saw nothing immoral about «transfer,» but stated: «We have to state the principle of compulsory transfer without insisting on its immediate implementation»(*Journal of Palestine Studies*,64,Summer 1987). In August 1948, he created a transfer committee which submitted a proposal that Arabs should not constitute more than 15 per cent of Israel's total population. The Zionist quest for a Jewish state makes attempts to «transfer» Palestinians inevitable, all the while places are prepared for new immigrants.

The testimony of Joseph Schechtman, an expert on population transfer, leaves no doubt about the age-old Zionist policy of displacement: «It is difficult to overestimate the tremendous role this lot of abandoned Arab property has played in the settlement of hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants who have reached Israel since the proclamation of the State in May 1948... The existence of these Arab houses - vacant and ready for occupation - has, to a large extent, solved the greatest immediate problem which faced the Israeli authorities in the absorption of immigrants...»(*Journal of Palestine Studies*, 64, Summer 1987).

Transfer and demographic change

The Zionist policy of demographic transformation did not stop with the 1948 Palestinian exodus, but continued with the Israeli aggression and occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the rest of historical Palestine, in 1967. This caused the exodus of 425,000 more Palestinians, and brought another 750,000 Palestinians under Israeli military rule. The increased number of Palestinians living under occupation, coupled with the high Palestinian birth rate as compared to that of Israeli Jews, has aggravated the danger of the Palestinian presence in the Zionists' eyes. The demographic issue is a nightmare for Israeli strategists, and has been termed a «time bomb.» An editor of *Maariv*, October 29th, 1967, described the Palestinian birth rate as a «danger against which society must defend itself by all means... We must act.» Such statements also illustrate the extreme racism that is inherent in Zionism.

Golda Meir was famous for saying, in the mid-seventies, that she could hardly sleep at night for worrying about how many Arab babies might have been born that night. All Israeli leaders have hoped a large number of Palestinians would eventually leave the occupied territories, and they differ only in the degree to which they openly advocate that the state should facilitate this process. For many years, the only Zionists who advocated withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories did so on demographic grounds. For example, after the 1967 war, Yitzhak Ben Aharon, secretary-general of the Histadrut, advocated restoring the occupied territories to the Arabs, even without a peace treaty, because they are «a bomb under the Jewish character of the state»(quoted by Halevi,p.190).

The «transfer» option gained new ground in the eighties with the further shift to the right on the Israeli political scene. A number of ultra-right parties openly advocate transfer, such as Tehiya whose Knesset representative, Geuleh Cohen, declared the party's establishment of a fund to «assist Arab in emigrating,» as one of many efforts aimed at attaining «Greater Israel.» The best representative of this

fascist, terrorist trend is the KACH movement, the logical extension of Zionist ideology. Its leader, Rabbi Meir Kahane, often says what the mainstream Israeli leadership is thinking, but reluctant to say aloud. In Kahane's view, the Palestinians have to leave, but if they insist on staying in their homes, despite all the oppression, they will be forcibly expelled by state and settler-organized terrorism. As the German fascists did with the Jews, he insists on the expulsion of all Palestinians as a «final solution» for the demographic problem and the Palestinian question. In his words: «The (Palestinians) who refuse to live as resident strangers (and they must be limited to a specific number that does not endanger the state) must be given a choice of leaving willingly with full compensation for their property or being compelled to leave without compensation»(*Al Fajr*, English edition, September 23rd, 1983).

Meir Cohen, when he was deputy speaker of the Knesset, blamed the Israeli army for leaving Palestinians on their land. On March 17th, 1983, he told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee: «We had the means in 1967 to make sure that two or three hundred thousand would move to the other side as was done in Lydda, Ramle and Galilee in 1948, but we made a calamitous mistake. Things would have been simpler today: no Palestine problem, no stones, no demonstrations. We could have brought in 100,000 settlers and there would have been no trouble»(*Al Fajr*, March 25th, 1983). Zvi Shiloah, of the Tehiya Party, who entered the Knesset in 1984, has this to say about «transfer»: «I advocate transfer. The difference between Meir Kahane and myself is that I am speaking of a transfer with Arab and international agreement... Under normal conditions expulsion is not feasible, so Kahane's call to expel the Arabs isn't practical. A transfer isn't such a terrible thing. After all, how far is Nazareth from Damascus?... If, for example, the Jordan River bridges were to be closed, I am sure the process of emptying the West Bank would be immeasurably speeded up. The Arabs of Israel? There we have a knotty problem. Perhaps things could be left to develop naturally until matters reach a point of confrontation where it would no longer be worth their while to stay on»(The Arab League, *op. cit.*, p.205).

From Shiloah's point of view, it is the need to maintain the Jewish character of the state which necessitates transfer, and this is a goal on which the entire Zionist leadership concurs. It is no accident that the year of the intifada, 1987, was also the year of the birth of a new party in Israel, Moledet, whose main raison d'etre is openly advocating transfer. Moledet gained two Knesset seats in 1988.

As a result of 42 years of organized expulsion and creeping annexation, Israel has today succeeded in fulfilling the most important element of «Greater Israel.» The new influx of immigrants is now being used not only to force more Palestinians out of their land, but also to strengthen Israel for further aggression and expansion. The new immigration supports the drive of Likud and the ultra-right to enact a mass expulsion of Palestinians into Jordan and mitigates for a new war. «We may have to invade Jordan,» said Geuleh Cohen. «We will come to Amman not as strangers... After all, as everyone knows, we really own Jordan»(The Arab League, *op. cit.*, p.204). ●