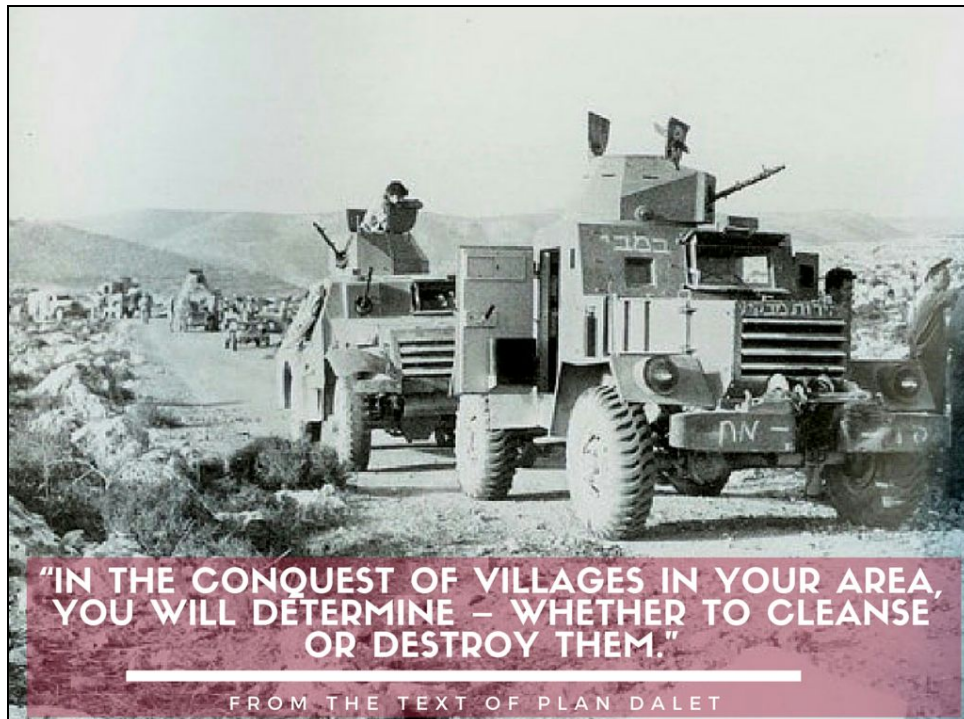


Palestinian communities destroyed

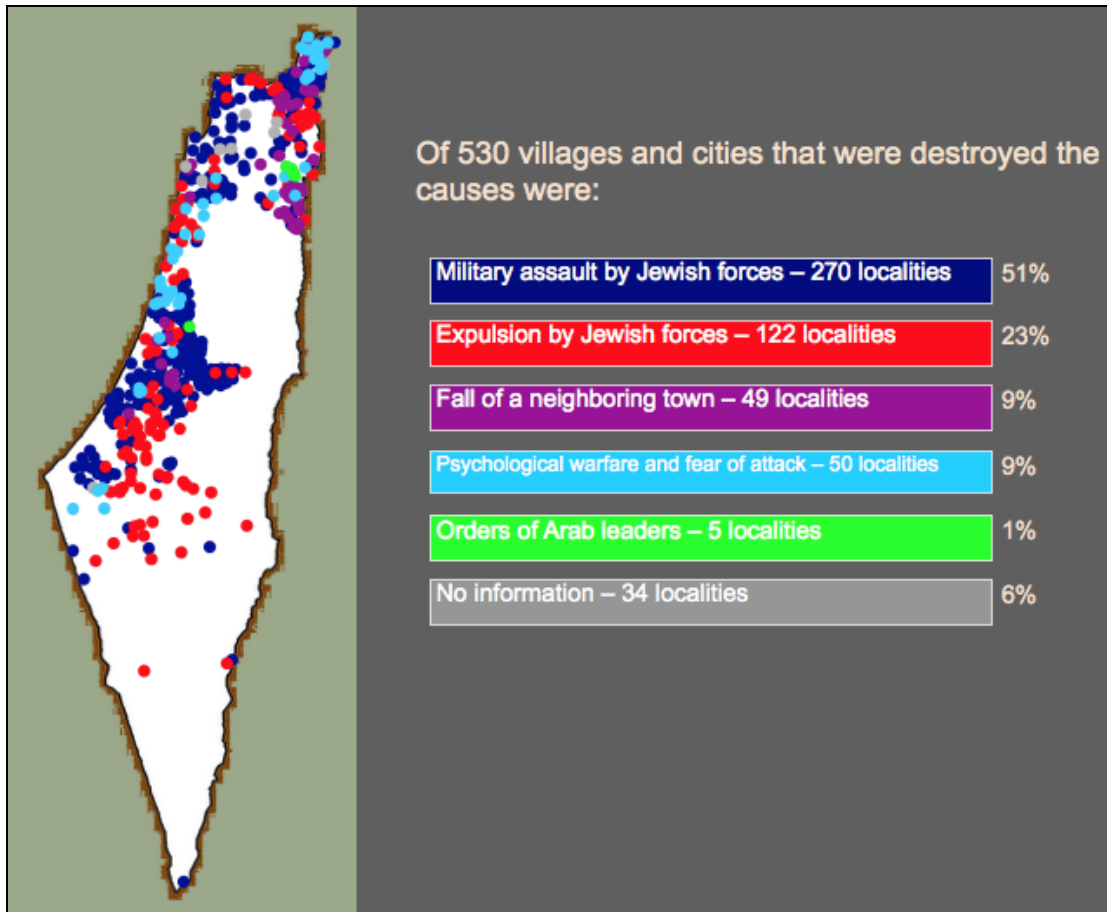
PLAN DALET



- ❖ The situation changed dramatically in March 1948 when the Haganah, in anticipation of the arrival of Arab regular army units, launched their Plan Dalet. The Haganah, along with the secessionist Etzel and Lehi forces, numbered some 40,000 fighters. This far exceeded the 10,000 mostly untrained, irregular, largely fragmented, and locally-based Palestinian fighters, even with volunteers from neighboring Arab countries. Plan Dalet's aim was to eliminate actual or potentially hostile elements from the area earmarked for the Jewish state—to create a continuous area of Jewish settlement and insure the future borders. It provided "for the seizure of areas in Galilee and on the way from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem that had been assigned to the Arab state or included in the international zone. Founded on these aims, the plan dealt in detail with the 'expulsion over the borders of the local Arab population in the event of opposition to our attacks...'"
- ❖ The purpose of Plan Dalet was to create territorial continuity for the Jewish side by controlling the largest possible territory with the smallest possible Arab population. To accomplish this task, Jewish military forces began a campaign to expel residents and destroy Arab villages. Although the plan was not designed specifically to expel the civilian population, it served as the anchor and strategic and ideological foundation for the expulsion of the population and the destruction of localities. These expulsions were left to the discretion of the commanders in the field. The Haganah attacks carried out under the plan were aimed at an entire society, which had already been under great pressure for many months, its strength eroding in a wearing process of attrition.
- ❖ On May 15, the British departed from Palestine and the State of Israel was declared. On May 16, 1948, regular Arab forces entered the country and the war between Israel and the Arab states began. The Haganah had taken large areas of the country, which had formerly been under Arab control. During these months, the mixed cities of Haifa, Tiberias and Jaffa were captured, as were many villages throughout the country. Many Palestinians fled or were forced from their homes and many were expelled by the Israeli military.

Palestinian communities destroyed

METHODS OF DESTRUCTION OF 530 LOCALITIES



- ❖ In most localities (83%) the population exodus was directly due to Israeli military action.
- ❖ As Israeli historian Benny Morris has noted, the assertion that the majority of Palestinian refugees originally left their villages because they were instructed to do so by their leaders is a myth.

