

The Link

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About This Issue

The Link interviewed Naeim Giladi, a Jew from Iraq, for three hours on March 16, 1998, two days prior to his 69th birthday. For nearly two other delightful hours, we were treated to a multi-course Arabic meal prepared by his wife Rachel, who is also Iraqi. "It's our Arab culture," he said proudly.

In our previous *Link*, Israeli historian Ilan Pappé looked at the hundreds of thousands of indigenous Palestinians whose lives were uprooted to make room for foreigners who would come to populate confiscated land. Most were Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe. But over half a million other Jews came from Islamic lands. Zionist propagandists claim that Israel "rescued" these Jews from their anti-Jewish, Muslim neighbors. One of those "rescued" Jews—Naeim Giladi—knows otherwise.

In his book, *Ben Gurion's Scandals: How the Haganah & the Mossad Eliminated Jews*, Giladi discusses the crimes committed by Zionists in their frenzy to import raw Jewish labor. Newly-vacated farmlands had to be plowed to provide food for the immigrants and the military ranks had to be filled with conscripts to defend the stolen lands. Mr. Giladi couldn't get his book published in Israel, and even in the U.S. he discovered he could do so only if he used his own money. His book is listed in our catalog on pages 13-15.

The Giladis, now U.S. citizens, live in New York City. By choice, they no longer hold Israeli citizenship. "I am Iraqi," he told us, "born in Iraq, my culture still Iraqi Arabic, my religion Jewish, my citizenship American."

John F. Mahoney

The Jews of Iraq



I write this article for the same reason I wrote my book: to tell the American people, and especially American Jews, that Jews from Islamic lands did not emigrate willingly to Israel; that, to force them to leave, Jews killed Jews; and that, to buy time to confiscate ever more Arab lands, Jews on numerous occasions rejected genuine peace initiatives from their Arab neighbors.

I write about what the first prime minister of Israel called "cruel Zionism."

The author, Naeim Giladi, pictured in 1947—the year his account for *The Link* begins.

CONTINUED ON

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IN MEMORIAM

We announce with sadness the deaths of Ambassador Marshall W. Wiley and Father Joseph L. Ryan, S.J.

Marshall W. Wiley served in various Foreign Service posts, as U. S. Ambassador to Oman, Deputy Chief of Mission in Saudi Arabia, Chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Baghdad, and Director of North African Affairs at the U.S. State Department in Washington. He also did tours of duty in Yemen, Lebanon and Jordan.

In recent years, Ambassador Wiley lectured widely on the Middle East and was a frequent participant on national TV news programs. Since 1986, he served on our Board of Directors.

His presence on our Board will be missed greatly. We will miss his Middle East expertise, his legal counsel, and his company. The one-day, round-trip trek by train from his home in Maryland to our office in Manhattan can be tiresome at best. Marshall seldom missed a Directors meeting. The obligation of an educational organization to provide reliable information was of profound importance to him—particularly if the organization was one on whose board he served.

Joseph L. Ryan was a Jesuit priest who taught at the Jesuits' Baghdad College in Iraq, and later served as dean and academic vice-president of Al-Hikma University in Iraq. From 1971 to 1975, he was an associate of the Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World at St. Joseph's University in Beirut, and from 1984 to 1990 he directed the Pontifical Mission for Palestine in Amman, Jordan.

Father Ryan served on our Board of Directors until a few years ago when his health began to fail. Even then he maintained his public endorsement of our efforts by accepting membership on our National Council.

An unobtrusive and shy man, Joseph Ryan was also an insightful observer of the human condition, who did not fear to speak on the plight of the Palestinians before congressional committees and in churches and synagogues. For the past seven years he was in residence at Fairfield University in Connecticut, where from time to time I'd have lunch or supper with him. His assignment was directing retreats for other Jesuits, and he'd always be reading the latest books on spirituality. Occasionally he'd tell me about a particularly good book he had just read and how much it had impressed him. Then he'd ask, "How is it over there?"

—John F. Mahoney

(Continued from Page 1.)

My Story

Of course I thought I knew it all back then. I was young, idealistic, and more than willing to put my life at risk for my convictions. It was 1947 and I wasn't quite 18 when the Iraqi authorities caught me for smuggling young Iraqi Jews like myself out of Iraq, into Iran, and then on to the Promised Land of the soon-to-be established Israel.

I was an Iraqi Jew in the Zionist underground. My Iraqi jailers did everything they could to extract the names of my co-conspirators. Fifty years later, pain still throbs in my right toe—a reminder of the day my captors used pliers to remove my toenails. On another occasion, they hauled me to the flat roof of the prison, stripped me bare on a frigid January day, then threw a bucket of cold water over me. I was left there, chained to the railing, for hours. But I never once considered giving them the information they wanted. I was a true believer.

My preoccupation during what I refer to as my "two years in hell" was with survival and escape. I had no interest then in the broad sweep of Jewish history in Iraq even though my family had been part of it right from the beginning. We were originally Haroons, a large and important family of the "Babylonian Diaspora." My ancestors had settled in Iraq more than 2,600 years ago—600 years before Christianity, and 1,200 years before Islam. I am descended from Jews who built the tomb of Yehezkel, a Jewish prophet of pre-biblical times. My town, where I was born in 1929, is Hillah, not far from the ancient site of Babylon.

The original Jews found Babylon, with its nourishing Tigris and Euphrates rivers, to be truly a land of milk, honey, abundance—and opportunity. Although Jews, like other minorities in what became Iraq, experienced periods of oppression and discrimination depending on the rulers of the period, their general trajectory over two and

one-half millennia was upward. Under the late Ottoman rule, for example, Jewish social and religious institutions, schools, and medical facilities flourished without outside interference, and Jews were prominent in government and business.

As I sat there in my cell, unaware that a death sentence soon would be handed down against me, I could not have recounted any personal grievances that my family members would have lodged against the government or the Muslim majority. Our family had been treated well and had prospered, first as farmers with some 50,000 acres devoted to rice, dates and Arab horses. Then, with the Ottomans, we bought and purified gold that was shipped to Istanbul and turned into coinage. The Turks were responsible in fact for changing our name to reflect our occupation—we became Khalaschi, meaning “Makers of Pure.”

