

## The Debate About 1948

Avi Shlaim

*International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 27:3, 1995, 287-304.

Reprinted in Ilan Pappé, ed., *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London: Longman, 1999).

'Conquerors, my son, consider as true history only what they themselves have fabricated.' [1] Thus remarked the headmaster to young Saeed on his return to Haifa in the summer of 1948 in Emile Habiby's tragicomic novel *T. of Sa'id, the Ill-fated Pessoptimist*. The headmaster spoke about the Israelis more in sorrow than in anger: 'It is to demolish those villages ... and did evict their inhabitants. But, my son, they are far more merciful than the conquerors of our forefathers had years before.' [2]

Most Israelis would be outraged by the suggestion that they are conquerors, yet this is how they are perceived by the Palestinians. But the point of the quote is that there can be no agreement on what actually happened in 1948. The Israelis subscribe to a different version of events. The Palestinians regard Israelis as the conquerors and themselves as victims of the first Arab-Israeli war which they call *al-Nakba* or the disaster. Palestinian historiography reflects these perceptions. The Israelis, on the other hand, whether conquerors or not, were the indisputable victors in the war which they call the War of Independence. Because they were the victors, among other reasons, they were able to impose their version more effectively than their opponents their version of this fateful war. History, in a sense, is the propaganda of the victors.

The conventional Zionist account of the 1948 War goes roughly as follows. The conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine came to a head following the passage, on 29 November 1947, of the United Nations partition resolution which called for the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The Jews accepted the UN plan despite the sacrifices it entailed but the Palestinians, the neighbouring Arab states and the Arab League rejected it. Great Britain used everything in its power towards the end of the Palestine Mandate to frustrate the establishment of the Jewish state envisaged in the UN plan. With the expiry of the Mandate and the proclamation of the State of Israel, seven Arab states sent their armies into Palestine with the firm intention of strangling the Jewish state at birth. The subsequent war was an unequal one between a Jewish David and an Arab Goliath. The infant Jewish state fought a desperate, ultimately successful battle for survival against overwhelming odds. During the war, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled to the neighbouring Arab states, mainly in response to orders from their leaders and despite the fact that they had to stay and demonstrate that peaceful co-existence was possible. After the war, the story continues, Israeli leaders sought peace with all their heart and all their might but there was no one to talk to on the other side. Arab intransigence was responsible for the political deadlock which was not broken until President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977.

This conventional Zionist account or old history of the 1948 War displays a number of features. In the first place, it is not history in the proper sense of the word. Most of the voluminous literature on the war was written not by professional historians but by participants, by politicians, soldiers, official historians and by a large host of sympathetic journalists, biographers and hagiographers. Secondly, this literature is very short on political analysis of the war and is full of chronicles of the military operations, especially the heroic feats of the Israeli fighters. Third, this literature maintains that Israel's conduct during the war was governed by higher moral standards than that of her enemies. Of particular interest here is the precept of *tohar haneshek* or the purity of arms which posits that weapons remain pure provided they are employed only in self-defence and provided they are not used against innocent civilians and defenceless people. The popular-heroic-moralistic version of the 1948 war is the one which is taught in Israeli schools and used extensively in the quest for legitimacy abroad. It is a prime example of the use of a nationalist version of history in the process of nation building.

Until recently this standard Zionist version of the events surrounding the birth of the State of Israel remained unchallenged outside the Arab world. The fortieth anniversary of the birth of the state, however, witnessed the

of a number of books which challenged various aspects of the standard Zionist version. First in the field, most in its tone, and most comprehensive in its scope, was Simha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities*. A former member of the Arab Affairs Department of the left-wing Mapam party and editor of the Middle East monthly, *New Outlook*, he wrote his book with an explicit political rather than academic aim in mind: to expose the myths that he claimed were the basis of Israeli propaganda and Israeli policy. 'The myths that Israel forged during the formation of the state have hardened into this impenetrable and dangerous ideological shield.' [3] After listing seven myths, each of which a chapter in the book is devoted to, Flapan frankly admits the political purpose of the whole exercise. 'It is the purpose of this book to debunk these myths, not as an academic exercise but as a contribution to a better understanding of the Palestinian problem and to a more constructive approach to its solution.' [4] Other books which were critical of the Zionist rendition of events, though without an explicit political agenda, included Benny Morris *The Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* [5], Ilan Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-51* [6] and my own *Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement and the Partition of Palestine*. [7] Collectively we came to be known as Israeli revisionists or the new historians. Neither term is entirely satisfactory. The term revisionists in the Zionist context refers to the right-wing followers of Zeev Jabotinsky who broke away from the mainstream Zionism in 1925. The new historians are located on the political map somewhere to the left of the mainstream. On the other hand the term old historians is rather self-congratulatory and dismissive, by implication, of everything written before the new historians appeared on the scene as old and worthless. Professor Yehoshua Porath of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem suggested as alternative terms pre-history and history. But this is only slightly less offensive towards the first historians. So, for lack of a better word, I shall use the label 'old' to refer to the proponents of the standard Zionist version of the 1948 War and the label 'new' to the recent left-wing critics of this version, including myself.

The first thing to note about the new historiography is that much of it is not new. Many of the arguments that are advanced in the new historiography were advanced long ago by Israeli writers, not to mention Palestinian, Arab and Western writers. To list all these Israeli writers is beyond the scope of this article but a few examples might be in place. One common theme that runs through the new historiography is a critical stance towards David Ben-Gurion, the founder of the State of Israel and its first Prime Minister. Whereas the old historians tend to view Ben-Gurion as representative of the consensus between the civilian and military elites, the new historians tend to portray him as the driving force behind Israel's policies, and particularly the policy of expelling the Palestinians. Many of the recent criticisms of Ben-Gurion, however, were foreshadowed in a book written by former IDF official historian, Lieutenant-Colonel Israel Baer, in prison and later convicted of spying for the Soviet Union. [8]