Palestinian communities destroyed

MILITARY ASSAULT BY JEWISH FORCES: DESTRUCTION OF 270 COMMUNITIES



- ❖ A British intelligence officer stated the following (cited by Benny Morris):
“During the morning [the Jews] were continually shooting down on all Arabs who moved both in Wadi Nisnas and the Old City. This included completely indiscriminate and revolting machine-gun fire, mortar fire and sniping on women and children sheltering in churches and attempting to get out... through the gates into the docks... The 40 [Royal Marine Commando] who control the docks... sent the Arabs through in batches but there was considerable congestion outside the East Gate of hysterical and terrified Arab women and children and old people on whom the Jews opened up mercilessly with fire.”
- ❖ In most cases, Jewish forces bombed the villages, sometimes from the air, so that the population would flee.
- ❖ Less frequently, there was Arab and Palestinian military resistance, but the balance of power typically favored the Jewish side.

Palestinian communities destroyed

EXPULSION BY JEWISH FORCES: DESTRUCTION OF 122 COMMUNITIES



❖ Moshe Carmel, Commander of the Carmeli Brigade, Northern Battles, stated in 1949 (*The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, Benny Morris):

“They abandon the villages of their birth and that of their ancestors and go into exile... Women, children, babies, donkeys – everything moves, in silence and grief, northwards, without looking to right or left. Wife does not find her husband and child does not find his father... no one knows the goal of his trek. Many possessions are scattered by the paths; the more the refugees walk, the more tired they grow – and they throw away what they had tried to save on their way into exile. Suddenly, every object seems to them petty, superfluous,

unimportant as against the chasing fear and the urge to save life and limb.”

- ❖ A pattern of expulsion was repeated in numerous locations: after residents of the village surrendered, the village was surrounded from three sides and the fourth was left open so that residents would leave in the direction of the neighboring Arab state. Men were separated into one group and women, children, and the elderly in another. The latter were expelled by threats and shooting over their heads, and sometimes their valuables were also taken.
- ❖ Some of the men were killed in order to scare the others, and many were taken to prisoner of war camps.
- ❖ There were also a number of areas where the population was expelled by trucks (Ramleh, Baysan, Majdal, and others).



Palestinian communities destroyed

FALL OF A NEIGHBORING TOWN OR PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AND FEAR OF ATTACK: DESTRUCTION OF 99 COMMUNITIES



- ❖ Many localities were abandoned following the fall of a neighboring village or city, as residents feared they would be defenseless against a coming attack. The fall of cities and large towns had a particularly strong effect, as the surrounding economic and social network broke down.
- ❖ Former Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin said: “The Arabs in Eretz Israel were panic stricken [...] which helped us particularly [...] in Tiberias and in the capture of Haifa.”
- ❖ The Deir Yassin massacre and the fall of Haifa have been identified as two key events that had an enormous effect on the expulsion and departure of Palestinians. The massacre in the village of Deir Yassin occurred on April 9, 1948, during an attack on the village by the Etzel, the Lehi and followed by the Haganah. More than one hundred Palestinian village residents, including men, women and children, most of them unarmed, were murdered. News of the massacre spread throughout the country.
- ❖ Yigal Allon, former Palmach commander stated (*The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, Benny Morris): “We, therefore, looked for a means that would not oblige us to use force to drive out the tens of thousands of hostile Arabs left in the Galilee and who, in the event of an invasion, could strike at us from behind. We tried to utilize a stratagem that exploited the [Arabs] defeat in Safad and in the area cleared by [Operation] Broom - a stratagem that worked wonderfully.
I gathered the Jewish mukhtars, who had ties with the different Arab villages, and I asked them to whisper in the ears of several Arabs that a giant Jewish reinforcement had reached the Galilee and were about to clean out the villages of the Hula, [and] to advise them, as friends, to flee while they could. And rumor spread throughout the Hula that the time had come to flee. The flight encompassed tens of thousands. The stratagem fully achieved its objective . . . and we were able to deploy ourselves in face of the [prospective] invaders along the borders, without fear for our rear.”