordance with it."³⁵ In Ben-Gurion's diary there is no mention of agreeing with or accepting Weitz's proposal. All we are told is that "Weitz asks that I issue orders to Shiloah." How Ben-Gurion responded is left unstated.³⁶

A few weeks later, on 21 October, Danin, who had just been appointed special adviser on Middle East affairs at the Foreign Ministry, came to see Ben-Gurion. Danin proposed setting up a Palestinian Arab puppet state in the West Bank (as an alternative to Jordan gaining sovereignty over the territory). But Ben-Gurion was not interested in any more "adventures," he said: "The Arabs of the Land of Israel, they have but one function left—to run away.' With that he [Ben-Gurion] got up and ended the conversation."³⁷ Ben-Gurion's intent was clear: Since he expected that the IDF would conquer the West Bank shortly and that the inhabitants would flee, he saw no point in cutting a deal with them. Ben-Gurion's diary record of the meeting mentions only that Danin had just seen a leading Tulkarm anti-Husayni notable. He completely fails to record Danin's proposal or his own response.³⁸

Yosef Nahmani's Diary

Yosef Nahmani, one of Weitz's subordinates, was director of the JNF office in Eastern Galilee between 1935 and his death in 1965. A legendary figure in the 1910s, he had been a senior member of HaShomer, the Yishuv's first self-defense organization; in the 1920s and 1930s, a key Haganah officer; and, from 1927 until 1950, a member of the Tiberias City Council.

Following Nahmani's death, Weitz—in a gesture of friendship—sifted through his papers and edited and published a commemorative volume entitled *Yosef Nahmani, Ish Hagalil* (Yosef Nahmani, man of the Galilee).³⁹ The 310-page volume contains articles about Nahmani, letters and articles by Nahmani, and more than 100 pages of excerpts from the yearly desk diaries he kept from 1935 until 1965.⁴⁰

The original diary, especially the lengthy entries for 1948, are a mine of information about what went on in Tiberias and in Eastern Galilee in general during the first Arab-Israeli war.⁴¹ However, the excerpts provided by Weitz in *Nahmani* do not reflect this. Weitz completely omitted entries of major importance and abridged other entries in a manner clearly guided by political and propagandistic intent. The result is a laundered "document."

On 29 November 1947 the UN General Assembly passed the resolution supporting the partition of Palestine into two states, one Arab and the other Jewish (with Jerusalem and Bethlehem to be included in a special international zone). The Palestinian Arabs rejected the resolution, launching a general strike and sporadic ambushes against Jewish traffic and attacks on Jewish passersby in the mixed towns and against isolated Israeli settlements. The Jewish militia organizations—primarily the Haganah (the Defense Organization), and secondarily the right-wing Irgun Zva'i Le'umi (IZL) and Lohamei Herut Yisrael (LHI)—responded in kind. The country, though still nominally ruled by Britain, drifted toward full-scale civil war.

On 30 December 1947, a squad of IZL terrorists threw a bomb at a bus stop outside the oil refinery complex just north of Haifa, killing about half a dozen Arabs, some of them workers at the plant, and wounding others. Within hours, in a spontaneous act of vengeance, Arab workers at the plant turned on their Jewish colleagues with knives and sticks, slaughtering thirty-nine of them. Nahmani jotted down in his diary (on 30 December):

... [I] was told about the bomb that Jews threw into a crowd of Arab workers from the refinery and there are dead. The Arabs [then] attacked the Jewish clerks ... and killed some of them ... This incident depressed me greatly. After all, the Arabs [in Haifa] had declared a truce and why cause the death of innocent people and again ignite the Arabs, so that they will have no choice except to respond against the Jews and the matter [i.e., the cycle of violence] will be without end. ... The unchecked and irresponsible [Jewish] actions will lead to a catastrophe and will incite against us those [Arabs] who have [so far] stood on the sidelines and those who have sympathized with our [Zionist] enterprise.⁴²

Weitz, in *Nahmani*, completely omitted this passage (though he did include a brief excerpt from Nahmani's entry for 30 December—dealing with other matters altogether). However, he published part of Nahmani's entry for 31 December, reading: "The disaster that struck

the workers at the Haifa oil refinery depressed me greatly.”⁴³ For Israeli readers in 1969, this passage, in the way it appears, could only be taken to refer to the massacre of the Jewish refinery workers and not to the killing of the Arab workers at the bus stop that preceded it. Yet it is clear from the entry from 30 December that what had exercised Nahmani was the (Jewish-initiated) “cycle of violence” rather than just the massacre of the Jews. Certainly his “depression” had not been caused only by the massacre of the Jews.