A significant start in revising the conventional Zionist view of British policy towards the end of the Palestine mandate was made by Gavriel Cohen in a volume with a characteristically old-fashioned title - *Hayinu Keholmim*, 'We were dreamers.' [9] Yaacov Shimoni, deputy-director of the Middle East Department in the Foreign Ministry in 1948, wrote a highly perceptive article on the hesitations, doubts, reservations and differences of opinion that attended the British decision to intervene in Palestine in May 1948. [10] This article which is at odds with the dominant Zionist narrative is noteworthy for having been written by an insider. Meir Pail wrote another corrective to the notion of a monolithic British policy, focusing in particular on the conflict between King Abdullah of Jordan and the Palestinians. [11] The Zionist narrative about the causes of the Palestinian refugee problem was called into question by a number of Israeli writers, most convincingly by Rony Gabbay. [12] Finally, the argument that Israel's commitment to peace with the Arabs dates back to the official rhetoric can be traced to a book published under a pseudonym by two members of the Israeli Labour Party. [13]

Although many of the arguments of the new historiography are not new, there is a qualitative difference between the new historiography and the bulk of the earlier studies, whether they accepted or contradicted the official Zionist version. The difference, in a nutshell, is that the new historiography is written with access to the official Israeli and Western archives, whereas the earlier writers had no access, or only partial access, to the official documents. This is not a hard and fast rule, there are many exceptions and there are also degrees of access. Nevertheless, it is generally true to say that the new historians, with the exception of the late Simha Flapan, have carried out extensive archival research in Israel, Jordan, America and that their arguments are backed by hard documentary evidence and by a Western-style scholarly approach.

Indeed, the upsurge of new histories would not have been possible without the declassification of the official documents. Israel adopted the British thirty-year-rule for the review and declassification of foreign policy documents. This rule is not applied by Israel as systematically as it is in Britain, it is applied rather more liberally. Both Britain and Israel have also started to follow the American example of publishing volumes of documents which are professionally researched and edited. The first four volumes in the series of *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel* are an invaluable and indispensable aid to research on the 1948 War and the armistice negotiations which ended it.[14]

On the Arab side, there is no equivalent of the thirty-year-rule. On the 1948 War little access is allowed to the state archives and this restriction does pose a serious problem to the researcher. It is sometimes argued that no definitive account of the 1948 War, least of all an account of what happened behind the scenes on the Arab side, is possible without access to the Arab state archives. But difficulty should not be construed as impossibility. In the first place, some Arab documents are available. A prime example is the report of the Iraqi parliamentary committee of inquiry into the Palestine question which is packed with high-level documents.[15] Another example is the collection of semi-official and private papers gathered by the Institute for Palestine Studies.[16] In addition, there is a far from negligible literature in Arabic which consists of first-hand accounts of the disaster, including the diaries and memoirs of politicians and soldiers.[17] But even if none of these Arabic sources existed, the other available sources would provide a basis for an informed analysis of the 1948 War. A military historian of the Middle Ages would be green with envy at the sight of the sources available to his contemporary Middle Eastern counterpart. Historians of the 1948 War would do better to explore in depth the manifold sources that are available to them than to lament the denial of access to state archives.

If the release of rich new sources of information was one important reason behind the advent of historical revisionism, a change in the general political climate was another.[18] For many Israelis, especially liberal-minded ones, the ill-conceived and ill-fated invasion of Lebanon in 1982 marked a watershed. Until then, Zionist leaders had been careful to cultivate the image of peace-lovers who would stand up and fight only if war was forced upon them. Until then the notion of *ein breira*, of no alternative, was central to the explanation of why Israel went to war and a means of legitimizing involvement in wars. But while the fierce debate between supporters and opponents of the Lebanon War was in progress, Prime Minister Menachem Begin gave a lecture to the IDF Staff Academy on wars of choice and wars of necessity. He argued that the Lebanon War, like the Sinai War of 1956, was a war of choice designed to achieve national objectives. This admission, unprecedented in the history of the Zionist movement, the national consensus round the notion of *ein breira* began to crumble, creating political space for a critical re-examination of the country's earlier history.[19]

The appearance of the new books on the 1948 War excited a great deal of interest and controversy in Israeli academic and political circles. A two-day conference on the end of the War of Independence, organized by the Dayan Center for Zionist Research at Tel Aviv University in April 1989, turned into a confrontation between the old version represented by historians, journalists and veterans of that war and the new version represented by Benny Morris and myself. Several of the speakers argued, with good reason, that the new historians did not develop a new scientific methodology of historical writing but used conventional historical methods to advance new interpretations of the 1948 War. On the merits of the new interpretations, opinions were sharply divided. Members of the old guard, especially the Mapai old guard, bristled with hostility and roundly condemned the new interpretations. The response of the academic community, both at the conference and in subsequent reviews and discussions, was more measured. The findings of the new historiography, and especially the findings reported in Benny Morris' book, became widely known in the Israeli academic community and found their way into university reading lists and high school textbooks.

Among the critics of the new historians, the most strident and vitriolic was Shabtai Tevet. Ben-Gurion's son, Tevet's attack entitled 'The New Historians' appeared in four successive full-page instalments in the Israeli daily *Ha-Aretz* on 7, 14 and 21 April and 19 May 1989. Tevet subsequently published an abridged and revised version of this article entitled 'Charging Israel with Original Sin' in the American-Jewish monthly, *Commentary*. In this article he describes the new history as a 'farrago of distortions, omissions, tendentious readings, and outright falsifications'.

Teveth pursues two lines of attack. One line of attack is that the new historiography 'rests in part on defective evidence which is characterized by serious professional flaws.' [21] The other line of attack is that the new historiography is ideologically motivated, pro-Palestinian, and aimed at delegitimizing Zionism and the State of Israel.

