

## The Riftin Report

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Akevot עקבות עקיפות

המכון לחקר הסכסוך הישראלי-פלסטיני  
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March 1, 1948

To: Chair of the Security Committee<sup>1</sup>

From: Yaakov R.<sup>2</sup>

### Section A: Factual Inquiry

1. a. The letter of David<sup>3</sup> to Amitai<sup>4</sup> dated February 4, 1948, states:

“Three weeks ago, a Polish Christian was arrested in Tel Aviv and taken to Yona base. He was not interrogated. His guard shot and killed him. The body was taken and thrown into Hadassah Garden”.
- b. Kiryati's<sup>5</sup> letter to Hillel<sup>6</sup> provided the following explanation:

“The guard who shot the prisoner was interrogated, and in his interrogation informed his commanding officer that when he went into the prisoner's cell to retrieve the soiled food dishes, the prisoner attacked him and attempted to strangle him. To protect his life, the guard shot him. The prisoner, after the shots, was dying. Accordingly, after considerations, it was decided to liquidate him and remove him from the base.”
- c. In his letter to Battalion B, Givati<sup>7</sup> decreed:

“1. – Acquit Hornik Efraim; 2. Condemn Keter Yaakov and remove him from the Organization [the Haganah]. The conclusions must be read during the platoon roll call.”
- d. In a verbal conversation, Givati provided me with the following explanation: A. Hornik came to Keter Yaakov's aid after he was attacked and had fired. Givati believes there was no need to fire, and the prisoner's attack could have been overcome without firing. He noted that both were young fellows. Keter Yaakov is a new immigrant from Turkey. Hornik – a new immigrant from Poland.

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<sup>1</sup> The Security Committee, established September 1947, was a 9-member civilian political body overseeing the Jewish armed forces. Its members represented the various Jewish political parties and its Chair was David Ben Gurion.

<sup>2</sup> Yaakov Riftin, a member of the Security Committee for Mapam party.

<sup>3</sup> David Shealtiel, head of the Haganah intelligence arm – Shai.

<sup>4</sup> Codename for David Ben Gurion.

<sup>5</sup> Kiryati was the codename the Tel Aviv district of the Haganah, referring here to its commander

<sup>6</sup> Codename for Yisrael Galili, commander of the Haganah National Headquarters

<sup>7</sup> Referring to the commander of the Givati brigade, Shimon Avidan

- e. On February 3, Hillel notified Givati and Kiryati:

“I am not satisfied with the investigation and its conclusions. This sort of adjudication is not within the power of the brigade commander. I task Comrade Yosef with conducting a thorough investigation into the circumstances of the shocking incident immediately. Based on this investigation, a trial will be held wherein justice will be served, and the guilty parties will be punished. Our commitment to protecting human life, the dignity of the Organization and our conscience require justice be done. Based on the investigation by Yosef K., I shall release my conclusions with respect to the methods of interrogation and trial used by the commanders of the Haganah vis-à-vis the persons guilty of the murder.

Conclusions:

- a. Yosef is required to complete his investigation,  
b. Hillel is required to: A. See to it that a trial is held.

B. Issue conclusions subsequent to the trial.

Comment: The description of the facts in the Shai’s<sup>8</sup> letter and Kiryati’s letter are insufficiently identical.

2. a. The letter of David to Amitai dated February 2, states:

“About two weeks ago, a Sudanese man was apprehended in Tel Aviv. Interrogated. No accusations made. Executed on Kiryati’s orders.

- b. Isser<sup>9</sup> informed me that a Shai man in Tel Aviv advised Kiryati not to execute the Sudanese man.  
c. Yosef – the Shai man in Tel Aviv, confirmed in a conversation with me that he did not advise to execute the Sudanese man.  
d. Kiryati informed me that after the Sudanese man was interrogated, there was concern regarding the the British Criminal Investigation Department [CID], especially since it was plausible that the English had brought him to Tel Aviv.

Conclusion:

Hillel must reprimand Kiryati with regards to this case, wherein not only was there no trial, but the institution in charge of the investigation expressed objection to a death sentence.

3. a. David’s letter states:

“A Polish Christian who was arrested in Tel Aviv on JNF Boulevard. Interrogated. The interrogation revealed he was a member of the underworld and has been involved in theft from a young age. There was a suspicion that he was not sane. Executed.”

