

## REJOINDER TO BENNY MORRIS

NORMAN FINKELSTEIN

In *Myths, Old and New* (hereafter: *Myths*), published in the last issue of the *Journal*,\* I discussed Benny Morris's central thesis that the Arab refugee problem was "born of war, not by design." I suggested that Morris's own evidence points to the conclusion that Palestine's Arabs were expelled systematically and with premeditation. Morris's *Response to Finkelstein and Masalha* (hereafter: *Response*), printed in the same issue (pp. 98-114), demonstrates that my criticism was warranted, indeed, understated. I will use this space to address each of the objections Morris raises. For the most part, I will not clutter my rejoinder with lengthy quotations, limiting myself instead to page references, so that readers may compare the cited passages with Morris. I will use the framework of my original article to organize the rejoinder, leaving to the end miscellaneous points. Finally, inasmuch as Morris's views in his response diverge radically from what he has written before, I will, for convenience's sake, use the rhetorical device of the "old" Morris and the "new" Morris, the former referring to Morris's two volumes and sundry articles, and the latter to his revisionism in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*. This distinction will, I think, clarify many of the points at issue between us.

My critique was basically divided into two parts, the first dealing with the Palestinian flight before May 1948 and the second with the Palestinian flight after May. In the first part, I disputed Morris on three central points, arguing, first, that his periodization obscured more than it enlightened, second, that the Arab exodus resulted from a general, predetermined Zionist policy and, third, that the Arab exodus did not come as a shock to the Zionist wartime

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**Norman Finkelstein** received his Ph.D. in political science from Princeton University and currently teaches in New York.

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leadership. Morris challenges all my arguments. I will address each of his challenges in turn.

I first argued that, for the purpose of understanding the dynamics of the Arab exodus in 1948, it was more useful to conceive of it as basically two stages—roughly before and after the Israeli declaration of statehood—rather than as Morris's division of it into four (or four-and-a-half) stages. The "new" Morris insists that the latter is the one and only valid periodization, my own obscuring crucial distinctions. The "old" Morris was rather less categorical, referring, for example, to the two halves of the Arab exodus in 1948, with the "circumstances of the second half of the exodus" after 1 June being an altogether "different story" from the first half (*1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* [hereafter: *1948*], p. 88).

In any event, a periodization is as good as the light it sheds on a historical process. I suggested a two-stage periodization since, as Morris's evidence made abundantly clear, the Zionist leadership, for multiple reasons, switched gears in May (and, especially, beginning in July) from a more or less covert expulsion policy to a more or less overt one (see *Myths*, p. 81). Besides highlighting this significant policy change, my periodization also illuminated the biases of Morris's history. At least as many Arabs fled *after* as before 14 May. Yet in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949* (hereafter: *Birth*), Morris devoted more than a hundred pages to the first half of the exodus (chapters 2–3) and only about *half as many* pages to the second half (chapters 6–8). It was in this respect that I suggested that Morris made the earlier months of the Arab exodus "somehow typical" (perhaps not the most exact phrase, but I still can't think of a better one) of the Arab flight. Morris achieved the same result by repeatedly referring to the Arab exodus in April–May as "the mass exodus," "the main wave," etc., and by devoting far and away the longest chapter of *Birth* to the events of April–May. In effect, *Birth*'s focus was those months when Zionist policy was most equivocal and most conducive to varied interpretation.

A similar distortion resulted from Morris's representation of the Arab flight from Haifa in April. Morris described Haifa as "illustrative of the complexity of the exodus," and accordingly analyzed the unfolding of events there in uniquely exhaustive detail. (Haifa, incidentally, was no more "pivotal"—as Morris puts it in his response—than Dayr Yasin, which "probably had the most lasting effect of any single event of the war in precipitating the flight of Arabs" [*Birth*, p. 113]. Yet Morris devoted to Dayr Yasin only a tiny fraction of the space given to Haifa.) No phase of the Arab exodus is better known than Haifa. Every Zionist account of the 1948 war seizes with desperate zeal on the story of the gentle Jewish mayor, Shabtei Levi, begging the Arabs to remain and the perfidious Arab leadership opting for flight. Likewise, this drama figured very prominently in Morris's account. Yet, as Morris himself has also observed, "nowhere else in the country in April, or later, did Jewish leaders plead with the Arab neighbors to stay put" and only "in few places

was there an organized considered decision by the local [Arab] leadership to evacuate" (1948, p. 20). Simply put, in crucial respects, Haifa was "illustrative" of—nothing. Morris's focus, in fact, was the most equivocal case of the most equivocal period of the Arab flight.