I did not volunteer the information to my father that I had joined the Zionist underground. He found out several months before I was arrested when he saw me writing Hebrew and using words and expressions unfamiliar to him. He was even more surprised to learn that, yes, I had decided I would soon move to Israel myself. He was scornful. “You’ll come back with your tail between your legs,” he predicted.

About 125,000 Jews left Iraq for Israel in the late 1940s and into 1952, most because they had been lied to and put into a panic by what I came to learn were Zionist bombs. But my mother and father were among the 6,000 who did not go to Israel. Although physically I never did return to Iraq—that bridge had been burned in any event—my heart has made the journey there many, many times. My father had it right.

I was imprisoned at the military camp of Abu-Greib, about 7 miles from Baghdad. When the military court handed down my sentence of death by hanging, I had nothing to lose by attempting the escape I had been planning for many months.

It was a strange recipe for an escape: a dab of butter, an orange peel, and some army clothing that I had asked a friend to buy for me at a flea market. I deliberately ate as much bread as I could to put on fat in anticipation of the day I became 18, when they could formally charge me with a crime and attach the 50-pound ball and chain that was standard prisoner issue.

Later, after my leg had been shackled, I went on a

starvation diet that often left me weak-kneed. The pat of butter was to lubricate my leg in preparation for extricating it from the metal band. The orange peel I surreptitiously stuck into the lock on the night of my planned escape, having studied how it could be placed in such a way as to keep the lock from closing.

As the jailers turned to go after locking up, I put on the old army issue that was indistinguishable from what they were wearing—a long, green coat and a stocking cap that I pulled down over much of my face (it was winter). Then I just quietly opened the door and joined the departing group of soldiers as they strode down the hall and outside, and I offered a “good night” to the shift guard as I left. A friend with a car was waiting to speed me away.

Later I made my way to the new state of Israel, arriving in May, 1950. My passport had my name in Arabic and English, but the English couldn’t capture the “kh” sound, so it was rendered simply as Klaski. At the border, the immigration people applied the English version, which had an Eastern European, Ashkenazi ring to it. In one way, this “mistake” was my key to discovering very soon just how the Israeli caste system worked.

They asked me where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do. I was the son of a farmer; I knew all the problems of the farm, so I volunteered to go to Dafnah, a farming *kibbutz* in the high Galilee. I only lasted a few weeks. The new immigrants were given the worst of everything. The food was the same, but that was the only thing that everyone had in common. For the immigrants, bad cigarettes, even bad

toothpaste. Everything. I left.

Then, through the Jewish Agency, I was advised to go to al-Majdal (later renamed Ashkelon), an Arab town about 9 miles from Gaza, very close to the Mediterranean. The Israeli government planned to turn it into a farmers’ city, so my farm background would be an asset there.

When I reported to the Labor Office in al-Majdal, they saw that I could read and write Arabic and Hebrew and they said that I could find a good-paying job with the Military Governor’s office. The Arabs were under the authority of these Israeli Military Governors. A clerk handed me a bunch of forms in Arabic and Hebrew. Now it dawned on me. Before Israel could establish its farmers’ city, it had to rid al-Majdal of its indigenous Palestinians. The forms were petitions to the United



NAEIM GILADI

Nations Inspectors asking for transfer out of Israel to Gaza, which was under Egyptian control.

I read over the petition. In signing, the Palestinian would be saying that he was of sound mind and body and was making the request for transfer free of pressure or duress. Of course, there was no way that they would leave without being pressured to do so. These families had been there hundreds of years, as farmers, primitive artisans, weavers. The Military Governor prohibited them from pursuing their livelihoods, just penned them up until they lost hope of resuming their normal lives. That's when they signed to leave.

I was there and heard their grief. "Our hearts are in pain when we look at the orange trees that we planted with our own hands. Please let us go, let us give water to those trees. God will not be pleased with us if we leave His trees untended." I asked the Military Governor to give them relief, but he said, "No, we want them to leave."

I could no longer be part of this oppression and I left. Those Palestinians who didn't sign up for transfers were taken by force—just put in trucks and dumped in Gaza. About four thousand people were driven from al-Majdal in one way or another. The few who remained were collaborators with the Israeli authorities.

Subsequently, I wrote letters trying to get a government job elsewhere and I got many immediate responses asking me to come for an interview. Then they would discover that my face didn't match my Polish/Ashkenazi name. They would ask if I spoke Yiddish or Polish, and when I said I didn't, they would ask where I came by a Polish name. Desperate for a good job, I would usually say that I thought my great-grandfather was from Poland. I was advised time and again that "we'll give you a call."

Eventually, three to four years after coming to Israel, I changed my name to Giladi, which is close to the code name, Gilad, that I had in the Zionist underground. Klaski wasn't doing me any good anyway, and my Eastern friends were always chiding me about the name they knew didn't go with my origins as an Iraqi Jew.

I was disillusioned at what I found in the Promised Land, disillusioned personally, disillusioned at the institutionalized racism, disillusioned at what I was beginning to learn about Zionism's cruelties. The principal interest Israel had in Jews from Islamic countries was as a supply of cheap labor, especially for the farm work that was beneath the urbanized Eastern European Jews. Ben Gurion needed the "Oriental" Jews to farm the thousands of acres of land left by Palestinians who were driven out by Israeli forces in 1948.

And I began to find out about the barbaric methods used to rid the fledgling state of as many Palestinians as possible. The world recoils today at the thought of bacteriological warfare, but Israel was probably the first to actually use it in the Middle East. In the 1948 war, Jewish forces would empty Arab villages of their populations, often by threats, sometimes by just gunning down a half-dozen unarmed Arabs as examples to the rest. To make sure the Arabs couldn't return to make a fresh life for themselves in these villages, the Israelis put typhus and dysentery bacteria into the water wells.