- b. According to Isser – this Pole was interrogated under torture.

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<sup>8</sup> Shai (Hebrew acronym for Informations Service) was the the intelligence arm of the Haganah.

<sup>9</sup> Referring to Isser Be’eri, Acting Head of Shai.

- c. According to Kiryati and Yossef – The interrogation clarified that he had ties with the Germans abroad.”

Conclusion:

Hillel should notify Kiryati that a legal procedure was necessary in this case, particularly since it is not clear there was enough material on guilt to support a death sentence.

4. a. David’s letter states:

“A Polish Christian and a Polish [sic] Ukrainian were apprehended by Egged in Jerusalem as they could not explain the purpose of their presence there. Interrogated. No accusations made. Executed on orders from Etzioni.<sup>10</sup>”

- b. In the explanation given to me by Etzioni and in a letter from Yavneh<sup>11</sup> to David dated January 1, a different account was given: “suspicion arose that they were spying on the preparations for the convoys leaving for Tel Aviv.” One of them, Wilhelm Patak, was carrying the following documents: “Paper No. 2: A letter from Dr. Mahri Hussein, recommending him as a German Nazi; his mother’s death certificate from Berlin also proving him to be German. Paper No. 4: A note for the guards of the police [station] in Jaffa with permission to enter. 5. George Munch’s business card.... 7. A permit to visit a person by the name of Nielson, whose identity we have not yet been able to ascertain, in Fortified Area A. The other man, Wasil Ivanchuk, was found carrying, “Paper No. 10 - Permit to visit Nielson in Fortified Area A, proving his association with Patak was not accidental.” “Neither was able to prove the reason for their presence at ‘Egged.’”
- c. In the conversation, Isser expressed doubt regarding the accuracy of the definition, “A letter... recommending him as a German Nazi.”

Conclusion:

Hillel must notify Etzioni that in this case, despite the strong suspicion, at least with respect to one of the plaintiffs, it was critical to appoint a tribunal in order to conduct a competent deliberation on the issue of the death sentence.

Comment: I note the incongruency in the description of the facts in the letter from Jerusalem Shai and the description provided in David’s letter.

5. a. David’s letter states:

“A Polish Christian was apprehended in Jerusalem. The only thing of which he was “guilty” was being carelessly transported to the place of interrogation, and there was fear that he could identify the address. Executed.”

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<sup>10</sup> Codename for the Jerusalem district of the Haganah and its commander

<sup>11</sup> Shai officer of the Jerusalem district

- b. Etzioni notified us the judgment was issued in his absence by Rudi.
- c. The letter from the Jerusalem Shai, dated January 13, states, with respect to this matter, inter alia: According to previous information, Grabovsky, who lives in Ein Kerem... is a gang leader... An expulsion order is pending against him. A known thief for some time. Rumoured to be working for the CID. The circumstances of his apprehension and transferral to detention by the district men were extremely unfortunate, as he was arrested with two others... who were released following a short interrogation... and there was a risk that the police would look for Grabovsky. He was therefore hastily taken elsewhere without a blindfold. For the risk that if released he may provide information [to CID], and based on the material we brought to the attention of the Acting District Commander, it was decided to liquidate him.”

Conclusion:

Hillel should inform Rudi that despite the strong suspicion, in this case too, it was necessary to urgently convene a tribunal in order to reach a competent decision with respect to the sentence.

Comment: In this case too, there is incongruency in the description of the facts between the report of the Jerusalem Shai and the letter of David to Amitai.