Morris disputes my rendering of the events in Haifa on many counts. His main objections are:

A. "Finkelstein refers to [the] events [during the Haifa offensive] as 'atrocities,' whereas I have found no evidence of any 'atrocities' committed in Arab Haifa during and after its capture" (*Response*, p. 105). But the Morris who wrote *Birth* had found such evidence. In a passage referring to the Haganah assault of 22 April, he wrote:

The 3-inch mortars "opened up on the market square [where there was] a great crowd . . . a great panic took hold. The multitude burst into the port, pushed aside the policemen, charged the boats and began fleeing the town." British observers noted that "during the morning they [i.e., the Haganah] were continually shooting down on all Arabs who moved both in Wadi Nisnas and the Old City. This included completely indiscriminate and revolting machinegun fire and sniping on women and children . . . attempting to get out of Haifa through the gates into the docks . . . There was considerable congestion outside the East Gate [of the port] of hysterical and terrified Arab women and children and old people on whom the Jews opened up mercilessly with fire" (*Birth*, p. 85f.; interpolations in original).

"[C]ompletely indiscriminate and revolting machinegun fire and sniping on women and children," "hysterical and terrified Arab women and children and old people on whom the Jews opened up mercilessly with fire"—this would appear to be ample evidence of atrocities.

B. "Finkelstein, forever a purveyor of Jewish malice, states flatly—and without an iota of proof—that the shelling [of Haifa harbor] was designed to precipitate an exodus" (*Response*, p. 105). Contrariwise, Morris stated flatly that the purpose of the shelling was only to break the Arab resistance and speed the Arab surrender (*Birth*, p. 85). He knew this was the case because the Haganah commander, Moshe Carmel, "afterwards said" so. Indeed, Morris goes so far as to aver in his response that "none" of the Haganah commanders even "expected" that the murderous shelling of Haifa "would result in the Arabs' flight." I quoted Uri Milstein, whom the "old" Morris acclaimed as the "definitive" military historian of the 1948 war (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, 20 May 1989), to the effect that the purpose of the shelling was indeed to precipitate Arab flight. Milstein's finding jibed both with the "militant thinking" to expel Haifa's Arabs in Carmeli Brigade headquarters and with a June 1948 IDF intelligence report pointing to the success of the "indirect methods" used in Haifa to precipitate Arab flight (*Birth*, pp. 92–93; 1948, p. 71). The prudent move on my part seemed to be to go with the finding of the "definitive" military historian of 1948 and not with the self-serving *ex post facto* account of the Zionist commander.

C. "Finkelstein . . . in effect, ignores the remaining Arab leaders' decision to evacuate the town . . . and dismisses the . . . Jewish civilian leaders' pleas for the Arabs to stay" in accounting for the Arab exodus (*Response*, p. 105). Yet, the "old" Morris reported that "clearly th[e] [Haganah] offensive, and especially the mortaring . . . precipitated the mass exodus" (*Birth*, p. 85; 1948, p. 21), and that the Arab-Jewish-British parleys proved largely irrelevant to the actual unfolding of events in Haifa since "the civilian [Zionist] authorities were saying one thing and the Haganah was doing something else altogether" (*Birth*, p. 90).

D. "Finkelstein ignores my explanation—based on documentation—of how and why the Arab leaders opted for the solution of evacuation. . ." (*Response*, p. 105). Yet, the only evidence Morris presented to support his explanation that the Arab leaders feared retribution from fellow Arabs was the "recollection of the events a year later" of one of the Zionist parties to the Haifa negotiations. The rest, as he freely admitted ("The shadow of the Husayri terrorism of 1936–39 apparently loomed over. . .," "Perhaps these 'instructions' . . .," and so on), was pure speculation (*Birth*, pp. 83–84; my emphasis). As it happens, Walid Khalidi, who has written with as much authority as any historian on Haifa, speculated in a rather different direction (the Arab leaders were trying to force the hand of the local British authorities), also with scanty evidence (cf. "The Fall of Haifa," in *Middle East Forum*, December 1959). The prudent move here seemed to be to suspend judgment—or, as Morris rather less felicitously puts it, to "clam[] up".