Uri Mileshtin, an official historian for the Israeli Defense Force, has written and spoken about the use of bacteriological agents.¹ According to Mileshtin, Moshe Dayan, a division commander at the time, gave orders in 1948 to remove Arabs from their villages, bulldoze their homes, and render water wells unusable with typhus and dysentery bacteria.

Acre was so situated that it could practically defend itself with one big gun, so the Haganah put bacteria into the spring that fed the town. The spring was called Capri and it ran from the north near a kibbutz. The Haganah put typhus bacteria into the water going to Acre, the people got sick, and the Jewish forces occupied Acre. This worked so well that they sent a Haganah division dressed as Arabs into Gaza, where there were Egyptian forces, and the Egyptians caught them putting two cans of bacteria, typhus and dysentery, into the water supply in wanton disregard of the civilian population. "In war, there is no sentiment," one of the captured Haganah men was quoted as saying.

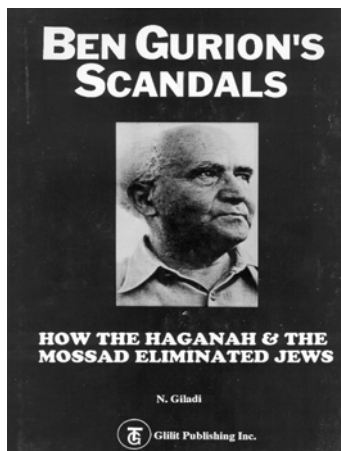
My activism in Israel began shortly after I received a letter from the Socialist/Zionist Party asking me to help with their Arabic newspaper. When I showed up at their offices at Central House in Tel Aviv, I asked around to see just where I should report. I showed the letter to a couple of people there and, without even looking at it, they would motion me away with the words, "Room No. 8." When I saw that they weren't even reading the letter, I inquired of several others. But the response was the same, "Room No. 8," with not a glance at the paper I put in front of them.

So I went to Room 8 and saw that it was the Department of Jews from Islamic Countries. I was disgusted and angry. Either I am a member of the party or I'm not. Do I have a different ideology or different politics because I am an Arab Jew? It's segregation, I thought, just like a Negroes' Department. I turned around and walked out. That was the start of my open protests. That same year I organized a demonstration in Ashkelon against Ben Gurion's racist policies and 10,000 people turned out.

There wasn't much opportunity for those of us who were second class citizens to do much about it when Israel was on a war footing with outside enemies. After the 1967 war, I was in the Army myself and served in the Sinai when there was continued fighting along the Suez Canal. But the cease-fire with Egypt in 1970 gave us our opening. We took to the streets and organized politically to demand equal rights. If it's our country, if we were expected to risk our lives in a border war, then we expected equal treatment.

We mounted the struggle so tenaciously and received so much publicity that the Israeli government tried to discredit our movement by calling us "Israel's Black Panthers." They were thinking in racist terms, really, in assuming the Israeli public would reject an organization whose ideology was being compared to that of radical blacks in the United States. But we saw that what we were doing was no different than what blacks in the United States were fighting against—segregation, discrimination, unequal treatment. Rather than reject the label, we adopted it proudly. I had posters of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela and other civil rights activists plastered all over my office.

With the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Israeli-condoned Sabra and Shatilla massacres, I had had enough of Israel. I became a United States citizen and made certain to revoke my Israeli citizenship. I could never have written and published my book in Israel, not with the censorship they would impose.



Even in America, I had great difficulty finding a publisher because many are subject to pressures of one kind or another from Israel and its friends. I ended up paying \$60,000 from my own pocket to publish *Ben Gurion's Scandals: How the Haganah & the Mossad Eliminated Jews*, virtually the entire proceeds from having sold my house in Israel.

I still was afraid that the printer would back out or that legal proceedings would be initiated to stop its publication, like the Israeli government did in an attempt to prevent former Mossad case officer Victor Ostrovsky from publishing his first book.² *Ben Gurion's Scandals* had to be translated into English from two languages. I wrote in Hebrew when I was in Israel and hoped to publish the book there, and I wrote in Arabic when I was completing

the book after coming to the U.S. But I was so worried that something would stop publication that I told the printer not to wait for the translations to be thoroughly checked and proofread. Now I realize that the publicity of a lawsuit would just have created a controversial interest in the book.

I am using bank vault storage for the valuable documents that back up what I have written. These documents, including some that I illegally copied from the archives at Yad Vashem, confirm what I saw myself, what I was told by other witnesses, and what reputable historians and others have written concerning the Zionist bombings in Iraq, Arab peace overtures that were rebuffed, and incidents of violence and death inflicted by Jews on Jews in the cause of creating Israel.

The Riots of 1941

If, as I have said, my family in Iraq was not persecuted personally and I knew no deprivation as a member of the Jewish minority, what led me to the steps of the gallows as a member of the Zionist underground? To answer that question, it is necessary to establish the context of the massacre that occurred in Baghdad on June 1, 1941, when several hundred Iraqi Jews were killed in riots involving junior officers of the Iraqi army. I was 12 years of age and many of those killed were my friends. I was angry, and very confused.

What I didn't know at the time was that the riots most likely were stirred up by the British, in collusion with a pro-British Iraqi leadership.

With the breakup of the Ottoman Empire following WW I, Iraq came under British "tutelage." Amir Faisal, son of Sharif Hussein who had led the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman sultan, was brought in from Mecca by the British to become King of Iraq in 1921. Many Jews were appointed to key administrative posts, including that of economics minister. Britain retained final authority over domestic and external affairs.

Britain's pro-Zionist attitude in Palestine, however, triggered a growing anti-Zionist backlash in Iraq, as it did in all Arab countries. Writing at the end of 1934, Sir Francis Humphreys, Britain's Ambassador in Baghdad, noted that, while before WW I Iraqi Jews had enjoyed a more favorable position than any other minority in the country, since then "Zionism has sown dissension between Jews and Arabs, and a bitterness has grown up between the two peoples which did not previously exist."³

King Faisal died in 1933. He was succeeded by his son Ghazi, who died in a motor car accident in 1939. The crown then passed to Ghazi's 4-year-old son, Faisal II, whose uncle, Abd al-Ilah, was named regent. Abd al-Ilah

selected Nouri el-Said as prime minister. El-Said supported the British and, as hatred of the British grew, he was forced from office in March 1940 by four senior army officers who advocated Iraq's independence from Britain. Calling themselves the Golden Square, the officers compelled the regent to name as prime minister Rashid Ali al-Kilani, leader of the National Brotherhood party.