In support of this last claim, Teveth quotes a passage from Benny Morris's article on 'The New Historiography' which states that 'how one perceives 1948 bears heavily on how one perceives the whole Zionist/Israeli experience which was born tarnished, besmirched by original sin then it was no more deserving of that [Western] grace and assistance than were its neighbours.' Teveth goes on to say that the original sin Shlaim charges Israel with consists of 'the creation of a Palestinian Arab population in a country' while Morris charges Israel with 'creating the refugee problem' and both are 'inherently false.' [22]

Teveth must have gone through the two books in question with a fine tooth comb to discover evidence of a political motive that he attributes to their authors but he came up with nothing. This is why he was reduced to quoting a passage from a *Tikkun* article which he builds up in a farrago of distortions of his own into the political manifesto of what he calls the 'old historical club.' But even the quote from the article does not demonstrate any political purpose; all it does is to state that Western attitudes towards Israel are influenced by perceptions of how Israel came into the world. That is undeniable. Benny Morris replied in *Ha'aretz* and in a second article in *Tikkun* that, as far as he is concerned, the new historiography has no political purposes whatsoever. The task and function of the historian, in his view, is to illuminate the past. [23] My own view is that the historian's most fundamental task is not to chronicle but to evaluate. The historian's job is to subject the claims of all the protagonists to rigorous scrutiny and to reject all those claims, however deeply held, that do not stand up to such scrutiny. In my view many of the claims advanced by the old historians do not stand up to serious scrutiny. But that does not mean that everything they say is untrue or that Israel is the sole villain of the piece. In fact, neither Benny Morris nor I have charged Israel with original sin. It is Shabtai Teveth who, in face of all the evidence to the contrary, continues to cling to the doctrine of Israel's immaculate conception. [24]

It is Teveth's counter-attack which is politically motivated. Like so many other members of the Mapai old guard, he is unable to distinguish between history and propaganda. Any attempt to revise the conventional wisdom with new evidence that has come to light is therefore immediately suspect as unpatriotic and calculated to harm the interests of the leader and the party who led the struggle for independence. For Teveth and other members of the Mapai old guard, the events in question do not yet fully belong to history but represent their party's and their country's finest hour. They are too wedded, personally and politically, to the heroic version of the creation of the State of Israel to be able to take a new historiography with an open mind.

Interestingly, individuals on the political right in Israel, whether scholars or not, respond to the findings of the new historiography with far greater equanimity. They readily admit, for example, that Israel did expel Palestinians and express regret that she did not expel more Palestinians since it was they who launched the war against her. Right-wing historians tend to treat the 1948 War from a *realpolitik* point of view rather than a moralistic one. They are therefore spared the need of trying to reconcile the practices of Zionism with the precepts of liberalism. It is perhaps for this reason that the right is generally less self-righteous and more receptive to new evidence and new analyses of the 1948 War than the Mapai old guard. The latter put so much store by Israel's claim to moral rectitude that they cannot face up to the reality of cynical Israeli double-dealings or brutal expulsion and dispossession of the Palestinians. It is an axiom of the right that Israel is the innocent victim. And it is their concern with the political consequences of rewriting of history that accounts for the ferocity of their attacks on the new historiography.

Although politics and history have got mixed up in the debate about 1948, and although this debate often resembles a dialogue of the deaf, the very fact that a debate is taking place is a welcome change from the stifling conformity of the past. As A. J. P. Taylor once remarked that history does not repeat itself, it is historians who repeat one another. The new historiography on the emergence of Israel is a striking example of this general phenomenon. As for the new historiography, whatever its faults, it at least has the merit of stimulating a re-examination of time-hallowed conventions.

Six major bones of contention can be identified in the ongoing debate between the new and the old historical policy at the end of the Palestine mandate, the Arab-Israeli military balance in 1948, the origins of the Palestinian problem, the nature of Israeli-Jordanian relations during the war, Arab war aims, and the reasons for the political deadlock after the guns fell silent. Let me now review briefly the main arguments and counter-arguments on six key issues in the debate, bearing in mind that I am not a detached or neutral observer but one of the protagonists of the debate.

## 1. British Policy

The first bone of contention concerns British policy in Palestine between 29 November 1947 and 14 May 1948. The historiography, reflecting the suspicions of Zionist leaders at that time, is laden with charges of hostile plots that are alleged to have been hatched against the Yishuv during the twilight of British rule in Palestine. The central charge is that the British government secretly encouraged the Arab allies, and especially her client, King Abdullah of Jordan, to invade Palestine at the expiry of the British Mandate and do battle with the Jewish state as soon as it came into the world. For Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary in the Labour Government headed by Clement Attlee, is reserved the role of chief villain in this conspiracy.

Ilan Pappé, using English, Arabic and Hebrew sources, has driven a coach and horses through the traditional rendition of British policy towards the end of the mandate, and I tried to follow along the trail that he had blazed. The key to British policy during this period is summed up by Pappé in two words: Greater Transjordan. Bevin believed that Palestine had to be partitioned, the Arab area could not be left to stand on its own but should be united with Transjordan. A Greater Transjordan would compensate Britain for the loss of bases in Palestine. Hostility to Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who had cast his lot with the Nazis during the Second World War, and hostility to a Palestinian state, which in British eyes always equated with a Mufti state, were important and constant features of British policy after the war. By February 1948, Bevin and his Foreign Office advisers were pragmatically reconciled to the inevitable emergence of the Jewish state; they were not reconciled to, was the emergence of a Palestinian state.

The policy of Greater Transjordan implied discreet support for a bid by Abdullah, nicknamed 'Mr Bevin's little dog', to enlarge his kingdom by taking over the West Bank. At a secret meeting in London on 12 February 1948, Bevin gave Tawfiq Abul Huda, Jordan's Prime Minister, the green light to send the Arab Legion to Palestine immediately following the departure of the British forces. But Bevin also warned Jordan not to invade territory allocated by the UN to the Jews. An attack on Jewish state territory, he said, would compel Britain to withdraw all subsidies and officers from the Arab Legion. Far from being driven by blind anti-semitic prejudice to unleash the Arab Legion against the Jews, Bevin in fact urged restraint on the Arabs in general and on Jordan in particular. What was committed by the British Foreign Secretary as the British mandate in Palestine approached its inglorious end was not King Abdullah to use force to prevent the emergence of a Jewish state was not one of them.

If Bevin was guilty of conspiring to unleash the Arab Legion, his target was not the Jews but the Palestinians. The emergence of a Palestinian state was pretty remote in any case because the Palestinians themselves had done so little to build up a state. In supporting Abdullah's bid to capture the Arab part of Palestine adjacent to his kingdom, Bevin indirectly helped to ensure that the Palestinian state envisaged in the UN partition plan would be still-born. In short, if there is a case against Bevin, it is not that he tried to abort the birth of the Jewish state but that he endorsed the understanding between King Abdullah and the Jewish Agency to partition Palestine between themselves and leave the Palestinians out in the cold.