- 6. a. David’s report stated: “An Arab taxi driver from Tiberias was kidnapped by a Palmach [Haganah elite combat force] unit with his car. Put to death. The car is used by the brigade in Tel Aviv.”
- b. In conversation, Isser added that the Arab taxi driver had business ties with Jews.
- c. In the Council’s<sup>12</sup> response to Hillel dated February 4 and in a conversation with Sasha,<sup>13</sup> the following explanation was given: The Mistaravim unit [an undercover unit that impersonated Arabs] hired an Arab taxi from Tiberias for the purpose of carjacking the vehicle to be used in Mistaravim operations. Their intention was to tie his hands and legs, leave him by the side of the road and make off with the car. On the way, the Arab showed them a recommendation letter from the “National Committee” regarding his role in the gangs. They were also told that a week ago, he toured a neighborhood that had been captured by Jews, and he even pointed to a car belonging to the Fourth Battalion as it passed by them and said he had seen this car in Sarona (the car is indeed based in Sarona). The unit intended to capture him and bring him in for interrogation, but he resisted with force, opened the door and meant to jump, and our men had to liquidate him. The car is used by the Mistaravim.
- d. In another conversation with Isser, he informed us that he had received the Arab’s papers but did not receive a “letter of recommendation from the National Committee regarding his role in the gangs.”
- e. A Shai letter from January 31 recounts the same incident:
 

“They kidnapped a taxi driver in Tiberias with his car. On the way, they injected him with morphine, but the injections didn’t work. They put him in the trunk in the back, but he started pounding, and then they were forced, at the top of the hill, to shoot him three times.”

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<sup>12</sup> Council is the codename for the Palmach headquarters.

<sup>13</sup> Codename for Palmach Commander, Yigal Alon

Conclusion:

Sasha must conduct a further investigation. A. Why was the car of this particular driver taken for the needs of the Mistaravim? B. Why was Shai not given the paper attesting to his role in the gangs? C. What were the circumstances of the man's death? [Sasha] must deliver his conclusion following further investigation.

Comment A: Incongruency in the description of the facts between Shai and Committee.

Comment B: I call Hillel's attention to the problem of confiscating Arab cars itself and the need to establish strict rules on this matter.

7. a. "The name of the driver of the car that was robbed (6490) is Yosef Patt. He caused a collision in Tel Aviv that, by chance, did not end in fatalities. He fled without checking to see what happened, and the unit asked Shai for help covering up the matter.
- b. The response of the Committee: "The driver fled for fear of trouble with the police as evidenced by the commander of his unit contacting Shai with a request to cover up the matter (as practiced in such cases).

Conclusion:

The Committee's explanation is satisfactory.

8. a. "500 Eretz Yisrael Pounds were stolen from the cash box at the Negev Brigade headquarters, and receipts for an additional such sum were removed. It appears that the investigation was conducted with a view to silencing the affair" – (from David's letter).
- b. South Shai Officer said he had found out about the theft accidentally. The incident occurred at the battalion headquarters in Nir Am. He was aware that the person in charge of the cash box was fired. The headquarters were poorly housed. There was a great deal of traffic. He had the impression that the transportation officer (Shmuel) had also been suspected.
- c. A letter from the Committee to Hillel stated:

"It is not true that the investigation was conducted with a view to silencing the matter. On December 31, in letter No. 53/47, we notified the financial office of the case. The investigation was conducted by Jacques<sup>14</sup> personally, and the person in charge of safeguarding the money was punished. Notice of the conclusions of the investigation was sent to the financial office in a second letter dated February 5, 1948, No. 253/48.
- d. Sasha explained to me that the financial officer (Mosik) was removed from his office over negligence in guarding the cash box but was under no suspicion. As for Shmuel – there was a trial against him over a certain sum of money, but he was acquitted. Jacques made thorough inquiries into the matter.
- e. Jacques: Mosik left the cash box unattended for several hours. He usually asked for the cash box to be watched upon exiting. There can be no suspicion against Mosik. His integrity cannot be doubted. The on-site investigation was difficult owing to the difficult conditions afflicting the headquarters' location at the time. Mosik was nevertheless removed from his position. As for Shmuel – care was

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<sup>14</sup> Likely a reference to Givati Brigade Commander Shimon Avidan.

taken that he is not assigned roles connected to money and finances. Receipts in the amount of some 600 Eretz Yisrael Pounds are missing. He notified the treasury on time.