The time was 1940 and Britain was reeling from a strong German offensive. Al-Kilani and the Golden Square saw this as their opportunity to rid themselves of the British once and for all. Cautiously they began to negotiate for German support, which led the pro-British regent Abd al-Ilah to dismiss al-Kilani in January 1941. By April, however, the Golden Square officers had reinstated the prime minister.

This provoked the British to send a military force into Basra on April 12, 1941. Basra, Iraq's second largest city, had a Jewish population of 30,000. Most of these Jews made their livings from import/export, money changing, retailing, as workers in the airports, railways, and ports, or as senior government employees.

On the same day, April 12, supporters of the pro-British regent notified the Jewish leaders that the regent wanted to meet with them. As was their custom, the leaders brought flowers for the regent. Contrary to custom, however, the cars that drove them to the meeting place dropped them off at the site where the British soldiers were concentrated.

Photographs of the Jews appeared in the following day's newspapers with the banner "Basra Jews Receive British Troops with Flowers." That same day, April 13, groups of angry Arab youths set about to take revenge against the Jews. Several Muslim notables in Basra heard of the plan and calmed things down. Later, it was learned that the regent was not in Basra at all and that the matter was a provocation by his pro-British supporters to bring about an ethnic war in order to give the British army a pretext to intervene.

The British continued to land more forces in and around Basra. On May 7, 1941, their Gurkha unit, composed of Indian soldiers from that ethnic group, occupied Basra's el-Oshar quarter, a neighborhood with a large Jewish population. The soldiers, led by British officers, began looting. Many shops in the commercial district were plundered. Private homes were broken into. Cases of attempted rape were reported. Local residents, Jews and Muslims, responded with pistols and old rifles, but their bullets were no match for the soldiers' Tommy Guns.

Afterwards, it was learned that the soldiers acted with the acquiescence, if not the blessing, of their British

commanders. (It should be remembered that the Indian soldiers, especially those of the Gurkha unit, were known for their discipline, and it is highly unlikely they would have acted so riotously without orders.) The British goal clearly was to create chaos and to blacken the image of the pro-nationalist regime in Baghdad, thereby giving the British forces reason to proceed to the capital and to overthrow the al-Kilani government.

Baghdad fell on May 30. Al-Kilani fled to Iran, along with the Golden Square officers. Radio stations run by the British reported that Regent Abd al-Ilah would be returning to the city and that thousands of Jews and others were planning to welcome him. What inflamed young Iraqis against the Jews most, however, was the radio announcer Yunas Bahri on the German station "Berlin," who reported in Arabic that Jews from Palestine were fighting alongside the British against Iraqi soldiers near the city of Faluja. The report was false.

On Sunday, June 1, unarmed fighting broke out in Baghdad between Jews who were still celebrating their Shabuoth holiday and young Iraqis who thought the Jews were celebrating the return of the pro-British regent. That evening, a group of Iraqis stopped a bus, removed the Jewish passengers, murdered one and fatally wounded a second.

About 8:30 the following morning, some 30 individuals in military and police uniforms opened fire along el-Amin street, a small downtown street whose jewelry, tailor and grocery shops were Jewish-owned. By 11 a.m., mobs of Iraqis with knives, switchblades and clubs were attacking Jewish homes in the area.

The riots continued throughout Monday, June 2. During this time, many Muslims rose to defend their Jewish neighbors, while some Jews successfully defended themselves. There were 124 killed and 400 injured, according to a report written by a Jewish Agency messenger who was in Iraq at the time. Other estimates, possibly less reliable, put the death toll higher, as many as 500, with from 650 to 2,000 injured. From 500 to 1,300 stores and more than 1,000 homes and apartments were looted.

Who was behind the rioting in the Jewish quarter? Yosef Meir, one of the most prominent activists in the Zionist underground movement in Iraq, known then as Yehoshafat, claims it was the British. Meir, who now works for the Israeli Defense Ministry, argues that, in order to make it appear that the regent was returning as the savior who would reestablish law and order, the British stirred up the riots against the most vulnerable and visible segment in the city, the Jews. And, not surprisingly, the riots ended as soon as the regent's loyal soldiers entered the capital.⁴

My own investigations as a journalist lead me to believe Meir is correct. Furthermore, I think his claims should be seen as based on documents in the archives of the Israeli Defense Ministry, the agency that published his book. Yet, even before his book came out, I had independent confirmation from a man I met in Iran in the late Forties.

His name was Michael Timosian, an Iraqi Armenian. When I met him he was working as a male nurse at the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Abadan in the south of Iran. On June 2, 1941, however, he was working at the Baghdad hospital where many of the riot victims were brought. Most of these victims were Jews.

Timosian said he was particularly interested in two patients whose conduct did not follow local custom. One had been hit by a bullet in his shoulder, the other by a bullet in his right knee. After the doctor removed the bullets, the staff tried to change their blood-soaked cloths. But the two men fought off their efforts, pretending to be speechless, although tests showed they could hear. To pacify them, the doctor injected them with anesthetics and, as they were sleeping, Timosian changed their cloths. He discovered that one of them had around his neck an identification tag of the type used by British troops, while the other had tattoos with Indian script on his right arm along with the familiar sword of the Gurkha.

The next day when Timosian showed up for work, he was told that a British officer, his sergeant and two Indian Gurkha soldiers had come to the hospital early that morning. Staff members overheard the Gurkha soldiers talking with the wounded patients, who were not as dumb as they had pretended. The patients saluted the visitors, covered themselves with sheets and, without signing the required release forms, left the hospital with their visitors.

