

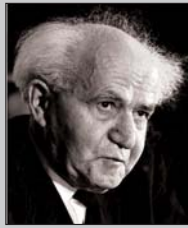
# NAKBA

The Process of Palestinian Dispossession



## Israel

In the lead-up to partition, the various organizations and political bodies in the Jewish community were consolidated into the Executive Committee headed by David Ben Gurion who, in addition to his other positions, now wielded more power than any of his colleagues in the Zionist leadership.<sup>15</sup> With the entire Jewish Agency and military forces under his control, he



David Ben Gurion

was able to orchestrate a cohesive and coordinated campaign to secure not only the territory designated to the Jewish State in the Partition Plan, but a large portion of the land allocated to the Arab state. Under his leadership, the Jewish militias were transformed in 1947 into a national conscript army with professional training under the overall command of Yaakov Dori and Yigael Yadin.



Yaakov Dori

Greatly assisted by the British during the Mandate, the Zionists had been able to build up a large, well-armed, well-trained army with significant combat experience. When it was disbanded by the British during WWII, it had responded by changing its structure and sinking its roots deep into the societies of the Zionist colonies in Palestine. As such it became self-sustaining and recruitment was greatly facilitated, and the culture of armed Jewish settlements was born which still plagues the Palestinian people to this day.

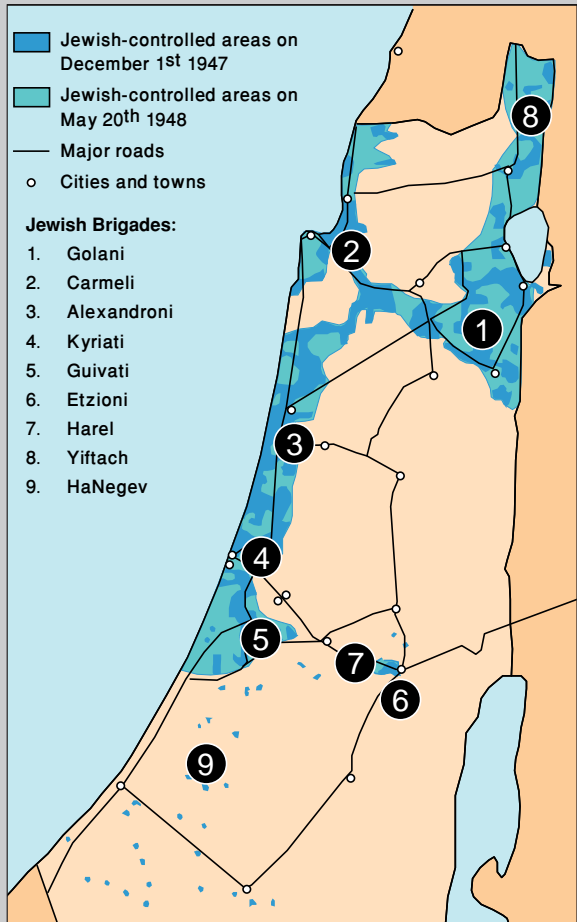
During the Jewish military operations prior to the end of the Mandate, in which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from their homes and lands, the coastal strip and the Galilee were secured by the Zionists in preparation for the expected confrontation with the Arab armies. During this process the militias of the Irgun and the Lehi, although small, played a crucial role in operating with a brutality which struck fear into the hearts of the Palestinian people and precipitated the exodus into the surrounding Arab countries.

The Jewish leadership was well aware of the lack of coordination among the forces they were facing, thanks both to intelligence technology and to contact with Arab and Palestinian individuals. Ben Gurion had always been keen to know to what extent Hajj



Having depopulated Lydda and driven Palestinian civilians towards the lines of the Arab Legion, Jewish troops march on Ramle to perform further expulsions.

## Jewish Controlled Areas and Troop Deployments



Amin al-Husseini had the power to control unfolding events from exile, where he had been since 1937. Ben-Gurion's diaries repeatedly reflect on how powerless, divided and lacking in direction the local Palestinian were on the ground.

In addition, the Zionists were aware of the logistical and political obstacles the Arabs were facing and knew that Arab armies would be incapable of or unwilling to come to the assistance of their allies. Ben Gurion admits in his memoirs that "we were victorious because the Arabs were weak and were subjected to unusual circumstances".<sup>16</sup> One of the major considerations behind his decision to attack the Egyptians in the Negev in the late stages of the 1948 conflict was his certainty that the other Arab states would not enter the battle. His gamble paid off, and the Transjordanians stood back as the Egyptians were routed by the Israeli forces.



Yitzhak Rabin, then a commander on the Jerusalem front, and General Yigal Allon in 1948

<sup>15</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*, London, 1994, p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> David Ben Gurion. *Zichronot*. Am Ovid Publishers, 1971.