Most of Nahmani’s attention and concern during the following months focused on events on his home turf, Tiberias, a mixed city with 6,000 Jews and 2,000 Arabs. During January–March 1948, occasional shots were traded along the seam between the neighborhoods of the two communities. Nahmani was active in efforts to keep the peace. But while the local Arab leaders “want peace . . . and showed great maturity . . . the people responsible [on our side, i.e., the Haganah commanders] do not understand the seriousness of the situation . . . I fear that it will be Jews who will cause the outbreak [of serious violence] in Tiberias,” he wrote in his diary on 4 February 1948.⁴⁴ “The aggressive spirit among Tiberias’s Jews will bring about a disaster . . .,” he wrote two days later.⁴⁵ “Our people continue [to carry out] irresponsible actions . . .,” he wrote on 10 March.⁴⁶ The Sephardi Jews, in particular, with their “boastful” talk, badly hurt the Arabs, who “only want peace,” he wrote on 17 March.⁴⁷

“Heading the security [forces, that is, the Haganah in Eastern Galilee] were young men who had contempt for death and had in their heads only military thoughts and plans . . . They laugh at the need to maintain [good] relations with Arab neighbours . . . They believe simply that there is a need to win using all means and then matters will sort themselves out . . .,” Nahmani wrote on 22 March 1948. That day he recorded the story of the Haganah (Palmah) attack on the nearby village of al-Husayniyya on the night of 16 March, in which dozens of Arabs were killed. He charged the Jewish troops with wanton cruelty.⁴⁸ In the final days before the Jewish conquest of Arab Tiberias on 16–18 April, Nahmani recorded the Haganah’s rejection of all negotiations and its attack on the neighboring small village of Khirbat Nasir al-Din, in which a number of Arab civilians, including children, were reportedly massacred.⁴⁹ There is no hint of any of these sentiments in the diary excerpts published by Weitz. Indeed, there is no mention at all of the Tiberias Arabs’ desire for peace and of the Haganah’s “aggressiveness,” or of al-Husayniyya or Khirbat Nasir al-Din.

During the final hours before the fall of Arab Tiberias, the Arab notables and Nahmani tried desperately to arrange a truce. The effort was vetoed by the Haganah command; the Jews were ordered by Haganah headquarters in Tel Aviv to refrain from negotiation. Subsequently, on 18 April, Nahmani made a last-minute bid to halt the British-organized

Arab exodus from the town. Again, the Haganah vetoed any meeting with the Arab leadership.⁵⁰ None of these events is mentioned in Weitz's published excerpts. The entry in Weitz's *Nahmani* for 18 April, for example, merely records the departure of Tiberias's Arab population. *Nahmani*'s sorrow at the event, expressed in the original diary entry, is omitted.

Within hours of the Arabs' departure, "the Jewish mob descended upon [the evacuated Arab area] and began to pillage the shops . . ." ⁵¹ The looting continued on 22 April, with Haganah contingents taking the lead, the townspeople—"old people and women, regardless of age . . ."—following. "Shame covers my face and [I] would like to spit on the city and leave it," recorded *Nahmani* on 22 April.⁵² Needless to say, not a whiff of any of this appears in Weitz's published excerpts.

