

THE NEW FACE OF THE OLD HORROR POLICY

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Gaza is again fermenting. Again the fate of the 400,000 inhabitants attracts the attention of the Israeli and world public. Shops are shut in protest, the medical staff of the hospitals strikes for a few hours, women demonstrate again and again in the streets of the town and express their protest in front of the UNO Welfare and Employment Agency. Stones are hurled in all directions where Israeli vehicles pass. Furious looks accompany the funeral of five Palestinian resistance fighters who were killed in a skirmish with Israeli forces. The occupation authorities have closed the approaches and roads to and from Gaza to all outsiders. The refugee camp Jabaliya has been put under curfew.

Gaza has never been quiet, for Gaza has never reconciled itself to the rule of the foreign occupation. In the course of time it became a symbol of resistance, its population did not bow the head to the savage shooting from armoured vehicles, to the hand grenades which "just by chance" exploded in busy crowds, in the market place, in schools, in post offices. All this did not shake the persistent will of the youngsters and the adults in the Gaza Strip to continue the struggle against the foreign yoke. The punishment campaigns of the Frontier Guards units, which excelled in cruelty, did not succeed in suppressing what cannot be suppressed.

Gaza again takes up considerable space in the press.

The town, which after several years of occupation resembles a ghost town, again keeps busy the press, the government institutions, the military authorities and the War Minister.

"Thinning-Out"

Clouds of dust envelop the refugee camp Jabaliya. Bulldozers, brought here by the occupation authorities, thrust their iron claws into the walls of the dwelling houses and with a merciless embrace turn them in the twink of an eye into dismal ruins. The military correspondent of the evening paper Yediot Ahronot, Eitan Haber, reports to his readers on July 30, 1971, that "400 houses have been demolished till now by the 'security forces' in Jabaliya in the Gaza Strip, and till yesterday 200 families (1,200 persons) were transferred to various places, including El-Arish." And one of the glorified generals of the occupation army, Shlomo Gazit, consoles the public, saying that we are just at the beginning of the work...

Thus, the Israeli Government has decided to use the blessed expedient of demolition--today in the Jabaliya refugee camp, tomorrow or the day after in other places in the Gaza Strip.

The semi-official daily Davar of July 26, 1971, ingenuously explains to its readers: "This is the most crowded camp, in which about 40,000 people live in terrible congestion. The alleys are narrow and crooked and a person can only with difficulty make his way. Therefore the Government decided to thin out the number of inhabitants and in the framework of this operation about a quarter of the structures in the camp will be demolished and roads 12 kilometers long and 25 meters wide will be paved. Davar simply is unable to comprehend the indifference of the inhabitant towards his own life and that of his neighbor. The Israeli authorities, doubtlessly guided by the noblest feelings, declared that "this is above all for the security of the camp dwellers themselves" and that this is "the duty of the Israeli authorities much more towards the refugees than towards themselves."

We, simple readers, who do not succeed in rising to the level of the feelings of Davar can only wipe a tear from an eye and continue to read the explanations ordered "from above" in such abundance. The bourgeois daily Ha'aretz of July 28, 1971, reports with satisfaction: "Within the framework of thinning out the refugee camps, renovation of empty dwelling units has started in El-Arish, where refugees will be housed, whose evacuation from the refugee camp Jabaliya has begun." The paper generously promises that these will be roomy apartments with running water and toilets. The evacuated families are getting full compensation. And so that there might remain no shadow of a doubt, Ha'aretz adds that "the transfer of the refugees takes place willingly." Yediot Ahronot of July 28, 1971 rounds out the job of "explanation," claiming that "the thinning out began after explanation had been carried out among the refugees." Military trucks have been put at the disposal of the evacuated families, which--and this time the honorable paper must be believed--attempted to save every piece of wood or tin.... "

In this manner, in the phrase dictionary of the "liberal" Israeli occupation, a place has now been found for the term "thinning out." But it is to be doubted whether the blessed activity of those concerned with the improvement of the language will succeed in concealing behind this new linguistic invention the monstrous face of one of the cruel methods of gradual expulsion of the Arab population from its homeland.