I next argued that Plan D—the comprehensive military plan formulated by the Zionist wartime leadership in early March and implemented beginning in April—sanctioned the mass expulsion of Arabs. As Morris himself put it, the "essence" of Plan D "was the clearing of hostile and potentially hostile forces out of the interior of the prospective territory of the Jewish State. . . . As the Arab irregulars were based and quartered in the villages, and as the militias of many villages were participating in the anti-Yishuv hostilities, the Haganah regarded most of the villages as actively or potentially hostile" (*Birth*, p. 62). And again: Plan D "constituted a strategic-ideological anchor and basis for expulsions by front, district, brigade and battalion commanders . . . and it gave commanders, *post facto*, a formal, persuasive covering note to explain their actions" (*Birth*, p. 63; cf. pp. 113, 128–29, 157).

Morris's main objection is that Plan D was motivated by "strategic and military" concerns, not ideological-political ones. Yet, as I observed in my critique: "One can . . . argue that Plan D was 'not a political blueprint for the expulsion of Palestine's Arabs' but, rather 'was governed by military considerations and was geared to achieving military ends.' The fact still remains, however, that such an expulsion policy *was* formulated" (*Myths*, p. 71; the internal quotations are from *Birth*, p. 62). The question of the motives behind the Zionist expulsion policy is an important one and I did carefully

address it in a section of my essay which *JPS*, for reasons of space, could not publish. (The full manuscript runs to three times the printed version.) But it is clearly a separate issue from whether or not there *was* a policy of expulsion.

I also documented in copious detail that the expulsion policy sanctioned by Plan D was the *operative* one in the field. I cited Morris's own conclusions—e.g., “it was understood” by Haganah officers “at each level of command and execution” that “militarily, in the struggle to survive, the fewer Arabs remaining behind and along the front lines, the better and, politically, the fewer Arabs remaining in the Jewish state, the better” (*Birth*, p. 289)—and the actual battlefield objectives—e.g., Moshe Carmel, commander of Operation Ben-Ami in early May, aimed at “the conquest and evacuation by the Arabs” of the Western Galilee (*Birth*, pp. 124–25). Crucially, Morris makes no effort to refute the evidence I assembled.

I then took up what Morris called the “atrocities factor.” Morris registers several objections:

A. Morris accuses me of questioning that “Jewish atrocities were a significant factor in propelling Palestine’s Arabs into refugeedom” (*Response*, p. 108). In fact, I did no such thing. What I did question was Morris’s *revised* meaning of the “atrocities factor” in his conclusion. There it principally referred, *not* to Zionist atrocities, but to Arab “fears” that the Zionists “would do to them what, in the reverse circumstances, victorious Arab fighters would have done.” It was in *this* context that I referred to Morris’s providing “only the flimsiest of evidence” (*Myths*, p. 72).

B. The “new” Morris indignantly denies that he ever used euphemisms like “nudging” to describe Zionist atrocities in 1948 (p. 108f.). Yet, wasn’t it the “old” Morris who summarized the bloody Zionist campaign of 1948, punctuated by the even more bloody Zionist atrocities at Lydda, Eilaboun, Jish, Ad Dawayima, Safsaf, Dayr Yasin, etc., as follows: “So the idea [of transfer] simmered until 1948, when war . . . brought a Palestinian exodus of itself. With *a little nudging* in the right direction, the low-key exodus . . . turned into a mass flood and a *fait accompli*”? (*Tikkun*,\* p. 83, in *Myths*, p. 85; my emphasis). The charitable interpretation, I suppose, is that the phrase “a little nudging” referred only to the benign Haganah shelling of places like . . . Haifa harbor.