Let us now turn to the second half of the war. On 29-31 October 1948, the IDF, the Haganah's successor organization, in Operation Hiram, conquered the last large Arab-held pocket of the Galilee. The operation was characterized by a series of atrocities against the Arab civilian population. On 6 November, *Nahmani* toured the newly-conquered area, along with Minority Affairs Minister Shitrit. They were accompanied by Immanuel ("Mano") Friedman, the ministry's representative in the Galilee, who briefed them on "the cruel acts of our soldiers," which *Nahmani* duly recorded in his diary:

In Safsaf, after . . . the inhabitants had raised a white flag, the [soldiers] collected and separated the men and women, tied the hands of fifty-sixty *fellahin* [peasants] and shot and killed them and buried them in a pit. Also, they raped several women At Eilaboun and Farradiya the soldiers had been greeted with white flags and rich food, and afterwards had ordered the villagers to leave, with their women and children. When the [villagers] had begun to argue . . . [the soldiers] had opened fire and after some thirty people were killed, had begun to lead the rest [towards Lebanon] . . . In Saliha, where a white flag had been raised[,] . . . they had killed about sixty-seventy men and women. Where did they come by such a measure of cruelty, like Nazis? . . . Is there no more humane way of expelling the inhabitants than by such methods . . . ?⁵³

None of this appears in Weitz's *Nahmani*. Indeed, there is no reference to the conquered Arab villages of the Galilee. Rather, Weitz preferred to publish the following excerpt from *Nahmani*'s entry for 6 November:

In El Aadeisse [one of fifteen Lebanese villages also conquered in Operation Hiram by the IDF] we met hundreds of Jewish tourists from the Hula Valley who also came to see the villages. The Arabs of Aadeisse asked that the Israeli army not leave the [Lebanese] villages that had been conquered and had surrendered to them, as they did not want to return to Lebanese rule.⁵⁴

Thus, what Weitz gives us is not *Nahmani*'s description of Jewish massacres of Arab civilians (the bulk of the original 6 November diary en-

try) but a report about (Lebanese) Arab villagers beseeching the Israeli army to stay and to keep them under Israeli control.

(But Weitz, to be fair, was not a paragon of the laundering arts. For example, most of the original diary entries for 13 and 14 November, in which Nahmani told of his two meetings with Israel's president-elect Chaim Weizmann, who was vacationing in Tiberias, do appear in *Nahmani*.⁵⁵ Weizmann, apparently having heard of IDF maltreatment of Arabs, was "very depressed" and sought Nahmani's advice. Nahmani could offer none. The two men commiserated and agreed that they were powerless to do anything about the IDF's behavior, which was the government's, meaning Ben-Gurion's, responsibility.)

I would like now to turn to another type of document, protocols or transcripts of meetings of important political bodies, the Israeli cabinet and the Political Committee of Mapam, which was the second largest party in the cabinet and on the Israeli political scene in 1948.

The Israeli Cabinet Meeting of 16 June 1948

The protocols of Israeli cabinet meetings remain classified,⁵⁶ but versions of what transpired at a number of important sessions have been published, principally by Ben-Gurion himself.

The cabinet meeting of 16 June 1948 was one of that war's most important. It was at that session that, without a formal vote, agreement was reached among the thirteen ministers of Israel's "Provisional Government" to bar a refugee return. The decision in effect sealed the fate of the 700,000 or so Palestinians who had become, or were to become, dis-

Despite the cabinet meeting's importance, its decisions were never published.

possessed exiles, leaving for future generations the nigh insoluble burden of the "Palestinian refugee problem." The decision carried moral undertones and political meanings that could be construed as embarrassing. Hence, despite its importance, the decision itself was never published and the statements made at the meeting—principally by Ben-Gurion and secondarily by Sharett—were to undergo successive rewritings to conform to accepted international political norms of behavior and speech.

In 1952, Ben-Gurion published a collection of speeches from 1948 entitled *Behilahem Yisrael* (As Israel fought).⁵⁷ He included in it a version of his speech in the cabinet of 16 June, in which he said that the UN resolution of 29 November 1947 was a dead letter, and that the fate of Palestine and the contours of the State of Israel would be determined by military force. He severely criticized the massive looting that had characterized Israeli conquest of most Arab villages and towns. But this was the only "moral shortcoming" in Israeli behavior during the war

that he identified; he made no mention of massacres, individual killing, rapes, and expulsions.⁵⁸