Today there is no doubt in my mind that the anti-Jewish riots of 1941 were orchestrated by the British for geopolitical ends. David Kimche is certainly a man who was in a position to know the truth, and he has spoken publicly about British culpability. Kimche had been with British Intelligence during WW II and with the Mossad after the war. Later he became Director General of Israel's Foreign Ministry, the position he held in 1982 when he addressed a forum at the British Institute for International Affairs in London.

In responding to hostile questions about Israel's invasion of Lebanon and the refugee camp massacres in Beirut, Kimche went on the attack, reminding the audience that there was scant concern in the British Foreign Office when British Gurkha units participated in the murder of 500 Jews in the streets of Baghdad in 1941.⁵

The Bombings of 1950-1951

The anti-Jewish riots of 1941 did more than create a pretext for the British to enter Baghdad to reinstate the pro-British regent and his pro-British prime minister, Nouri el-Said. They also gave the Zionists in Palestine a pretext to set up a Zionist underground in Iraq, first in Baghdad, then in other cities such as Basra, Amara, Hillah, Diwaneia, Abril and Karkouk.

Following WW II, a succession of governments held brief power in Iraq. Zionist conquests in Palestine, particularly the massacre of Palestinians in the village of Deir Yassin, emboldened the anti-British movement in Iraq. When the Iraqi government signed a new treaty of friendship with London in January 1948, riots broke out all over the country. The treaty was quickly abandoned and Baghdad demanded removal of the British military mission that had run Iraq's army for 27 years.

Later in 1948, Baghdad sent an army detachment to Palestine to fight the Zionists, and when Israel declared independence in May, Iraq closed the pipeline that fed its oil to Haifa's refinery. Abd al-Ilah, however, was still regent and the British quisling, Nouri el-Said, was back as prime minister. I was in the Abu-Greib prison in 1948, where I would remain until my escape to Iran in September 1949.

Six months later—the exact date was March 19, 1950—a bomb went off at the American Cultural Center and Library in Baghdad, causing property damage and injuring a number of people. The center was a favorite meeting place for young Jews.

The first bomb thrown directly at Jews occurred on April 8, 1950, at 9:15 p.m. A car with three young passengers hurled the grenade at Baghdad's El-Dar El-Bida Café, where Jews were celebrating Passover. Four people were seriously injured. That night leaflets were distributed calling on Jews to leave Iraq immediately.

The next day, many Jews, most of them poor with nothing to lose, jammed emigration offices to renounce their citizenship and to apply for permission to leave for Israel. So many applied, in fact, that the police had to open registration offices in Jewish schools and synagogues.

On May 10, at 3 a.m., a grenade was tossed in the direction of the display window of the Jewish-owned Beit-Lawi Automobile Company, destroying part of the building. No casualties were reported.

On June 3, 1950, another grenade was tossed from a speeding car in the El-Batawin area of Baghdad where most rich Jews and middle class Iraqis lived. No one was hurt, but following the explosion Zionist activists sent telegrams to Israel requesting that the quota for

immigration from Iraq be increased.

On June 5, at 2:30 a.m., a bomb exploded next to the Jewish-owned Stanley Shashua building on El-Rashid street, resulting in property damage but no casualties.

On January 14, 1951, at 7 p.m., a grenade was thrown at a group of Jews outside the Masouda Shem-Tov Synagogue. The explosive struck a high-voltage cable, electrocuting three Jews, one a young boy, Itzhak Elmacher, and wounding over 30 others. Following the attack, the exodus of Jews jumped to between 600-700 per day.

Zionist propagandists still maintain that the bombs in Iraq were set off by anti-Jewish Iraqis who wanted Jews out of their country. The terrible truth is that the grenades that killed and maimed Iraqi Jews and damaged their property were thrown by Zionist Jews.

Among the most important documents in my book, I believe, are copies of two leaflets published by the Zionist underground calling on Jews to leave Iraq. One is dated March 16, 1950, the other April 8, 1950.

The difference between these two is critical. Both indicate the date of publication, but only the April 8th leaflet notes the time of day: 4 p.m. Why the time of day? Such a specification was unprecedented. Even the investigating judge, Salaman El-Beit, found it suspicious. Did the 4 p.m. writers want an alibi for a bombing they knew would occur five hours later? If so, how did they know about the bombing? The judge concluded they

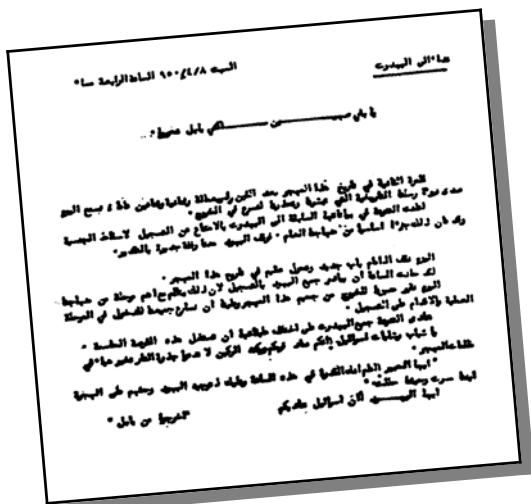
knew because a connection existed between the Zionist underground and the bomb throwers.

This, too, was the conclusion of Wilbur Crane Eveland, a former senior officer in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), whom I had the opportunity to meet in New York in 1988. In his book, *Ropes of Sand*, whose publication the CIA opposed, Eveland writes:

In attempts to portray the Iraqis as anti-American and to terrorize the Jews, the Zionists planted bombs in the U.S. Information Service library and in synagogues. Soon leaflets began to appear urging Jews to flee to Israel. . . . Although the Iraqi police later provided our embassy with evidence to show that the synagogue and library bombings, as well as the anti-Jewish and anti-American leaflet campaigns, had been the work of an underground Zionist organization, most of the world believed reports that Arab terrorism had motivated the flight of the Iraqi Jews whom the Zionists had "rescued" really just in order to increase Israel's Jewish population."⁶

Eveland doesn't detail the evidence linking the Zionists to the attacks, but in my book I do. In 1955, for example, I organized in Israel a panel of Jewish attorneys of Iraqi origin to handle claims of Iraqi Jews who still had property in Iraq. One well known attorney, who asked that I not give his name, confided in me that the laboratory tests in Iraq had confirmed that the anti-American leaflets found at the American Cultural Center bombing were typed on the same typewriter and

Leaflets distributed by the Zionist underground in Iraq were few in number, sometimes issued months apart. The leaflet of April 8, 1950, was unusual in that it carried the time of day—4 o'clock p.m.—not just the date. Five hours later, during Passover celebrations in Baghdad, a cafe frequented by Jews was the target of a bomb. Was the hour mentioned because the underground itself was behind the bombing, which it hoped would violently punctuate its 4 p.m. advisory? There is strong evidence to support that conclusion.