C. The clearly identified source for the claim that the Zionists, not the Arabs, “mostly fabricated or exaggerated” the reports on Dayr Yasin was the above-mentioned Uri Milstein, who I carefully described as “authoritative (if controversial)” (*Myths*, p. 72). In this connection, I want to point to a dilemma posed by Morris’s response: Morris repeatedly faults me for relying

\* “The Eel and History: A Reply to Shabtai Teveth,” in *Tikkun* 5, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 1990), pp. 19–22, 79–86.

heavily on his research, yet he apparently considers himself the only reliable authority on 1948. Thus, he dismisses every other source I cite—Milstein, Palumbo, Khalidi, Pa'il, Teveth—with more or less (usually more) contempt. Why, incidentally, was it wrong to rely on Morris if the explicitly stated main purpose of my essay was an *internal* critique of Morris (see *Myths*, p. 67)?

In the third section of part one, I argued that the evidence does not sustain Morris's claim that the Arab exodus came as a "shock" to the Zionist leaders. I considered Ben-Gurion and Josef Weitz.

In the case of Ben-Gurion, I cited numerous indications that he anticipated the mass exodus—e.g., his prediction on 6 April that "the war will also bring in its wake a great change in the distribution of the Arab population" (*Myths*, p. 77, citing *Birth*, p. 181). Morris nonetheless urges that Ben-Gurion's expressions of shock "should not be dismissed so lightly." One problem here is that Ben-Gurion *himself* stated in June 1948 that he "was not surprised" by the "flight of Arabs" (*Myths*, p. 77, citing Simha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel* [1987], p. 88). In a related line of argument, the "new" Morris maintains that Ben-Gurion may have "wanted" to see the Arabs expelled, but that "didn't mean" it "translated into policy" (p. 103). Yet, the "old" Morris had something rather different to say. Referring explicitly to the matter of expulsion, Morris stated: "Outwardly, [Ben-Gurion] continued until very late in the day to pay the requisite lip service to the grand humanist-socialist ideals. *On the ground, however, he made sure that what he wanted done got done*, and he carefully avoided leaving tracks; his name rarely adorns an actual expulsion directive" (*Tikkun*, p. 82 in *Myths*, p. 77; my emphasis). Moreover, there is a certain inconsistency in Morris's response. He suggests that Ben-Gurion's expulsion wishes didn't get translated into policy because of, *inter alia*, his "private scruples" and concern for "Western opinion." Yet only two paragraphs before, he described Ben-Gurion as a "ruthless" leader who showed "contempt for world public opinion, UN speeches and resolutions, and American pressures" (p. 103).

In the case of Weitz, I again cited numerous indications that the Arab exodus could not have surprised him very much—e.g., his 11 January diary entry, "Is it not now the time to be rid of them? Why continue to keep in our midst these thorns at a time when they pose a danger to us? Our people are weighing up [solutions]" (*Myths*, p. 78, citing *Birth*, p. 55). Regarding Morris's specific objections, I did question his *uncritical* reliance on Weitz's diary—for instance, the use of Weitz's anxious 23 April entry on Haifa as evidence that the Arab flight shocked him. Yet, Morris himself reported—but only some thirty pages later and in an altogether different context—that Weitz was already urging on 22 April that Haifa's Arabs be "hound[ed]" into exile (*Myths*, p. 79, citing *Birth*, pp. 92–93; cf. 1948, p. 100). Indeed, many of Weitz's diary entries that Morris cites strain credulity. Thus, after bearing witness in his diary to the results of the Haganah's depredations in the Jezreel Valley—"[T]he Arab villages [are] in ruins. . . . The houses and huts

are completely destroyed. . . .”—Weitz wrote that the Arabs there left “in a psychosis of fear. . . . Village after village was abandoned in a panic that *cannot be explained* (*Birth*, p. 111; my emphasis). Was it really “palpable nonsense” to question Weitz’s “forthrightness and candor” here?

In the second part of *Myths*, I documented the overt Zionist expulsion policy after May and especially beginning in July (p. 80 ff.). I cited the “majority opinion” of the well-informed Mapam leadership—e.g., Aharon Cohen, director of Mapam’s Arab Department, who stated in early May that “a deliberate eviction [of the Arabs] is taking place. . . . Others may rejoice. I, as a socialist, am ashamed and afraid” (1948, p. 46)—and Ben-Gurion’s own pronouncements, including his statement on 21 October that “[t]he Arabs of the Land of Israel have only one function left to them—to run away” (*Birth*, p. 218).