He identified the Arab exodus as one of the principal events of the war and quoted himself as saying, "... as to allowing back the Arabs, I do not accept the version [formula] that [we should] not encourage their return—I believe that their return must be prevented." He went on to say that Jaffa, most of which had been abandoned by its Arab inhabitants in April and May, should be settled with Jews:

Jaffa will become a Jewish city Bringing back the Arabs to Jaffa is not just but rather is foolish. Those who had gone to war against us—let them carry the responsibility after having lost. We will not now issue statements about what will be after the war—because it will depend on how the war ends. But how the war ends depends greatly on what happens now, during the [First] Truce. If the Arabs return now to Abu Kabir [a suburb of Jaffa] and to Jaffa, and the war is renewed—the chances of the war ending as we wish it to end will decrease. And we must prevent at all cost their return meanwhile It will not be just if they demand of us to allow back to Abu Kabir and Jaffa those who tried to destroy us. They wanted war—and they must be responsible [for the consequences].⁵⁹

In 1969, Ben-Gurion, who had retired from government six years before, published a potted history of Israel's establishment and early years in two volumes entitled *Medinat Yisrael Hamehudeshet* (The restored state of Israel).⁶⁰ He devoted part of a chapter to the 16 June cabinet session, kicking off with a précis of Sharett's speech. Sharett described the Arab exodus as "the most surprising event," a "momentous event in world history and Jewish history." "Can we imagine to ourselves a return to the *status quo ante*?" the foreign minister asked rhetorically. "They are not returning [or "they will not return"—"*hem einam hozrim*"], and that is our policy: they are not returning."⁶¹

Ben-Gurion provided a version of his own speech somewhat different from the one included in his 1952 volume. He favored giving work to the Arabs who had remained in Jaffa (about 3,000 of the original 70,000):

I believe that they should receive the same wage as a Jewish worker. An Arab has the right also to be elected president of the state But war is war. We did not make [i.e., launch] the war. . . . Jaffa made war upon us. So did Haifa. And I do not want those who fled to return. Their return now must be prevented . . . [and] I will be for their not returning also after the war.⁶²

Interestingly, in *Medinat Yisrael* Ben-Gurion did not republish his statement that "Jaffa will become a Jewish city." Perhaps he felt in 1969 that Israel—or the world—had become somewhat more sensitive than it had been in 1952 to anything smacking of racism.

At any event, though the protocols of the cabinet meetings of 1948 remain closed, the Israel State Archives has kindly enabled me to go over the crucial paragraph dealing with the question of a possible refu-

gee return—and it is somewhat different from both the *Behilahem* and *Medinat Yisrael* versions. It reads:

But war is war. We did not start the war. They made the war, Jaffa went to war against us. So did Haifa. And I do not want those who fled to return. I do not want them again to make war. That would be not just but foolish. Do we have to bring back the enemy, so that he again fights us in Beit Shean? No! You made war—[and] you lost. I am not obliged to maintain [the existence of] Beit Shean [an Arab town which was at that very moment in large part being levelled by the IDF]. They lost and fled. Their return now must be prevented And I will oppose their return also after the war⁶³

The transcripts of certain crucial political gatherings of the pre-1948 period—for example, the Twentieth Zionist Congress of August 1937 which dealt with the Peel Commission's partition recommendation and the issue of transfer—were laundered on their way to publication.⁶⁴ But occasionally, as we shall see, much as Ben-Gurion “edited” his diary as he was writing it, the stenographers and participants in important political meetings also occasionally “laundered” the proceedings as they unfolded, in real time. Sensitive items simply failed to make it into the record *as it was being written* (apparently as a result of instructions from the leading participants).⁶⁵

A good example of this laundering process is the record of the meeting on 11 November 1948 of the Political Committee of Mapam. The participants first discussed immigration to Israel from North Africa and the Eastern Bloc, and the establishment of Zionist self-defense groups in Communist countries, particularly Romania. They then moved on to discuss the atrocities committed by the IDF in Operations Yoav (in the south) and Hiram (in the Galilee) during late October 1948. The stenographic record of the meeting⁶⁶ omits much of what was said. Fortunately, one of the participants, Aharon Cohen, director of Mapam's Arab Department, took notes during the proceedings⁶⁷ and these contain far more than appears in the official, ostensibly “stenographic,” record.