A Brief History of Pride and No-Surrender

On July 7, 1969, about two years after the June war, the Information Minister, Israel Galili, declared that "it is possible to say with an absolute measure of certainty that the district of Gaza will never be severed from the State of Israel." This was a declaration voiced loudly in relation to something that had been also decided in relation to other territories, but the attention of the Israeli Government was concentrated on Gaza, for it had proved itself to be a very hard nut to crack. The inhabitants of Gaza did not wish to consent to the destiny ordained for them by Minister Galili, and it was only natural to expect that their resistance to occupation and surrender would take on various forms, from formal protests and strikes to armed struggle. Amnon Rubinstein's

statement in the daily Ha'aretz is not exaggerated. According to it the Israeli military authorities have lost all capability of facing the situation created. Things went so far that the general Moshe Dayan, famed for his heroism, decided on July 7, 1969 to evacuate all the local police from the refugee camps in Gaza subsequent to the unceasing attacks of the Palestinian resistance fighters. Neither was the policy devised by the War Ministry, and termed by its inventors "let them kill one another," of any help. The aim of this policy had been to set Arabs against Arabs, employing the well-tested methods of British colonialism, of provocations and informing. From January 1971 till mid-July, 91 persons, including 7 Israelis, were killed in Gaza, and 400 persons, including 73 Israelis, were wounded. Human life lost all value, death reaped its harvest in the explosion of a grenade hurled from an unknown direction, in submachine gun fire in the narrow alleys of the refugee camp.

The policy of "let them kill one another" professed to present the struggle of the Palestinians as indiscriminating terror, as hostility and hatred of the population towards the Palestinian resistance movement. And what were the results? Amnon Rubinstein was compelled to state to his sorrow in his article of July 25: "You are walking through the narrow stinking alleys. A swarm of children follows you, shouting, yelling, cursing; little girls of nursery age are running in front of you and making coarse oriental gestures; stones are thrown at you from behind the walls of the alley, eyes full of hatred are guards which accompany you. . . you are walking through dense orchards and your eyes look for a suspected movement among the branches." On the other hand, Rubinstein states the absolute failure of the policy intended to create hatred towards the "terrorists": "In the alleys of the refugee camps you see blackened spots on the ground. These are the remains of bonfires that had been lighted as expression of the inhabitants' mourning and grief at the death of known saboteurs. The graves of saboteurs are decorated. . . ("saboteurs," "terrorists," are the names given by the official mass media to the resistance fighters--A.M.)

The Israeli militarists in the Government and outside it have begun to claim that "the imposition of disorder and lawlessness" in the Gaza Strip "undermines our right to demand its inclusion within the bounds of Israeli rule, and the more the terror intensifies, and the more our rule narrows down, the more our claim declines. . . ." This, of course, is a theory which puts the facts on their head. For it is precisely the continuation of the occupation, contradicting the will of the population of Gaza, and the acts of terror committed on behalf of the authorities, which have created the intensification of the resistance. But Dayan and his henchmen need no logic and no international law; they want facts, accomplished facts, which, if they do not occur themselves, must be created. Therefore, when the armored cars and machine guns were of no avail, bulldozers started crawling into the refugee camps.

The Great Architect

It is no secret that there exists, at the side of the Government, a Commission of Government Ministers for Gaza Affairs, headed by the Minister I. Galili. But according to all signs, the policy of this commission is laid down by the War Ministry, which has proposed a "plan for palliation and pacification" in the Gaza Strip. This plan, fathered by Moshe Dayan himself, proposes (according to press reports) that "the population shall not be expelled from the Strip abroad, and that until the full peace settlement with the Arab countries one has to act in the narrow territorial bounds of the Strip." In order to implement this plan one has to act according to three action lines: 1) employing means of determent and punishment against inhabitants who collaborate with members of the Palestinian organizations; 2) thinning out the big camps, primarily Jabaliya, and "improvement" of these camps. The thinning out and "improvement" will be done by blazing the trail for roads which will encompass and cross the camps. Meantime the inhabitants will be evacuated to empty dwelling units in the Strip. The final intention is to attain a series of relatively small camps and to take out many inhabitants from the Jabaliya camp; 3) In order to make the thinning out possible, new camps will be created in the Strip. These camps will have a different form from the previous camps, but will still bear the character of refugee camps.

The Yediot Ahronot of July 28, 1971 reports from sources of the military government in Gaza that the "Dayan plan" includes the establishment of "labor villages" between Gaza and Rafiah.

All this looks, at first sight, so perfect, so full of paternal concern for the fate of the hundreds of thousands of refugees that it will be difficult to express doubts and lack of confidence in the humane and noble considerations of the military government in Gaza. But the great architect Moshe Dayan will not be able to embellish the ugly reality which hides behind the plans that are drawn up in such clean and straight lines. For the occupant remains an occupant, and his plans and aims no longer constitute any secret for the whole world.

If Matters Are so Fine, Why Are They so Bad?

In the second half of July, when the military government took actual steps to carry out the "Dayan plan," the press announced that the inhabitants accept with satisfaction their transfer to other dwellings. It announced that before the families leave the camp, military government personnel visit the houses of the inhabitants whose dwellings had been demolished by the paving of roads in Jabaliya, and assess the damages caused to them. Every family receives transport at the expense of the military government, and it is carried out by truck, which also transports its possessions to the new dwelling. The family also receives the promise for immediate work at their new domicile. This is what the press reported.