Morris does not dispute the evidence I adduced. Rather, his main objection, argued at considerable length and with considerable gusto, is that “Finkelstein . . . can’t assert that there was a ‘ruthlessly efficient’, ‘systematic’ policy of expulsion” if fully 100,000–160,000 of the 900,000 Arabs of what became Israel remained *in situ* at the war’s end (p. 102–3). Otherwise stated, the fact that one-sixth of the total Palestinian Arab population wasn’t expelled shows that five-sixths of the population wasn’t “ruthlessly” and “systematic[ally]” expelled. This argument has intriguing possibilities. One wonders how Morris would respond if a German historian argued that the fact that roughly one-half (five million) of the Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe survived the war shows that the other half wasn’t the victim of a “ruthlessly efficient” and “systematic” policy of extermination. Indeed, so far as I know, not even the crackpot “revisionist” historians in Germany have yet claimed that the fact that my mother survived Majdanek and my father Auschwitz shows that there wasn’t a “ruthlessly efficient” and “systematic” extermination policy in these camps.

Morris’s specific examples are even more intriguing. To demonstrate that the Zionist leadership did not pursue a “ruthlessly efficient” and “systematic” policy of expulsion, the “new” Morris points to the small Arab communities that remained “after the mass exodus” in, among other places, Lydda and Ramle (p. 102). Yet, the “old” Morris devoted scores of pages to exhaustively documenting the “ruthlessly efficient” and “systematic” expulsion of Lydda and Ramle’s Arab population (in addition to *Birth* and 1948, cf. “Operation Dani and the Palestinian Exodus from Lydda and Ramle in 1948,” in *The Middle East Journal* 40, no. 1 [Winter 1986], pp. 82–109).

I did attempt to account for some of the exceptions to the mass expulsion—e.g., fear of Christian reaction, lobbying efforts on behalf of “collaborationist” villages, the need for Arab labor—citing, *inter alia*, Morris’s findings in chapter seven of 1948, which he inexplicably says I “ignore” (see *Myths*, pp. 73, 81; notes 13 and 20). Beyond the practical constraints on them, I want to note more generally that the Zionist leaders were not politi-

cally or ideologically committed to expelling *every last Arab*. The basic point was made by the Zionist politician-turned-historian, Simha Flapan, who stated that Israel was willing to grant Arabs the full rights of citizenship "as long as they amounted to no more than 15 percent of the state's Jewish population" (*The Birth of Israel*, p. 104).

The remainder of my critique was devoted to Morris's charts at the front of *Birth*. I documented that the charts systematically underreported Zionist expulsions in the 1948 war. Morris levels many accusations at my analysis. A careful discussion of these accusations nicely illustrates, I think, the style and substance of Morris's entire response.

A. "Finkelstein kicks off by admitting that some of his assertions may be incorrect, but—typically—he tucks away the admission in a footnote (no. 27) so that many readers might miss it" (*Response*, p. 110). Turning to the footnote we read: "There may be some overlap in the Arab villages and towns I report as erroneously tabulated since Morris's textual references range from single sites to broadly inclusive regions." It takes considerable talent to construe this footnote as a surreptitious "admission" that my "assertions may be incorrect."

B. "[Finkelstein] cheats by informing the readers of only *three*—'M' (Zionist attack), 'A' (Arab orders) and 'E' (Jewish expulsion)—of the six causes given for Arab flight. He omits any mention of the other three causes in the key—'F' (fear of Jewish attack), 'W' (Jewish psychological warfare), and 'C' (the influence of the fall of, or exodus from, a neighboring town). Mention of these is presumably omitted because of Finkelstein's preference for clearcut, simplistic history. . ." (*Response*, p. 110). Yet, I explicitly referred to the designations "M," "A," and "E" as the ones "mainly" used by Morris (*Myths*, p. 83). I focused on these designations for the obvious reason that they are the main poles in the debate on the Arab exodus. Nothing essential seemed sacrificed since Morris himself stated that "the lines between C, F and M are somewhat blurred" (*Birth*, p. iv). True, that leaves "W," but I doubt if even the "new" Morris would want to argue that "whispering campaigns" were a significant cause of the Arab flight.