The Zionist charge that Bevin deliberately instigated hostilities in Palestine and gave encouragement and arms to crush the infant Jewish state thus represents almost the exact opposite of the historical truth as it emerges from British, Arab and Israeli documents. The charge is without substance and may be safely discarded as the first of the myths that have come to surround the founding of the State of Israel.

## 2. The Military Balance

A second myth, fostered by official and semi-official accounts of the 1948 War, is that the Israeli victory was achieved in the face of insurmountable military odds. Israel is pictured in these accounts as a little Jewish David confronting a Goliath. The war is portrayed as a desperate, costly and heroic struggle for survival with plucky little Israel fighting off marauding armies from seven Arab states. Israel's ultimate victory in this war is treated as nothing short of a miracle.

The heroism of the Jewish fighters is not in question. Nor is there any doubt about the heavy price that the Yishuv paid for its victory. Altogether there were 6,000 dead, 4,000 soldiers and 2,000 civilians, or about 1 per cent of the entire Yishuv. Nevertheless, the Yishuv was not as hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned as the official history would have it. It is true that the Yishuv numbered merely 650,000 souls, compared with 1.2 million Palestine Arabs and nearly 2 million Arabs in the surrounding states. It is true that the senior military advisers told the political leadership on 12 May 1948 that the Haganah had only a 'fifty-fifty' chance of withstanding the imminent Arab attack. It is true that the sense of fear and vulnerability in the Jewish population was as acute as it was pervasive and that some segments of this population were gripped by a feeling of gloom and doom. And it is true that during three critical weeks, from the invasion of the regular armies of the Arab states on 15 May until the start of the first truce on 11 June, this community had to fight for its very survival.

But the Yishuv also enjoyed a number of advantages which are commonly downplayed by the old historians. The Yishuv was better prepared, better mobilized and better organized when the struggle for Palestine reached its crucial stage than its local opponents. The Haganah, which was renamed the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) on 31 May, could draw on a large reserve of Western-trained and home-grown officers with military experience. It had an effective centralized command and control. And, in contrast to the armies of the Arab states, especially those of Iraq and Egypt, it had well-developed internal lines of communication which enabled it to operate with greater speed and mobility.

During the unofficial phase of the war, from December 1947 until 14 May 1948, the Yishuv gradually gained the upper hand in the struggle against its Palestinian opponents. Its armed forces were larger, better trained, better equipped, technologically advanced. Despite some initial setbacks, these advantages enabled it to win and win decisively against the Palestine Arabs. Even when the Arab states committed their regular armies, marking the beginning of the official phase of the war, the Yishuv retained its numerical superiority. In mid-May the total number of Arab regular and irregular, operating in Palestine was between 20,000 and 25,000. IDF fielded 35,000 troops, not counting second-line troops in the settlements. By mid-July IDF fully mobilized 65,000 men under arms, by September it rose to 90,000 and by December it reached a peak of 96,441. The Arab states also reinforced their armies but they did not match this rate of increase. Thus, at each stage of the war, IDF significantly outnumbered all the Arab forces put against it and by the final stage of the war its superiority ratio was nearly two to one.[26]

IDF's gravest weakness during the first round of fighting in May-June was in firepower. The Arab armies were better equipped, especially with heavy arms. But during the first truce, in violation of the UN arms embargo, Israel imported arms from all over Europe, and especially from Czechoslovakia, rifles, machine-guns, armoured cars, field guns, tanks, and all kinds of ammunition in large quantities. These illicit arms acquisitions enabled IDF to tip the scales decisively in its favour. In the second round of fighting IDF moved on to the offensive and in the third round it picked off the Arab forces one by one and defeated them one by one. The final outcome of the war was thus not a miracle but a faithful reflection of the underlying Arab-Israeli military balance. In this war, as in most wars, the stronger side ultimately prevailed.

## 3. The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem

A third bone of contention between the old and the new historians concerns the origins of the Palestinian refugee problem. The question is: did they leave or were they pushed out? Ever since 1948 Israeli spokesmen have maintained that the Palestinians left the country on orders from their own leaders and in the expectation of a triumphant return. The old historians written by old historians echo the official line. Arab spokesmen have with equal consistency maintained that Is

expelled some 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and that Israel, therefore, bears the full responsibility for of the Palestinian refugee problem. The question of origins is thus directly related to the question of resolving the Palestinian refugee problem. Arab claims that the notion of forcible 'transfer' is inherent in Zionism. In 1948 the Zionists simply seized the opportunity to displace and dispossess the Arab inhabitants of the country. This controversy all the more acrimonious.

Benny Morris in his book *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* investigated this subject as carefully, dispassionately and objectively as it is ever likely to be. Morris found no evidence of Arab leaders issuing calls to Palestine's Arabs to leave their homes and villages nor any trace of a radio or press campaign urging them to flee. On the Israeli side, there were no blanket orders handed down from above for the systematic expulsion of the Palestinians. He therefore rejects the Arab order and the Jewish robber state explanations. His much-quoted conclusion is that 'The Palestinian refugee problem was born of war, not by design, Jewish or Arab. It was largely a by-product of Arab and Jewish fears and of the bitter fighting that characterized the first Arab-Israeli war; in smaller part, it was the deliberate creation of Jewish military commanders and politicians.' [27] Benny Morris has already replied in detail to Teveth's criticisms and to serve no useful purpose for me to give a blow by blow account of the battle between them. [28] But it seems: Teveth's position on the origins of the Palestinian refugee problem is about as sophisticated as the old saying *vehem nassu* - there was a miracle and they ran away. Anyone who believes that will believe anything.