On 29 October, the Eighty-ninth Battalion of the Eighth Brigade captured the village of al-Dawayima, in the Hebron foothills, and massacred dozens (and perhaps hundreds) of its inhabitants (different sources—IDF, UN, and Arab—put the civilian death toll at between 70 and 1,000).⁶⁸ Yisrael Galili, the former chief of the Haganah National Staff and one of Mapam's leaders, told the Political Committee:

In the last campaigns, there were grave occurrences concerning soldiers' behaviour vis-a-vis captives, women, etc. . . . [Eighth Brigade OC General] Yitzhak Sadeh walked about Beersheba giving back watches [stolen by soldiers], feeding people. On the other hand, the brigade behaved awfully in the conquest of Dawayima [in Operation Yoav]. But many there [i.e., in the Eighty-ninth Battalion] were LHI [veterans of Lohamei Herut Israel or, as the British called it, the Stern

Gang, an extremist terrorist organization], Frenchmen, [and] Moroccans, who are prone to such grave behaviour

Galili went on to speak of the Seventh Brigade's expulsion of "many Circassians" during Operation Hiram, and of an investigation by the front commander, General Moshe Carmel, of two incidents "in which soldiers will be put on trial."⁶⁹

This passage is rendered in the "official" protocol (both in the handwritten original and in the typescript) as: "In the last campaigns there were grave occurrences concerning soldiers' behaviour vis-a-vis captives, women, etc. . . . Yitzhak Sadeh walked about [Beersheba] and gave back watches to Arabs. In this brigade there are LHI, Moroccans, Frenchmen." Mention of the expulsion of Circassians and of the massacre at al-Dawayima is completely omitted and Galili is quoted as saying, "Moshe [Carmel] related that there were two grave incidents, and those responsible *have already* been put on trial."⁷⁰

Minister of Labor Mordechai Bentov went on to relate that there was "shock" in the cabinet, "save for B[en] G[urion] and Shertok [Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett]" and that an investigatory committee had been set up. There had been "expulsion of Arabs and atrocities, slaughter in villages, [murder] of individuals, [and] captives" This last sentence, quoted from Cohen's notes, does not appear in the "official" protocol.

The omissions from the official "stenographic" record of passages from the subsequent statements by Benny Marshak, a senior Palmah officer, and Mapam co-leader Meir Ya'ari, are even more striking. They relate to the connection drawn by some Israelis between what had happened in operations Hiram and Yoav and Nazi behavior in occupied Europe. Marshak stated, "In Burj [probably should read "Bayt"] Jamil [a monastery in the Judean Hills] a statue and cross were destroyed and a Star of David and of Zion were etched in stone [by the soldiers]. A lad explained: Six million Jews were destroyed and I wanted to take revenge." Ya'ari replies, "What a lie and falsehood it is [to say] that this is revenge for the six million [They say,] 'Why should not 500,000 Jews take revenge on 50,000 Arabs for the six million?!' . . . Shall we allow bastards [menuvalim] to hide behind [the] six million . . . [?]"⁷¹ By omitting these sentences, the official record in effect deleted the linkages made by some of the participants between Jewish behavior toward the Arabs and the Nazis' behavior toward European Jewry. But, curiously, one such linkage was left, albeit in the negative. Benny Marshak is quoted in the official protocol as saying, "[I] suggest that we refrain from using such expressions as 'Nazi acts' [when describing IDF atrocities]."⁷²

The official record deleted the linkages made by some participants between Jewish behavior toward the Arabs and the Nazis' behavior toward European Jewry.