But already on July 28, some newspapers also began to publish reports. Ha'aretz of that date published a report of its correspondent in Gaza, Amos Hadad, which said that "tens of families in Jabaliya, whose houses had been demolished consequent to blazing the trail for roads, have disappeared and have not come to ask for new dwelling in exchange for their demolished homes. Yediot Ahronot reported on that day that "tens of refugees have run away, abandoning their possessions and others refuse to move to the dwellings in El-Arish proposed to them by the military government." The reporter of Davar in the Strip, Dani Tzadkoni, writes on July 29, 1971, about his meetings with evacuated refugees who complained that they are sent to El-Arish, where there are "sand storms." Another young man disclosed to him that "those who had been transferred in recent days to El-Arish are returning from there." Amnon Rubinstein condemns the myth of payment of "high compensation": "Reports are published in the press as if the inhabitants of Jabaliya were evacuating their camps with joy and happiness. It is doubtful if the intelligent reader will believe these reports."

The general embitterment and resistance of the local population was joined by the UNO Welfare and Employment Agency, which protested against the steps taken by the military government in carrying out the violent expulsion. All the employees of the Agency declared that they join the strike of the nurses in the hospitals as a sign of their solidarity with the sufferings of the refugees. This is, evidently, one of the reasons why, as the political correspondent of Ha'aretz reported, "further discussion was held in the Government in connection with the plan for the thinning out of the refugee camps," and "why the plan is encountering difficulties." In order to overcome these difficulties, the War Ministry has again taken up the well-tested expedient of "persuasion." The thinning-out is necessary for security reasons. David Appel wrote on July 28, 1971 in Yediot Ahronot: "The new roads will enable an easy and fast approach for military vehicles in cases of combing operations or curfew. Also, the roads which are close to orchards will be widened to 25 meters. This will be done in order to afford the Israeli army forces a field of visibility."

Thus the fig leaf has fallen from the "humanitarian" considerations of the "Dayan plan." But the claims of the military government that "the refugee camps have become nests of rebellion and sabotage" do not stand any scrutiny. Even the juggled data of official statistics prove this. Thus, writes Amnon Rubinstein in one of his above mentioned articles, "among the saboteurs who have been caught, just as among those who are wanted, a large part - almost one half - are not refugees, but local inhabitants." The significance of this is that the entire population of Gaza - refugees in camps and local residents - stand up against the Israeli occupation.

Without Make-Up

The "new" Dayan plan is nothing but the new embodiment of the old adventurist steps of Israeli militarism, which still believes that by creation of

accomplished facts in the occupied Arab territories it will strengthen its rule over them. However, if the building of Jewish urban settlements in Hebron, or the establishment of rural settlements in the Jordan Valley are "accomplished facts," whose aim is the Judaization of Arab lands, the "Dayan plan" takes us back to the epoch of brutal maltreatment, when whole tribes and peoples were uprooted from their places of birth. The objective of the "Dayan plan" is to empty the Gaza Strip of its inhabitants, and in the first stage to disperse them to the four winds, or to put them into special concentration camps, according to their character and structure ("labor villages"), and in this way to lead them to despair and lack of prospect ever to lead a human life, until they decide "by themselves and voluntarily" to seek their fortune in neighboring Arab countries or in the West Bank. The Israeli militarists secretly hope that if they will not be allowed to keep all the occupied Arab areas, they will at least succeed in keeping the Gaza Strip, and hence their intention to populate empty houses in El-Arish or other places, which are situated on the Egyptian side of the international frontier.

Apart from the criticism and the protests of the democratic circles in Israel, which consider the new designs of the Israeli ruling circles as a new and dangerous link in the chain of policies intended to move peace farther away, voices of "criticism" and "protest" have also been sounded from chauvinist quarters, which believe that the "Dayan plan" constitutes a missing of opportunity for a more radical and purposeful "solution" of the refugee problem in the Gaza Strip.

Their intention does not need any interpretation. If it has already been decided to transfer inhabitants from one place to another within the territorial bounds of the Gaza Strip and northern Sinai, why should one not execute more purposeful tasks, such as the gradual transfer of all the inhabitants of Gaza to the East Bank (of the Jordan)?

It is not quite clear whether the "Dayan plan" is not intended precisely for this final solution, despite its impressive phraseology. The history of the expulsion of the Arab population has not begun yesterday or the day before yesterday. This was, and is, the basic policy of the Zionist Israeli government and no robe is able to conceal the ugly face of this policy.

However, this policy has not let to peace, which is vitally necessary for the Israeli people for its security, but conversely, it has created a profound and perilous conflict which can only be abolished with the complete abolition of the occupation, with the crossing over from colonialist methods to good neighborliness.

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