[TRANSLATION]
 SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1950, 4
 O'CLOCK P.M.
CALL TO THE JEWS
 [TO] ALL OF THE TRIBE OF
 ZION
 LIVING IN BABYLON
 FOR THE SECOND TIME IN
 THE HISTORY OF THE
 DIASPORA, WE HAVE AN
 OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE. WE
 ENCOURAGE YOU TO HURRY
 AND LEAVE.
 TODAY, THE JEWS ARE IN A
 NEW ERA OF THE HISTORY OF
 THE DIASPORA. THE TIME HAS

duplicated on the same stenciling machine as the leaflets distributed by the Zionist movement just before the April 8th bombing.

Tests also showed that the type of explosive used in the Beit-Lawi attack matched traces of explosives found in the suitcase of an Iraqi Jew by the name of Yosef Basri. Basri, a lawyer, together with Shalom Salih, a shoemaker, would be put on trial for the attacks in December 1951 and executed the following month. Both men were members of Hashura, the military arm of the Zionist underground. Salih ultimately confessed that he, Basri and a third man, Yosef Habaza, carried out the attacks.

By the time of the executions in January 1952, all but 6,000 of an estimated 125,000 Iraqi Jews had fled to Israel. Moreover, the pro-British, pro-Zionist puppet el-Said saw to it that all of their possessions were frozen, including their cash assets. (There were ways of getting Iraqi dinars out, but when the immigrants went to exchange them in Israel they found that the Israeli government kept 50 percent of the value.) Even those Iraqi Jews who had not registered to emigrate, but who happened to be abroad, faced loss of their nationality if they didn't return within a specified time. An ancient, cultured, prosperous community had been uprooted and its people transplanted to a land dominated by East European Jews, whose culture was not only foreign but entirely hateful to them.

The Ultimate Criminals

Zionist Leaders. From the start they knew that in order to establish a Jewish state they had to expel the indigenous Palestinian population to the neighboring Islamic states and import Jews from these same states.

Theodor Herzl, the architect of Zionism, thought it could be done by social engineering. In his diary entry for 12 June 1885, he wrote that Zionist settlers would have to "spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country."⁷

Vladimir Jabotinsky, Prime Minister Netanyahu's ideological progenitor, frankly admitted that such a transfer of populations could only be brought about by force.

David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, told a Zionist Conference in 1937 that any proposed Jewish state would have to "transfer Arab populations out of the area, if possible of their own free will, if not by coercion."⁸ After 750,000 Palestinians were uprooted and their lands confiscated in 1948-49, Ben Gurion had to look to the Islamic countries for Jews who could fill the resultant cheap labor market. "Emissaries" were smuggled into these countries to "convince" Jews to

leave either by trickery or fear.

In the case of Iraq, both methods were used: uneducated Jews were told of a Messianic Israel in which the blind see, the lame walk, and onions grow as big as melons; educated Jews had bombs thrown at them.

A few years after the bombings, in the early 1950s, a book was published in Iraq, in Arabic, titled *Venom of the Zionist Viper*. The author was one of the Iraqi investigators of the 1950-51 bombings and, in his book, he implicates the Israelis, specifically one of the emissaries sent by Israel, Mordechai Ben-Porat. As soon as the book came out, all copies just disappeared, even from libraries. The word was that agents of the Israeli Mossad, working through the U.S. Embassy, bought up all the books and destroyed them. I tried on three different occasions to have one sent to me in Israel, but each time Israeli censors in the post office intercepted it.

British Leaders. Britain always acted in its best colonial interests. For that reason Foreign Minister **Arthur Balfour** sent his famous 1917 letter to Lord Rothschild in exchange for Zionist support in WW I. During WW II the British were primarily concerned with keeping their client states in the Western camp, while Zionists were most concerned with the immigration of European Jews to Palestine, even if this meant cooperating with the Nazis. (In my book I document numerous instances of such dealings by Ben Gurion and the Zionist leadership.)

After WW II the international chessboard pitted communists against capitalists. In many countries, including the United States and Iraq, Jews represented a large part of the Communist party. In Iraq, hundreds of Jews of the working intelligentsia occupied key positions in the hierarchy of the Communist and Socialist parties. To keep their client countries in the capitalist camp, Britain had to make sure these governments had pro-British leaders. And if, as in Iraq, these leaders were overthrown, then an anti-Jewish riot or two could prove a useful pretext to invade the capital and reinstate the "right" leaders.

Moreover, if the possibility existed of removing the communist influence from Iraq by transferring the whole Jewish community to Israel, well then, why not? Particularly if the leaders of Israel and Iraq conspired in the deed.

The Iraqi Leaders. Both the regent **Abd al-Ilah** and his prime minister **Nouri el-Said** took directions from London. Toward the end of 1948, el-Said, who had already met with Israel's Prime Minister Ben Gurion in Vienna, began discussing with his Iraqi and British associates the need for an exchange of populations. Iraq would send the Jews in military trucks to Israel via

Jordan, and Iraq would take in some of the Palestinians Israel had been evicting. His proposal included mutual confiscation of property. London nixed the idea as too radical.

El-Said then went to his back-up plan and began to create the conditions that would make the lives of Iraqi Jews so miserable they would leave for Israel. Jewish government employees were fired from their jobs; Jewish merchants were denied import/export licenses; police began to arrest Jews for trivial reasons. Still the Jews did not leave in any great numbers.