C. The only example of misrepresentation I cited that Morris seriously disputes is Fajja. I suggested that, according to Morris's text, Fajja also deserved as one of its designations an "E," since "expulsion did play a part" in the Arab flight from there (*Myths*, p. 83). To judge by Morris's response, I could not have committed a more monumental blunder: "What does Finkelstein know about the exodus from Fajja. . .? What evidence does he have. . .? None—and he offers none" (p. 111). True, I knew nothing about Fajja save what was in Morris. Turning then to what he wrote, we read that the Arab flight from Fajja "could also have been included perhaps in the expulsion category" (1948, p. 83). Yet for Morris, Fajja is *the* irrefutable evidence of my "spurious, twisted scholarship" (p. 111).

D. "I . . . restricted myself [in the charts] to the main cause or causes that propelled into refugeedom the great majority of the population of each particular site" (*Response*, p. 110). Morris's criterion of "main cause or causes" did not prevent him from tabulating the infamous mass expulsions at Lydda, Ramle, and Dayr Yasin each as an "E" (expulsion) and "M" (military assault). Yet, it *did* prevent him from tabulating an "E" for numerous sites even as his texts or sources *unmistakably* reported "expulsion" as a main cause of the Arab exodus. These sites are typically given an "M." To repeat a couple of typical examples of what Morris calls my "merely being quarrelsome or trying to pull the wool over [the] readers' eyes with simulated scholarship" (*Response*, p. 111): (a) Morris's text stated that the IDF "carried out a full-scale clearing operation in the Kaufakha-Al Muharraqa area" during which the "villages' inhabitants and [bedouin] concentrations in the area were dispersed and expelled" (*Birth*, p. 215; the second quote is from an official Israeli source). Yet, Kaufakha-Al Muharraqa received only an "M" classification in the tables; (b) Morris reported that a Haganah raid "precipitated the evacuation of . . . Al Manara." The only source Morris cited was Naffez Nazzal's *The Palestinian Exodus from Galilee, 1948* (1978). Turning to the cited pages in Nazzal, we read that "Zionist soldiers attacked . . . Al Manara (a village of 490 Arab inhabitants), chased its inhabitants out, destroyed some houses, and left leaflets behind warning the inhabitants not to return because the village had been mined" (p. 28–29). Yet, Al Manara was listed with an "M" in the tables. (Cf. *Myths*, pp. 84–85 for much more extensive documentation.) Plainly, Morris's operative criterion for tabulating the Arab exodus was not the "main cause or causes," but *serviceability* for his central thesis that "M" (military assault), not "E" (expulsion), accounted for it.

Let me now turn to the miscellaneous points in Morris's response.

(1) Inasmuch as I never disputed that much of the Arab exodus between December 1947 and March 1948 was not the result of a general, premeditated Zionist policy (the first part of *Myths* clearly focused on April–May) and inasmuch as these refugees accounted for no more than between 1/20 and 1/10 of the total figure, I cannot see the relevance of Morris's discussion of the Arab exodus at that time. Nonetheless, it is not without interest to notice how Morris renders these months in his response, where he can't detect "any evidence . . . even hinting" (p. 101) that the Zionist leadership was tending toward expulsion of the Arabs before April 1948. Yet, the "old" Morris reported that "already in November 1947, a few days before the UN partition resolution, Ben-Gurion was thinking in terms of a 'transfer' solution to the prospective Jewish state's Arab problem" (*Tikkun*, p. 82). Hence, he advised giving the Arabs of the future Jewish state citizenship in the future Arab state so as to facilitate their expulsion in the likely event of war. Then, as the Palestinians first began to flee before the Zionist assaults during the early days of the war in December 1947, Morris observed, Ben-Gurion grasped that

the moment was at hand to implement transfer. To quote the "old" Morris again: "With a little nudging, with a limited expulsion here and the razing of a village there, and with a policy of military conquest usually preceded by mortar barrages, this trickle of an exodus, [Ben-Gurion] realized, could be turned into a massive outflow" (*Tikkun*, p. 82). But the "new" Morris can't detect "any evidence . . . even hinting" at a Zionist intent to expel the Arabs before April. (See *Myths*, pp. 75–77 for much more extensive documentation.) Compare, incidentally, the latter quote with the above-cited claim of the "new" Morris that the Zionist wartime leaders never "expected" that the Haganah military offensives would "result in the Arabs' flight."