Another category of critics of Benny Morris' book consists of Israeli orientalists. Some orientalists, like Yehoshua Porath have been highly supportive. Others, like Asher Susser, Emmanuel Sivan and Avraham Sela, have written in a more critical vein while giving credit where credit is due. The recurrent criticism from this professional quarter is that Morris made very little use in his book of Arabic sources. In response to this criticism, Morris posed a question: would the inclusion of the Arabic materials mentioned by the critics have resulted in a fundamental revision of the analysis of the exodus or added significantly to the description of this exodus given in his book? [29] Avraham Sela concedes that the use of the Arabic sources would have probably not changed the main conclusions of Morris's study on the causes of the Palestinian exodus. But he goes on to argue that neglect of the available Arabic sources and heavy reliance on Hebrew documents is liable to produce an unbalanced picture. [30]

While a number of Israeli Orientalists consider that Morris attached too much weight to Israeli actions, and to other factors, in the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, many other reviewers felt that in his conclusion he set Israel off rather lightly. An observation which is frequently made, by Western as well as Palestinian reviewers, is that the evidence presented in the body of the book suggests a far higher degree of Israeli responsibility than that implied in his conclusion. [31] But despite the shortcomings of Morris's conclusion, his book remains an outstandingly scholarly and important contribution to the study of a problem which lies at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

#### 4. Israeli - Jordanian Relations

A fourth issue which gave rise to a lively controversy in Israel is the nature of Israeli-Jordanian relations specifically, the contention that there was collusion or tacit understanding between King Abdullah and the Jews in 1947-49. That there was traffic between these two parties has been widely known for some time and the television interview between Golda Meir and King Abdullah in November 1947 and May 1948 have even featured in popular film. The charge of collusion is a new one. It was made in a book published by Colonel Abdullah al-Tall who had been a secret messenger between King Abdullah and the Jews, following Tall's abortive coup and defection to Egypt. [32] The charge was levelled against Ben-Gurion by Lieutenant-Colonel Israel Baer in the book he wrote in his prison cell after his conviction of spying for the Soviet Union. [33] Tall condemned King Abdullah for betraying his fellow Arabs and the Palestinians down the river. Baer condemned Ben-Gurion for forming an unholy alliance with Arab reactionaries and imperialism. A number of books and articles on Zionist-Hashemite relations have also been written by Israeli historians, the most recent of which are by Dan Schueftan and by Uri Bar-Joseph. [34] But out of the recent crop of books on the unusual bilateral relationship, it is my own book *Collusion Across the Jordan* which achieved real notoriety on the Jordan and has been singled out for attack by the old historians.

The central thesis advanced in my book is that in November 1947 an unwritten agreement was reached between Abdullah and the Jewish Agency to divide Palestine between themselves following the termination of the British Mandate and that this agreement laid the foundation for mutual restraint during the first Arab-Israeli war and for collaboration in the aftermath of this war. A subsidiary thesis is that Britain knew and approved of this secret Zionist agreement to divide up Palestine between themselves rather than along the lines of the UN partition plan.

This thesis challenges the conventional view of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a simple bipolar affair in which a monolithically hostile Arab world is pitted against the Jews. It suggests that the Arab rulers were deeply divided themselves on how to deal with the Zionist challenge and that one of these rulers favoured accommodation and had indeed cut a deal with the Jewish Agency to partition Palestine at the expense of the British Mandate. The thesis also detracts from the heroic version which pictures Israel as ringed by an unbroken circle of Arab states having to repel a concerted all-out attack on all fronts. Not surprisingly, the official history of the War of Independence does not even mention the unwritten agreement with King Abdullah.[35] Even when this agreement is acknowledged the official line is that Abdullah went back on it at the critical moment and that it consequently had no influence, or only a minimal influence, on the conduct of the war.[36]

Regurgitating the official line, Shabtai Teveth hotly denies that the Jewish leaders were involved in collusion or collusion on the Arab side. He coyly admits that 'Israel and Jordan did maintain a dialogue' but goes on to argue that 'at the end of the day it was an understanding of convenience ... There was nothing in such an understanding to suggest collusion or to deceive a third party, in this case the Palestinian Arabs.'[37] Again, anyone who believes this, will believe anything that transpired between Israel and Jordan was a dialogue, then it was a rather curious kind of a dialogue because it lasted for thirty years, because it was clandestine, because it was directed against a common rival, and because many hands were involved. That the dialogue broke down between May and August 1948 is not in doubt. But surely, if one takes a realistic view of this relationship, a strategic partnership, if not an unholy alliance, would be a more appropriate description than dialogue.

Teveth is evidently so wedded to the doctrine of Israel's immaculate conception that he is totally impervious to evidence that contradicts it. He has made up his mind and he does not want to be confused by the facts. The collusion provides a fine example of the absurd lengths to which the old historians are capable of going to suppress truths about the way in which Israel came into the world. Judged by the rough standards of the game of international politics, the dalliance between the Zionists and the Hashemite king was neither extraordinary nor particularly reprehensible. It was acted in a pragmatic fashion to advance their own interest. A problem arises only as a result of the claim that the collusion was based on morality rather than self-interest.

The relations between Jordan and Israel in the 1948 War were reviewed recently by Avraham Sela in a 66-page article in *Middle Eastern Studies*. Sela's use of archival sources and comprehensive examination of the literature on the subject, especially in Arabic, make this a valuable contribution to the historiography of the 1948 War. It does not lead me to revise any of the arguments I advanced in *Collusion Across the Jordan*. Sela's thesis is that 'the conditions and assumptions that had constituted the foundations of the unwritten agreement between Abdullah and the Jewish Agency regarding the partition of Palestine as early as the summer of 1946 were altered so substantially during the war (December 1947 - May 1948) as to render that agreement antiquated and impracticable.'[38]

I believe that despite all the changes, the earlier accord and the long history of co-operation going back to the founding of the Amirate of Transjordan in 1921, continued to exert some influence over the conduct of the two sides. Sela maintains that in the early part of the war, the two sides, and especially the Israeli side, behaved according to the old adage 'comme à la guerre'. Even if this is a valid conclusion regarding Israel, it is emphatically not valid, in my view, regarding Jordan. Although the accord was no longer binding and contact was severed, each side, and especially Jordan, continued to pursue limited objectives and acted with restraint towards the other until the war ended. Though they became bitter enemies at the height of the war, they remained in Uri Bar-Joseph's apt phrase, the best of enemies.