But the biggest omission in the official protocol is of Moshe Erem's detailed, albeit telegraphic, description of the various atrocities committed in Operation Hiram. The official protocol reads: "Erem: Gives details he heard of deeds done by the army."⁷³ Cohen's rendering of what Erem said reads:

Safsaf 52 men tied together with a rope. Pushed down a well and shot. 10 killed. Women pleaded for mercy. 3 cases of rape A girl of 14 raped. Another four killed. Rings [cut off with?] knives. Jiz [should be Jish]—a woman and baby killed. Another 11 [killed?] The kibbutzim are participating in the looting Ear-rings are torn off with ears [In] Sasa cases of mass murder. A thousand had raised white flags. They prepared an offering for the army. [But the army] expelled the whole village. 94 in Saliha blown up with a house

The aim, throughout, was to hide things said and done and to leave for posterity a sanitized version of the past.

Erem, according to Cohen's notes, went on to describe expulsions during Operation Yoav from Beersheba; Ben-Gurion's visit to the emptying town; and an order to expel the remaining inhabitants of Majdal (Ashqelon), an order that was not, in fact (at this time), carried out.⁷⁴ But none of

this appears in the official "stenographic" protocol.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages we have examined two types of Zionist documents—diaries and protocols of political meetings produced during the crucial year in the development of the movement and of its conflict with the Arab world. We have seen that they were subjected to censorial editing, either as they were being written, or, more often, subsequently, on their way to publication. The aim, throughout, was to hide things said and done and to leave for posterity a sanitized version of the past. (As regards Ben-Gurion, one should perhaps add that there can be little doubt that his revolutionary roots—he was a great admirer of Lenin—and his years at the head of an underground, the Haganah, had instilled in him an ineradicable secretiveness, a propensity to refrain from putting sensitive things down on paper.) I have tried to compare these laundered documents with their uncensored originals or with other, fuller records of the same events and conversations.

To historians brought up (like myself) in the belief that documents are and should be the basis of historiography, this exercise may prove somewhat unsettling. It is no part of my contention, however, that this belief is erroneous: Documents must remain at the core of any investigation of the post-archaeological past. Nonetheless, the preceding passages indicate that a great deal of care and circumspection must be exercised. On sensitive matters, as likely as not, there is a telling absence of a one-to-one correspondence between what was written and/or

published and "reality," that is, what actually was said or happened. Politicians and officials, as has been shown, have twisted documents, both as they were being written and subsequently, into a shape that would serve their personal or political ends—and these definitely are not the ends of the impartial historian.

There is a lesson in all this for those who write about Zionism, Israel, and the Middle East. And this lesson may apply, equally, to historians of regions beyond and movements other than Zionism. Long-after-the-event oral testimony must necessarily remain even more suspect than contemporary documentation; but that documentation, in its original form or as subsequently published, may also leave much to be desired.