(2) All the British and United Nations estimates for the total number of Arab refugees from the 1948 war hovered between 700,000 and 800,000. Israel publicly maintained that the figure was only a little over 500,000. I noted that, according to Morris, Israel "sincerely believed" that the 700,000–800,000 was "inflated"; yet, he also quoted the Israeli Foreign Ministry's cynical private admission that the real figure was 700,000–800,000 (*Birth*, pp. 284, 297–98). In his response, Morris still professes that there is no contradiction between his faith that Israel "sincerely believed" the 500,000 figure and his own evidence that it privately conceded the 700,000–800,000 figure. Morris doesn't deign to make an argument, however. Rather, he simply invokes his own "unimpeachable" authority: "I can only repeat that Israel 'sincerely believed' that . . ." (*Response*, p. 109).

(3) "Finkelstein is wrong about the degree of penetration of my work into the Israeli consciousness" (*Response*, p. 98). Yet my remarks clearly referred to the impact of Morris's research on popular discussion in the *United States*, which is why I limited myself to citing American periodicals. Morris's crucial findings, incidentally, were first published in 1986 and created a considerable sensation here. Was it really so unreasonable, as Morris suggests, to expect that by 1988 Jewish and scholarly periodicals in the U.S. would be familiar with them?

(4) "Why does Finkelstein assert that the villagers of Balad ash Sheikh in April 1948 were 'threatened with a Haganah massacre?' Who made this threat or commented that such a threat existed? When? Where is that 'threat' documented? How about—the inhabitants of Israel are 'threatened' with a massacre by the PLO should Israel hand over the West Bank to PLO rule. Who? When? What?" (*Response*, p. 109). Morris can barely control his rage, yet a careful reading of my manuscript reveals that I never wrote any such thing. Perhaps Morris confuses me—dare I say so?—with Joan Peters.

(5) "Shouldn't an expert on 1948 of Finkelstein's stature have noticed that there was no '82nd Regiment' (there were and are no 'regiments' in the IDF—there are battalions and brigades) in Lydda on 11–13 July 1948 (in fact, the 82nd Battalion, 8th Brigade conquered Lydda airport). . ." (*Response*, p. 114, note 1). Yet Morris's quarrel is evidently not with me but with Israeli writer Amos Kenan, since I was clearly quoting *his* recollection of how the "82nd Regiment" to which he belonged "conquered the Palestinian town of

Lydda" (*Myths*, p. 89, note 29). Morris, incidentally, reports that he called Kenan, and that Kenan "denied that he had written that there was no expulsion in Lydda. 'Of course there was,' [Kenan] said" (*Response*, p. 114, note 1). Never mind that I directly quoted Kenan's published article (*The Nation*, 6 February 1989) to the effect that "we never really *conquered* Lydda. Lydda, to put it simply, fled" and that "there was really no city to conquer. The whole place, except George Habash and his sister and a few others, was empty" (*Myths*, p. 89, note 29; emphasis in original). Morris rang up Kenan; Kenan said "it ain't so"; so, "it ain't so." One can only marvel at how Morris wills away the existence of a statement already in print.

So far as I can tell, I have now answered all the objections in Morris's response save the last one. Morris registers "a small protest at the tone of some of Finkelstein's remarks" which "I don't think . . . are justified or appropriate to civilized academic argumentation" (pp. 113-14). Considering the "tone" of Morris's remarks—"Finkelstein definitely should have his eyes checked," "Finkelstein—for whom the only good Israeli is an evil Israeli," "Finkelstein, forever a purveyor of Jewish malice," "Finkelstein's (dishonest and reprehensible) point," "Finkelstein has twisted, distorted, and hoodwinked," "Finkelstein's spurious, twisted scholarship," etc., etc.—I am not certain he is the best judge of what is "appropriate to civilized academic argumentation."\*

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\* Unfortunately, the reader cannot fully appreciate the audacity of Morris's "small protest" since, in deference to me but against my urging, *JPS* edited out Morris's more egregious *ad hominem* attacks.