In conclusion, Sela tells us that war is a complex and intricate phenomenon. This is indisputable. One real complexity is that war involves both politics and the use of force. The old historiography deals mostly with one side of the war. I tried to redress the balance by looking at the political side of the war and more particularly at the relationship between politics and strategy. Sela goes on to state that 'The collusion myth implicitly assumes the possible Zionist and Palestinian acceptance of the partition plan and its peaceful implementation.[39] I assume nothing of the kind. On the contrary, precisely because the Palestinians rejected partition, I consider collaboration between the Jewish Agency and the Arab League to have been a reasonable and realistic strategy for both sides. In other words, I accept that in 1947-49 Israel had no Palestinian option or any other Arab option, save the Jordanian option. King Abdullah was the Arab head of state who was willing to accept the principle of partition and to co-exist peacefully with a Jewish state. The dust had settled. From March-April 1948 this understanding was subjected to severe strain as the Jews launched their offensive. In the period May-July 1948, the two sides came to blows. From Abdullah's post-war vantage point it was merely a *fitna*, a family quarrel, and the Jews had started it. And after the initial outburst of violence, both sides pulled their punches, as one does in a family quarrel.

There remains the question of whether the term collusion is appropriate for describing the relations between the Jewish Agency and later the State of Israel. Some of the criticisms of the book were directed at its title rather than its substance. It was for this reason that for the abridged and revised paperback version of the book I opted for a neutral title *The Politics of Partition*. [40] In the preface to the new edition I explained that although I had chosen a word which was offensive to some, I was still of the opinion that the Israel-Jordan link-up involved at least some of the characteristics associated with collusion: 'it was held behind a thick veil of secrecy; its existence was hotly denied by the parties; it was directed against a third party; it involved more than a modicum of underhand scheming and plotting; it was consciously and deliberately intended to frustrate the will of the international community, as expressed through the United Nations General Assembly, in favour of creating an independent Arab state in part of Palestine.' [41] On reflection I regret that I changed the title of my book. The original title was an apt one. Collusion is as good a word as any to describe the traffic between the Hashemite king and the Zionist movement during the period 1921-1951, despite the interlude in the hot summer of 1948.

## 5. Arab War Aims

Closely related to Israeli-Jordanian relations is the question of Arab war aims in 1948, a fifth bone of contention between the old and the new historians. The question is why did the Arab states invade Palestine with their regular armies after the British mandate expired and the State of Israel was proclaimed? The conventional Zionist answer is that behind the invasion was to destroy the newly-born Jewish state and to throw the Jews into the sea. The reality is more complex.

It is true that all the Arab states, with the exception of Jordan, rejected the UN partition plan. It is true that regular Arab armies invaded Palestine the morning after the State of Israel was proclaimed. It is true that the invasion was accompanied by blood-curdling rhetoric and threats to throw the Jews into the sea. It is true that in addition to the regular Arab armies and the Mufti's Holy War army, various groups of volunteers arrived in Palestine, the most important of which was the Arab Liberation Army, sponsored by the Arab League and led by the Syrian Fawzi al-Qawukji. More importantly, it is true that the military experts of the Arab League had worked out a plan for the invasion and that this plan was all the more dangerous for having had more limited and realistic aims than those implied by the wild pan-Arab rhetoric.

But King Abdullah, who was given nominal command over all the Arab forces in Palestine, wrecked this plan with last minute changes. His objective in sending his army into Palestine was not to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state but to make himself master of the Arab part of Palestine which meant preventing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Since the Palestinians had done next to nothing to create an independent state, the Arab part of Palestine would have probably gone to Abdullah without all the scheming and plotting, but that is another matter. What happened, that, under the command of Glubb Pasha, the Arab League made every effort to avert a head-on collision at

exception of one of two minor incidents, made no attempt to encroach on the territory allocated to the Jewish UN cartographers.

There was no love lost between Abdullah and the other Arab rulers who suspected him of being in cahoots with Jews. Syria and Lebanon felt threatened by his long-standing ambition to make himself master of Greater Syria. King Farouk made his decision to intervene in Palestine at the last moment, and on the advice of his civilian and military experts, at least in part in order to check the growth of his rival's power. Their motives behind the invasion of Palestine were rather mixed. And there was no single Arab plan of action during the invasion. On the contrary, it was the inability of the Arabs to co-ordinate their diplomatic and military plans that was the measure responsible for the disaster that overwhelmed them.

The one purpose which the Arab invasion did not serve was the ostensible one of coming to the rescue of the Palestinians. Nowhere was the disparity between pan-Arab rhetoric and the reality greater than in relation to the Palestinian Arabs.[42] The reality was one of national selfishness with each Arab state looking after its own interests. What was supposed to be a holy war against the Jews, quickly turned into a general land grab. Division and discord within the ramshackle Arab coalition deepened with every successive defeat. Israel's leaders knew about the divisions and exploited them to the full. Thus they launched an offensive against the Egyptian army in October and in December 1948 in the confident expectation that their old friend in Amman would keep out. The old habit of concentrating almost exclusively on the military operations of 1948 ended up with the familiar picture of an Arab war in which all the Arabs were united by a single purpose, all were bent on the defeat and destruction of Israel. In retrospect, however, the political line-up on the Arab side in 1948 appears much more complicated and the motives behind the invasion of Palestine much more mixed.

## 6. The Elusive Peace

Last but not least of the contentious questions in the debate between the old and the new historians is the question of why peace proved unattainable in the aftermath of the first Arab-Israeli War. At the core of the old version lies the charge of Arab intransigence. According to this version, Israel strove indefatigably towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict and all her efforts foundered on the rocks of Arab intransigence. The new historians believe that postwar Israel was more intransigent than the Arab states and that she consequently bears a larger share of the responsibility for the deadlock which followed the formal ending of hostilities.[43]

Evidence to back the new interpretation comes mainly from the files of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. These files are replete with evidence of Arab peace feelers and Arab readiness to negotiate with Israel from September 1948 onwards. Two key issues in dispute were refugees and borders. Each of the neighbouring Arab states was prepared to negotiate with Israel directly and prepared to bargain about both refugees and borders.