NOTES

1. Yosef Weitz, *Yomani Ve'Igrotai LaBanim* (My diary and letters to the [i.e., my] sons), 4 vols. (Ramat Gan: Massada Publishers, 1965).
2. These notebooks are deposited in the Central Zionist Archives (CZA), A246.
3. Some of the differences between the notebooks and the published diaries were first noted in Benny Morris, "Yosef Weitz and the Transfer Committees, 1948-9," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22, no. 4 (October 1986), pp. 522-61, republished as chapter 4 in Benny Morris, *1948 and After* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
4. CZA, A246-12, p. 2290.
5. CZA, A246-13, pp. 2315-16.
6. CZA, A246-13, p. 2354.
7. CZA, A246-13, p. 2364.
8. CZA, A246-13, p. 2367; Weitz, *Yomani*, vol. 3, p. 273.
9. CZA, A246-13, p. 2367.
10. CZA, A246-13, p. 2368.
11. Letter from Weitz to Granovsky (25 May 1948), CZA, S-53/437.
12. CZA, A246-13, p. 2374.
13. See Morris, *1948 and After*, chap. 4.
14. A copy of the memorandum, undated and signed by the three members of the "Transfer Committee"—Weitz, Elias (Eliahu) Sasson, a senior Foreign Ministry official, and Ezra Danin, one of the architects of the Haganah Intelligence Service—is in the Israel State Archives (ISA), FM 2564/19.
15. CZA, A246-13, p. 2411.
16. Weitz, *Yomani*, vol. 3, p. 298.
17. CZA, A246-13, p. 2411; Weitz, *Yomani*, vol. 3, p. 298.
18. Ben-Gurion diary, Ben-Gurion Archives (BGA), 5 June 1948. Ben-Gurion's diary for 1948 was, in fact, published under the title *Yoman Hamilhama, Milhemet Ha'atzma'ut, Tashah-Tashat* (The war diary, the War of Independence, 1948-1949), 3 vols. Ed. Gershon Rivlin and Elhannan Orren (Tel Aviv: Israel Defense Ministry Press/the Society for the Dissemination of David Ben-Gurion's Thinking, 1982). However, the editors, both former lieutenant colonels in the IDF, in a footnote to the entry, misrepresented the nature of the Weitz-Ben-Gurion meeting when writing that Weitz "had proposed . . . to set up a three-man committee to study the subject" of transfer when, in fact, the committee had already been established, and Weitz had come to propose measures to precipitate further Arab emigration or to assure that those who had left would not be able to return (see vol. 2, p. 487, footnote 11).
19. Ben-Gurion diary, 16 June 1948.
20. There are four records of this important meeting: Ben-Gurion's and Weitz's diary entries for 18 August; a four-page memorandum by foreign ministry official Ya'akov Shimoni, who attended, entitled "A Précis of Things Said at a Meeting at the Prime Minister's Office on the Questions of the Arab Refugees and their Return, 18/8/1948," ISA FM 2444/19; and a letter from Shimoni in Tel Aviv to Elias Sasson in Paris (19 August 1948), ISA, FM 2570/11.
21. Shimoni, "A Précis," ISA, FM 2444/19. Weitz's original diary entry (CZA, A246-13, p. 2464) says that the questions of whether to cultivate or not cultivate Arab lands, and whether to destroy villages or not and settle Jews in them were among the main points of discussion. But his published entry (Weitz, *Yomani*, vol. 2, p. 331) omits all mention of destruction of abandoned villages.
22. Ben-Gurion diary, 18 August 1948.
23. CZA, A246-13, p. 2415.
24. Weitz, *Yomani*, vol. 3, p. 301.
25. CZA, A246-13, p. 2418.
26. Weitz, *Yomani*, vol. 3, p. 302.
27. Weitz, *Yomani*, vol. 3, p. 303.
28. Interview with Ya'akov Shimoni, 1985.
29. Already in the 1980s, a number of Israeli historians cast doubt on the reliability and accuracy of the diary's entries regarding facts and conversations. Anita Shapira repeatedly questioned the accuracy and reliability of the diary entries relating to the struggle for the control of the Haganah/IDF and to successive quasi-political crises in her book *Mipiturzi Havana'ad Peiruk Hapatmah, Sugiyot Bama'avah 'al Hahanhaga Habit'hanit, 1948* (From

