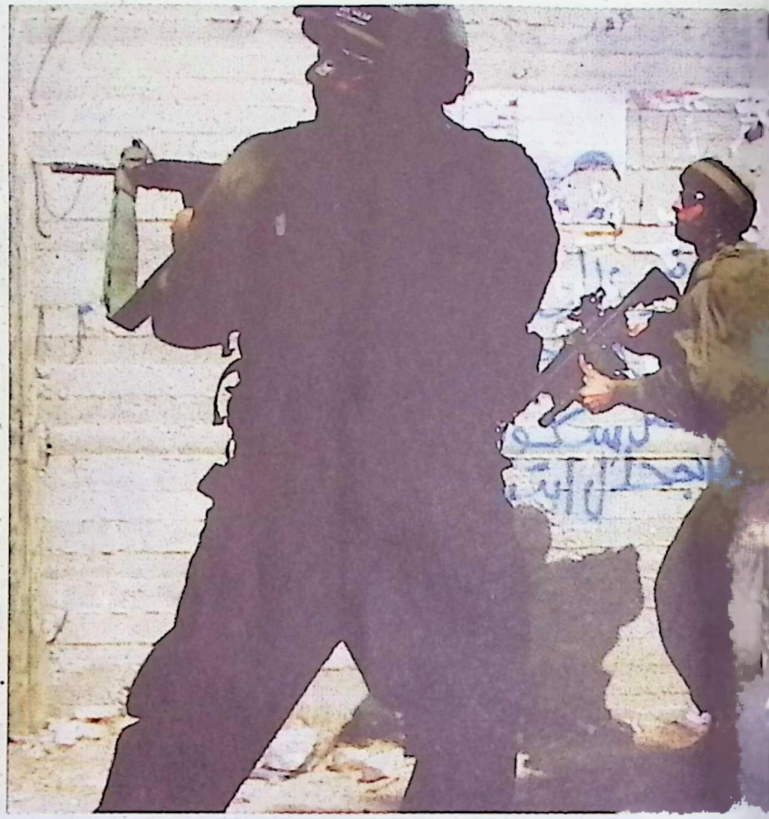


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**Similarly, in terms of possible outcomes, one could argue that Israel, after its creation, could have taken the high road in its dealings with the Palestinians and Arabs.**

to gain new advantages over the Arabs: or after each of its military victories over the Arabs Israel could have offered to give up its gains, and thereby gained the confidence of its adversaries. Yes, these opportunities existed -- and Avnery lists several such opportunities -- but Israel "missed" every one of them.

In principle, during the war of 1948 the Haganah -- the military forces of the Jewish colons in Palestine -- could have chosen to limit its conquests to the borders defined by the UN partition plan: or withdrawn to these borders once the conflict ended.

Instead, the Haganah pushed beyond these borders to capture a little more than half the territories that were "given" by the UN to the Palestinians. It also expelled more than eighty percent of the Palestinians in these territories: and forcibly prevented them from returning to their homes.

Had the Zionists "missed" an opportunity for peace here? This question is entirely misplaced: it can only be based on a blatant disregard of the settler-colonial character of the Zionist movement.

Nearly from the outset, the Zionist founders scarcely concealed their intent to create their Jewish state in all of mandatory Palestine -- at the least -- whose Jewish character could be guaranteed only by evacuating the Palestinians from their lands.

On any honest assessment, the Zionists had merely seized the opportunity for which they had been preparing since 1897. It would have gone against their grain had they done anything else.

Similarly, in terms of possible outcomes, one could argue that Israel, after its creation, could have taken the high road in its dealings with the Palestinians and Arabs. "On the morrow of the war of 1948, in which Israel was founded," writes Avnery, "We could have achieved peace."

Israel could have supported the creation of a Palestinian state; given heed to Nasser's peace feelers instead of joining hands with Britain and France in 1956 to overthrow him; after 1967, when Israel occupied all of Palestine, Israel could have given the Palestinians a state; and so the list goes on.

Yet Israel took the path that led