King Abdullah proposed an overall political settlement with Israel in return for certain territorial concessions, a land corridor to link Jordan with the Mediterranean, which would have enabled him to counter Arab criticism and to negotiate a separate peace with Israel. Colonel Husni Zaim, who captured power in Syria in March 1949 and was overthrown a few months later, offered Israel full peace with an exchange of ambassadors, normal economic relations and the resettlement of 300,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria in return for an adjustment of the boundary between the two countries in the middle of Lake Tiberias.[44] King Farouk of Egypt demanded the cession of Gaza and a substantial strip of land bordering on Sinai as his price for a *de facto* recognition of Israel. All three Arab rulers displayed remarkable pragmatism in their approach to negotiations with the Jewish state. They were even anxious to pre-empt one another by making peace with Israel. It was assumed that whoever settled up with Israel first would also get the best terms. Zaim openly declared his ambition to be the first Arab leader to make peace with Israel.

In each case, though for slightly different reasons, David Ben-Gurion considered the price being asked for peace too high. He was ready to conclude peace on the basis of the status quo; he was unwilling to proceed to a peace which more than minuscule Israeli concessions on refugees or on borders. Ben-Gurion, as his diary reveals, considered armistice agreements with the neighbouring Arab states met Israel's essential needs for recognition, security and stability.[45] He knew that for formal peace agreements Israel would have to pay by yielding substantial tracts of land and by permitting the return of a substantial number of Palestinian refugees and he did not consider this a fair price for paying. Whether Ben-Gurion made the right choice is a matter of opinion. That he had a choice is now undeniable.

The controversy surrounding the elusive peace is examined in a book by Itamar Rabinovich, former Rector of Bar Ilan University and one of Israel's leading experts on modern Arab politics. The title of the book, inspired by a poem by Robert Frost, is *The Road Not Taken: Early Arab-Israeli Negotiations*. This title implies that the failure of these talks was not because there was another road leading to peace - the road not taken. But the book does not advance any thesis or engage directly in the debate between the old and the new historians. Rabinovich prefers to remain above the fray and is reluctant to assign blame, that his book ends without an explicit conclusion. All he would say is that the decisions of 1948-49 were made by Arabs, Israelis, Americans and others. The credit and responsibility for them belong to all. Rabinovich's implicit conclusion, however, is that because of the instability of the Arab regimes, Ben-Gurion was right in his refusal to assume any political risks for the sake of peace. Yet in every crucial respect Rabinovich's argument undermines the claim of the old historians that Israel encountered total Arab intransigence and confirms the argument that Israeli intransigence was the much more serious obstacle on the road to peace.[47]

## Conclusion

This article is concerned with the old Zionist version of the first Arab-Israeli war and with the challenge to it posed by the new historiography. My conclusion is that this version is deeply flawed and needs to be radically revised in the light of the new information that is now available. To put it bluntly, this version is little more than propaganda of the victors. The debate between the old and the new historiography, moreover, is not of purely historical interest. It cuts to the very core of Israel's image of herself. It is for this reason that the battle of the historians has excited such intense popular interest and stirred such strong political passions.

The debate about 1948 between the old and the new historians resembles the American debate on the origins of the Cold War. That debate evolved in stages. During the 1950s the so-called traditionalist view held sway. According to this view Soviet expansionism was responsible for the outbreak of the Cold War while American policy was essentially defensive. Then, in the context of the Vietnam war and the crisis of American self-confidence that accompanied it, a revisionist school of thought emerged, a revisionist school of mostly younger, left-wing scholars. According to this school of thought the Cold War was the result of the onward march of American capitalism, and it was the Soviet Union that reacted to it. Following the opening up of the archives, a third school of thought emerged, the post-revisionist school. A re-evaluation of the assumptions and arguments of both traditionalists and revisionists in the light of new evidence has led to a gradual post-revisionist synthesis. The hallmark of post-revisionism is not to allocate blame to this party or the other but to understand the dynamics of the conflict that we call the Cold War.

The debate about the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict seems to be following a similar pattern. A tradition consisting of participants and propagandists as well as historians close to the political establishment, laid the blame for the 1948 War and its consequences at the door of the Arabs. Then, following the opening of the archives, a new school of mostly left-wing historians began to reinterpret many of the events surrounding the creation of the State of Israel. The new historians take a much more critical view of Israel's conduct in the years 1947-49 and place on her a larger share of the blame for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem and for the continuing political impasse in the Middle East. The debate between the old and the new historians is bitter and acrimonious and it is conducted in a highly charged political atmosphere. It is melancholy to have to add that there is no sign yet of the emergence of a post-revisionist synthesis. Battles between historians, like real battles, evidently have to run their course.