- the dismissal of the chief of the [Haganah] National Staff until the dismantling of the Palmah, issues in the struggle for the defense leadership) (Tel Aviv: Kibbutz Me'uhad Press, 1985), p. 23. For a response, affirming the credibility of the diary, see Elhannan Orren, "Yoman Hamilhama shel Ben-Gurion Kemakor Histori Lemilhemet Ha'atzma'ut" (Ben-Gurion's war diary as an historical source for the War of Independence), *Cathedra* 43 (March 1987), pp. 173-92.
30. "A Protocol from the Meeting Concerning Arab Affairs, 1-2.1.1949," Kibbutz Me'uhad Archive, Ramat Efal, Israel. The document is headed "stenograma, tiyuta" which, roughly translated, means "a stenographic record, draft."
31. "A Protocol," p. 1.
32. Ben-Gurion diary, 1 January 1948.
33. "A Protocol," pp. 3-4.
34. "A Protocol," p. 46.
35. Weitz, *Yomani*, vol. 3, p. 344.
36. Rivlin and Orren, *Yoman Hamilhama*, vol. 3, p. 721. The whole passage, dealing with Weitz's proposal to harass the refugees into flight, remains classified in the BGA, despite its publication a decade ago in *Yoman Hamilhama*.
37. Letter from Danin in Tel Aviv to E. Sasson in Paris (24 October 1948), ISA, FM 2570/11.
38. Ben-Gurion diary, 21 October 1948.
39. Yosef Weitz, *Yosef Nahmani, Ish Hagalil* (Yosef Nahmani, man of the Galilee) (Ramat-Gan: Masada Publishers, 1969).
40. Nahmani diary, HaShomer Archive, Kfar Gil'adi, Israel.
41. Curiously, the existence of the diary was ignored by historians, despite Weitz's publication of the excerpts in *Nahmani*, until 1993, when I visited the HaShomer Archive. In 1994, I published "Yosef Nahmani and the Arab Question in 1948," an article largely based on the diary, in Benny Morris, *1948 and After*, revised ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
42. Nahmani diary, 30 December 1947.
43. Weitz, *Nahmani*, p. 246.
44. Nahmani diary, 4 February 1948.
45. Nahmani diary, 6 February 1948.
46. Nahmani diary, 10 March 1948.
47. Nahmani diary, 17 March 1948.
48. Nahmani diary, 22 March 1948.
49. Nahmani diary, 9 and 12 April 1948.
50. Nahmani diary, 16-18 April 1948.
51. Nahmani diary, 18 April 1948.
52. Nahmani diary, 22 April 1948.
53. Nahmani diary, 6 November 1948.
54. Weitz, *Nahmani*, p. 251.
55. Weitz, *Nahmani*, p. 252.
56. There is now a tentative agreement that the stenographic transcripts of cabinet sessions during 1948-56 will shortly be opened and that, in the future, protocols will be opened regularly after the passage of forty years.
57. David Ben-Gurion, *Behilalem Yisrael* (As Israel fought) (Tel Aviv: Mapai Publications, 1952).
58. Ben-Gurion, *Behilalem*, pp. 127-31.
59. Ben-Gurion, *Behilalem*, pp. 130-31.
60. David Ben-Gurion, *Medinat Yisrael Hamehudeset* (The restored State of Israel), 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: 'Am 'Oved, 1969).
61. Ben-Gurion, *Medinat Yisrael*, vol. 1, pp. 164-65. Discussion of the cabinet meeting continues to p. 167.
62. Ben-Gurion, *Medinat Yisrael*, vol. 1, p. 167.
63. "Protocol of the Meeting of 16 June 1948 of the Provisional Government [i.e., Cabinet] of Israel," ISA.
64. See this author's article in *Ha'Aretz*, 4 February 1994 and translated in the Spring 1994 issue *JPS's* sister publication, *Revue d'études Palestiniennes*.
65. Telephone interview on 3 February 1994 with Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, one of the leaders of Mapam in 1948.
66. "Protocol of the meeting of the Political Committee, 11 November 1948," HaShomer HaTza'ir Archive (HHA), 90.66 (1). The protocol exists in two versions, an original in handwriting (in a lined notebook) and a typescript (copied from the notebook). The two are virtually identical.
67. Handwritten notes by Aharon Cohen from the Political Committee meeting of 11 November 1948, HHA, 10.95.10 (6). Curiously, these are the only notes of a meeting of the Political Committee in Aharon Cohen's papers. Moreover, the notes deal only with that part of the 11 November meeting devoted to the atrocities. Apparently, Cohen knew that the stenographers would not record what was said in full and decided to keep a full record for his own use.
68. For details, see Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 222-23, and the fuller, Hebrew version, Benny Morris, *Leidata shel Ba'ayat HaPlitim HaFalstini'im 1947-1949*, pp. 295-98, and the accompanying footnotes.
69. Aharon Cohen notes, HHA, 10.95.10 (6).
70. Aharon Cohen notes, HHA, 10.95.10 (6). Emphasis added.
71. Aharon Cohen notes, HHA, 10.95.10 (6).
72. This sentence does not appear in Cohen's notes. Either he missed it or he preferred not to quote it. It is also possible—but unlikely—that it was not actually said by Marshak but was added by the stenographer. Aharon Cohen notes, HHA, 10.95.10 (6).
73. "A Protocol," HHA, 90.66 (1).
74. Aharon Cohen notes, HHA, 10.95.10 (6).