In September 1949, Israel sent the spy **Mordechai Ben-Porat**, the one mentioned in *Venom of the Zionist Viper*, to Iraq. One of the first things Ben-Porat did was to approach el-Said and promise him financial incentives to have a law enacted that would lift the citizenship of Iraqi Jews.

Soon after, Zionist and Iraqi representatives began formulating a rough draft of the bill, according to the model dictated by Israel through its agents in Baghdad. The bill was passed by the Iraqi parliament in March 1950. It empowered the government to issue one-time exit visas to Jews wishing to leave the country. In March, the bombings began.

Sixteen years later, the Israeli magazine *Haolam Hazeh*, published by Uri Avnery, then a Knesset member, accused Ben-Porat of the Baghdad bombings. Ben-Porat, who would become a Knesset member himself, denied the charge, but never sued the magazine for libel. And Iraqi Jews in Israel still call him Morad Abu al-Knabel, Mordechai of the Bombs.

As I said, all this went well beyond the comprehension of a teenager. I knew Jews were being killed and an organization existed that could lead us to the Promised Land. So I helped in the exodus to Israel. Later, on occasions, I would bump into some of these Iraqi Jews in Israel. Not infrequently they'd express the

sentiment that they could kill me for what I had done.

Opportunities for Peace

After the Israeli attack on the Jordanian village of Qibya in October, 1953, Ben Gurion went into voluntary exile at the Sedeh Boker *kibbutz* in the Negev. The Labor party then used to organize many buses for people to go visit him there, where they would see the former prime minister working with sheep. But that was only for show. Really he was writing his diary and continuing to be active behind the scenes. I went on such a tour.

We were told not to try to speak to Ben Gurion, but when I saw him, I asked why, since Israel is a democracy with a parliament, does it not have a constitution? Ben Gurion said, "Look, boy" – I was 24 at the time – "if we have a constitution, we have to write in it the border of our country. And this is not our border, my dear." I asked, "Then where is the border?" He said, "Wherever the *Sahal* will come, this is the border." *Sahal* is the Israeli army.

Ben Gurion told the world that Israel accepted the partition and the Arabs rejected it. Then Israel took half of the land that was promised to the Arab state. And still he was saying it was not enough. Israel needed more land. How can a country make peace with its

neighbors if it wants to take their land? How can a country demand to be secure if it won't say what borders it will be satisfied with? For such a country, peace would be an inconvenience.

I know now that from the beginning many Arab leaders wanted to make peace with Israel, but Israel always refused. Ben Gurion covered this up with propaganda. He said that the Arabs wanted to drive Israel into the sea and he called Gamal Abdel Nasser the Hitler of the Middle East whose foremost intent was to destroy Israel. He wanted America and Great Britain to treat Nasser like a pariah.



The author (right) was an activist in what became known as Israel's "Black Panthers," a movement of Jews from Islamic countries that fought against ethnic discrimination. Giladi represented the movement on the executive committee of the Histadrut, Israel's trade union. This photo was taken in 1979 as members of an Israeli Architects Association signed petitions for Giladi's candidacy in Histadrut elections.

In 1954, it seemed that America was getting less critical of Nasser. Then during a three-week period in July, several terrorist bombs were set off: at the United States Information Agency offices in Cairo and Alexandria, a British-owned theater, and the central post office in Cairo. An attempt to firebomb a cinema in Alexandria failed when the bomb went off in the pocket of one of the perpetrators. That led to the discovery that the terrorists were not anti-Western Egyptians, but were instead Israeli spies bent on souring the warming relationship between Egypt and the United States in what came to be known as the Lavon Affair.

Ben Gurion was still living on his *kibbutz*. Moshe Sharett as prime minister was in contact with Abdel Nasser through the offices of Lord Maurice Orbach of Great Britain. Sharett asked Nasser to be lenient with the captured spies, and Nasser did all that was in his power to prevent a deterioration of the situation between the two countries.

Then Ben Gurion returned as Defense Minister in February, 1955. Later that month Israeli troops attacked Egyptian military camps and Palestinian refugees in Gaza, killing 54 and injuring many more. The very night of the attack, Lord Orbach was on his way to deliver a message to Nasser, but was unable to get through because of the military action. When Orbach telephoned, Nasser's secretary told him that the attack proved that Israel did not want peace and that he was wasting his time as a mediator.

In November, Ben Gurion announced in the Knesset that he was willing to meet with Abdel Nasser anywhere and at any time for the sake of peace and understanding. The next morning the Israeli military attacked an Egyptian military camp in the Sabaha region.

Although Nasser felt pessimistic about achieving peace with Israel, he continued to send other mediators to try. One was through the American Friends Service Committee; another via the Prime Minister of Malta, Dom Minthoff; and still another through Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia.

One that looked particularly promising was through Dennis Hamilton, editor of *The London Times*. Nasser told Hamilton that if only he could sit and talk with Ben Gurion for two or three hours, they would be able to settle the conflict and end the state of war between the two countries. When word of this reached Ben Gurion, he arranged to meet with Hamilton. They decided to pursue the matter with the Israeli ambassador in London, Arthur Luria, as liaison. On Hamilton's third trip to Egypt, Nasser met him with the text of a Ben Gurion speech stating that Israel would not give up an inch of land and would not take back a single refugee.

Hamilton knew that Ben Gurion with his mouth had undermined a peace mission and missed an opportunity to settle the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Nasser even sent his friend Ibrahim Izat of the *Ruz El Yusuf* weekly paper to meet with Israeli leaders in order to explore the political atmosphere and find out why the attacks were taking place if Israel really wanted peace. One of the men Izat met with was Yigal Yadin, a former Chief of Staff of the army who wrote this letter to me on 14 January 1982:

Dear Mr. Giladi:

Your letter reminded me of an event which I nearly forgot and of which I remember only a few details.

Ibrahim Izat came to me if I am not mistaken under the request of the Foreign Ministry or one of its branches; he stayed in my house and we spoke for many hours. I do not remember him saying that he came on a mission from Nasser, but I have no doubt that he let it be understood that this was with his knowledge or acquiescence....

When Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal in spite of opposition from the British and the French, Radio Cairo announced in Hebrew:

If the Israeli government is not influenced by the British and the French imperialists, it will eventually result in greater understanding between the two states, and Egypt will reconsider Israel's request to have access to the Suez Canal.

Israel responded that it had no designs on Egypt, but at that very moment Israeli representatives were in France planning the three-way attack that was to take place in October, 1956.

All the while, Ben Gurion continued to talk about the Hitler of the Middle East. This brainwashing went on until late September, 1970, when Gamal Abdel Nasser passed away. Then, miracle of miracles, David Ben Gurion told the press:

A week before he died I received an envoy from Abdel Nasser who asked to meet with me urgently in order to solve the problems between Israel and the Arab world.

The public was surprised because they didn't know that Abdel Nasser had wanted this all along, but Israel sabotaged it.

Nasser was not the only Arab leader who wanted to make peace with Israel. There were many others. Brigadier General Abdel Karim Qasem, before he seized power in Iraq in July, 1958, headed an underground organization that sent a delegation to Israel to make a secret agreement. Ben Gurion refused even to see him. I learned about this when I was a journalist in Israel. But

whenever I tried to publish even a small part of it, the censor would stamp it "Not Allowed."

Now, in Netanyahu, we are witnessing another attempt by an Israeli prime minister to fake an interest in making peace. Netanyahu and the Likud are setting Arafat up by demanding that he institute more and more repressive measures in the interest of Israeli "security." Sooner or later I suspect the Palestinians will have had enough of Arafat's strong-arm methods as Israel's quisling—and he'll be killed. Then the Israeli government will say, "See, we were ready to give him everything. You can't trust those Arabs—they kill each other. Now there's no one to even talk to about peace."

Conclusion

Alexis de Tocqueville once observed that it is easier for the world to accept a simple lie than a complex truth. Certainly it has been easier for the world to accept the Zionist lie that Jews were evicted from Muslim lands because of anti-Semitism, and that Israelis, never the Arabs, were the pursuers of peace. The truth is far more discerning: bigger players on the world stage were pulling the strings.

These players, I believe, should be held accountable for their crimes, particularly when they willfully terrorized, dispossessed and killed innocent people on the altar of some ideological imperative.

I believe, too, that the descendants of these leaders have a moral responsibility to compensate the victims and their descendants, and to do so not just with reparations, but by setting the historical record straight.

That is why I established a panel of inquiry in Israel to seek reparations for Iraqi Jews who had been forced to leave behind their property and possessions in Iraq. That is why I joined the Black Panthers in confronting the Israeli government with the grievances of the Jews in Israel who came from Islamic lands. And that is why I have written my book and this article: to set the historical record straight.

We Jews from Islamic lands did not leave our ancestral homes because of any natural enmity between Jews and Muslims. And we Arabs—I say Arab because that is the language my wife and I still speak at home—

(Continued on page 13)

March to Protest Aid to Israel

A march on Capitol Hill to protest U.S. aid to Israel will be held on May 15, 1998, sponsored by the Council for the National Interest. For information, contact the Council's Chairman, former Congressman Paul Findley, at 202-628-6962.

Postcards to Clinton Campaign



Americans for Middle East Understanding
New York, NY
January 27, 1998

Dear Mr. John F. Mahoney:

Thank you for your Jan.-March, 1997 Link. It was one of the publications that motivated us to get active.

My name is Kouthar Al-Rawi and I am 10 years old. My sister is Marwa and she is 9 years old.

We want to tell everyone that an Iraqi child dies every 10 minutes, that is 150 children a day, and 4,500 children a month. The children in Iraq see me, my sister and other children watching them die a cruel, painful, slow death, and not doing a thing to save them. We all hold the ability to save these children's lives.

That is why my sister and I started a

campaign called Remember the Iraqi Children, One Million Postcards to President Clinton. We have a mission to educate the public on this tragedy in Iraq, and call for the end of the embargo. An entire generation of children is disappearing because of no food, no clean water, and no medicine.

We are calling on people, especially other children, to write a postcard to President Clinton calling for an end of the embargo on Iraq, for the sake of the children. Send your cards to us:

Kouthar and Marwa Al-Rawi
Remember the Iraqi Children,
One Million Postcards to President Clinton Campaign
P.O. Box 1141
San Pedro, CA 90733

When we reach our goal of one million postcards, we will deliver them to President Clinton.

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(Continued from page 12)

we Arabs on numerous occasions have sought peace with the State of the Jews. And finally, as a U.S. citizen and taxpayer, let me say that we Americans need to stop supporting racial discrimination in Israel and the cruel expropriation of lands in the West Bank, Gaza, South Lebanon and the Golan Heights.

ENDNOTES

¹ Mileshtin was quoted by the Israeli daily, *Hadashot*, in an article published August 13, 1993. The writer, Sarah Laybobis-Dar, interviewed a number of Israelis who had knowledge of the use of bacteriological weapons in the 1948 war. Mileshtin said bacteria was used to poison the wells of every village emptied of its Arab

inhabitants.

² On Sept. 12, 1990, the New York State Supreme Court issued a restraining order at the request of the Israeli government to prevent publication of Ostrovsky's book, "By Way of Deception: The Making and Unmaking of a Mossad Officer." The New York State Appeals Court lifted the ban the next day.

³ Marion Woolfson, "Prophets in Babylon: Jews in the Arab World," p. 129

⁴ Yosef Meir, "Road in the Desert," Israeli Defense Ministry, p. 36.

⁵ See my book, "Ben Gurion's Scandals," p. 105.

⁶ Wilbur Crane Eveland, "Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East," NY: Norton, 1980, pp. 48-49.

⁷ T. Herzl, "The Complete Diaries," NY: Herzl Press & Thomas Yoncliff, 1960, vol. 1, p. 88.

⁸ Report of the Congress of the World Council of Paole Zion, Zurich, July 29-August 7, 1937, pp. 73-74.

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