**Notes:**

- [1] Emile Habiby, *Al-Waqa'at al-Ghariba fi Ikhtifa' Sa'id Abi al-Nahs al-Mutasha'il*, [The Secret Life of Saeed, the Pessimist] (Beirut: Dar Ibn Khaldun, 1974), p.37.
- [2] *Ibid.*, p.35.
- [3] Simha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities* (New York: Pantheon, 1987), p.8.
- [4] *Ibid.*, p.10.
- [5] Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- [6] Ilan Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-51* (London, Macmillan, 1988).
- [7] Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement and the Partition of Palestine* (Clarendon Press, 1988)
- [8] Israel Baer, *Bitahon Israel: Etmol, Hayom, Mahar* [Israel's Security: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow] (Tel Aviv: Keter, 1966).
- [9] Gavriel Cohen, 'Hamediniyut Habritit Erev Milhemet Ha'atzma'ut', in Yehuda Wallach, ed., *Hayinu Keholmi as Dreamers* (Givatayim: Massada, 1985).
- [10] Yaacov Shimoni, 'Ha'aravim Likrat Milhemet Israel-'Arav, 1945-1948' (The Arabs and the Approaching War 1945-1948), *Hamizrah Hehadash*, 47:3, 1962.
- [11] Meir Pail, 'Hafqa'at Haribonut Hamedinit shel Filastin miyedei Hafalestinim' (The Expropriation of Palestinian Sovereignty over Palestine from the Palestinians), *Ziyonut*, 3, 1973.
- [12] Rony E. Gabbay, *A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict: The Arab Refugee Problem* (Geneva: Librairie E. Dictionnaire, 1961).
- [13] A. Yisra'eli [Moshe Machover and Akiva Orr], *Shalom, Shalom - ve'ein Shalom: Yisra'el-Arav, 1948-61* [Peace, there is No Peace: Israel and the Arabs, 1948-61] (Jerusalem, 1961).
- [14] Israel State Archives and Central Zionist Archives, *Political and Diplomatic Documents, December 1947-May 1948* by Gedalia Yogev (Jerusalem: Israel Government Press, 1980); Israel State Archives, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel, May - September 1948*, vol. I, edited by Yehoshua Freundlich (Jerusalem: Israel Government Press, 1984); and *Documents on the Foreign Policy of the State of Israel: October 1948 - April 1949*, Vol. II, edited by Yehoshua Freundlich (Jerusalem: Israel Government Press, 1984); and *Documents on the Foreign Policy of the State of Israel: Armistice with the Arab States, December 1948- July 1949*, vol. III, edited by Yemima Rosenthal (Jerusalem: Israel Government Press, 1986).
- [15] Iraq, *Taqrir Lajnat al-Tahqiq al-Niyabiya fi Qadiyat Filastin* (Baghdad, 1949).
- [16] See the references in Walid Khalidi, 'The Arab Perspective', in Wm. Roger Louis and Robert W. Stookey, eds. *The Palestine Mandate* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1986).
- [17] For a review of this literature, see Avraham Sela, 'Arab Historiography of the 1948 War: The Quest for Legitimacy', in Lawrence J. Silberstein, ed., *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State* (New York: New York University Press, 1991).
- [18] Benny Morris, 'The New Historiography: Israel Confronts its Past', *Tikkun*, 3:6, November-December 1989. This much-discussed article is reprinted in Benny Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
- [19] One historian of Zionism, Anita Shapira, was prompted by Menachem Begin's claim to embark upon a re-evaluation of the defensive ethos of Zionism throughout the pre-state period. Tom Segev, 'The Anguish of Poor Samson', October 1992. Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: the Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. vii.
- [20] Shabtai Teveth, 'Charging Israel with Original Sin', *Commentary*, September 1989, p. 33.
- [21] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- [22] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- [23] Benny Morris, *Ha'aretz*, 9 May 1989; 'The Eel and History: A reply to Shabtai Teveth', *Tikkun*, 5:1, January 1990; and *1948 and After*, pp. 27-29.
- [24] See my letters to the Editor, *Commentary*, February and July 1990.
- [25] Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*; Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*; and Avi Shlaim, 'Britain and the Arab-Israeli War of 1948', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 16:4, Summer 1987. On the theory that the British wanted to

- Jewish part of Palestine to a 'rump state' see Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1963: Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 372-79.
- [26] Flapan, *The Birth of Israel*, Myth Six, especially the table with three different estimates of troop numbers or Morris, *1948 and After*, pp. 13-16. A study based on privileged access to IDF sources supports the revision showing that the United Nations arms embargo hurt the Arabs much more than it hurt IDF: Amitzur Ilan, *The Arab-Israeli Arms Race* (forthcoming).
- [27] Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, p. 286.
- [28] In addition to the articles in *Ha'aretz* and *Commentary*, Teveth published 'The Palestine Arab Refugee Problem: Origins', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26:2, April 1990.
- [29] Benny Morris, *Ha'aretz*, 23 April and 1 May 1992.
- [30] Avraham Sela, *Ha'aretz*, 4 and 11 October 1991.
- [31] See, for example, Michael Palumbo, 'What Happened to Palestine? The Revisionists Revisited', *The Middle East Journal*, September - October 1990; Rashid Khalidi, 'Revisionist Views of the Modern History of Palestine: 1948', *Middle Eastern Quarterly*, 10:4, Autumn 1988; Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, 'The War of 1948: Disputed Perspectives and Outcome', *Palestine Studies*, 18:2, Winter 1989; and Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: the Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Thought, 1882-1948* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).
- [32] Abdullah al-Tall, *Karithat Filastin: Mudhakkirat Abdullah al-Tall, Qa'id Ma'arakat al-Quds* [The Palestine Catastrophe: Memoirs of Abdullah al-Tal, Leader of the Battle for Jerusalem] (Cairo: Dar al-Qalam, 1959).
- [33] Baer, *Bitahon Israel*.
- [34] Dan Schueftan, *Optzya Yardenit: Israel, Yarden Vehapalestinim* [Jordanian Option: Israel, Jordan and the Palestine Option] (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hame'uhad, 1986); and Uri Bar-Joseph, *The Best of Enemies: Israel and Transjordan in the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1987).
- [35] Israel Defence Forces, *Toldot Milhemet Hakomemiyut* [History of the War of Independence] (Tel Aviv: Ma'arac, 1990).
- [36] See, for example, the author's interview with Yigael Yadin, acting chief of staff in 1948, in Shlaim, *Collusion in Jordan*, p. 236.
- [37] Teveth, 'Charging Israel with Original Sin', p.28.
- [38] Avraham Sela, 'Transjordan, Israel and the 1948 War: Myth, Historiography and Reality', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 29:5, October 1992, p. 627.
- [39] *Ibid.*, p. 680.
- [40] Avi Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition: King Abdullah, the Zionists and Palestine, 1921-1951* (Oxford: Oxford Univ Press, 1990).
- [41] *Ibid.*, p. viii.
- [42] See, for example, Avi Shlaim, 'The Rise and Fall of the All-Palestine Government in Gaza', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 20:1, Autumn 1990.
- [43] Flapan, *The Birth of Israel*, Myth Seven; Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*; Morris, *1948 and After*, pp. 22-23; Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1992), chapters 8-10.
- [44] Avi Shlaim, 'Husni Zaim and the Plan to Resettle Palestinian Refugees in Syria', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 15:3, Summer 1986.
- [45] David Ben-Gurion, *Yoman Hamilhama* [War Diary], edited by Gershon Rivlin and Elhanan Orren (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defence, 1982), vol. III, p. 993.
- [46] Itamar Rabinovich, *The Road Not Taken: Early Arab-Israeli Negotiations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- [47] For a detailed critique of Rabinovich see Benny Morris, 'A Second Look at the "Missed Opportunity," or Some Thoughts on the History: A Review Essay', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 24:1, Autumn 1994.

[Back](#)