- f. Baruch: Confirms receipt of notice from the Palmach. Transferred it to Head of the National Headquarters.
- g. Nahum (I spoke to him in Nir Am): Physical conditions in the headquarters were harsh. Drivers would come in and out to ask for gasoline. One driver (Uzi) was suspected, but no foothold was found.  
Nahum was the judge advocate in Shmuel's trial. He was not acquitted. He was found negligent. It appears that the prosecutor (Shula) told Sasha after the trial that he thought the prosecution had been unfounded. At the time the Second Battalion was redeployed to the Negev, Shmuel, at some point, had positions connected to money and finances, and it is unclear whether things proceeded 100% smoothly at the time. Details about that could be requested from Yoskeh. Shmuel is a talented fellow. He is now taking the platoon commander course.
- h. Moshe (in Nir Am):
  1. There were suspicions against a driver: Abraham. He was the last person to receive the money on the day of the theft (though not in the headquarter room). "Indecipherable face." Urgently drove to Beit Eshel, where there was an attack. There was no proof against him. Wounded in combat. Transferred to Beilinson Hospital.
  2. There was suspicion against Uzi. Moshe knows him from Ramat Yohanan (Uzi left the kibbutz). "Could have done it." Negative influence from his girlfriend. Needs his parents' help. After a few months of not receiving a salary, he gave his mother 20 Eretz Yisrael Pounds. Suddenly had a good new watch. Inquiries were made with banks, and the girl was followed. Nothing came out of these investigations. The connection between Uzi and Abraham was suspected (Uzi set out to help Abraham as the car he left with on the day of the theft sank<sup>15</sup>). After being asked about Shmuel, he said he suspected him for a moment of taking the cash box as a joke. Knows he had unclear financial accounts. The affair is no longer discussed.

#### Conclusion:

Further investigation is absolutely necessary. Sasha must appoint a special person to devote themselves to this investigation. Everything must be done to find the culprit and bring him to trial before the Organization.

- 9. a. "As a result of some words exchanged between a Shai worker in the Negev and his driver, the former was attacked by a group of drivers. Members of the brigade beat him in front of commanders who were standing nearby. No one addressed the issue." (David)
- b. Regional Shai Officer South: Zvi Atkin, a Shai worker in the south, does not show collegial tact towards people – he has also not been sufficiently tactful with his driver. After the beating incident, the driver – during combat – excelled in defending the convoy.
- c. A letter from the Committee dated February 6 states: Immediately after I find out, I shall answer the question. It is peculiar that the Shai man ... did not communicate directly "with a complaint in the matter."
- d. Nahum (Nir Am): The person who was beaten did not contact him. Nahum was told that Zvi Atkin demanded his driver drive the car out of its place in the convoy and advance. The driver said that

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<sup>15</sup> sic. Possibly sank in sand.

while in a convoy, he is bound by convoy discipline. Zvi Atkin, during an exchange of words, struck the driver. This was followed by blows from the driver and other drivers in Nir Am.

- e. David Karon – A Shai man (in Nir Am): Heard the following story from Zvi Atkin: The commander of the convoy asked him to pass by the convoy with his car. The driver drove erratically and did not obey him. After an exchange of words, the driver struck Atkin twice. Then Atkin struck back. In Nir Am, the drivers, rallied by his driver, attacked him. The case was referred for inquiry to the deputy battalion commander (Moshe Brachtman). The driver is known to be impudent. He has been “kicked out” of the unit in the past.

Conclusion:

Sasha should uncover the facts – in keeping with the undertaking in his letter of February 6, and draw conclusions.

- 10. a. “Food items driven to communities in the Negev and counted in the food rationing calculations are devoured by the people escorting the convoys” (David).
- b. Regional Shai Officer South: Insufficient scrutiny. The people of Asluj<sup>16</sup> complained that a certain amount of Halva was missing.
- c. Sasha: There were isolated cases, but the matter was explained to the units and rectified.
- d. Letter from the Committee dated February 6: I am aware of isolated cases of food consumption in miniscule amounts in convoys to Jerusalem and the Negev. We took steps to address this. It is false to claim that this is a common practice that amounts to “devouring.”
- e. The response given to me by Nahum (in Nir Am) was of a similar vein.

Conclusion:

As steps have been taken with respect to this matter, the matter is considered resolved.

- 11. a. “Patrol units in the Negev that confiscate weapons from Arabs are turning the confiscations into a private matter. They also rob money from the Arabs.” (David)
- b. Response from the Committee: “Firearms are confiscated, handed over to a warehouse in the Negev, and I inform the Organization of this. People may only take cold weapons. Additionally, I have no knowledge of theft of money for private needs. I am aware of a case where a security unit found 1,500 Eretz Yisrael Pounds in an Arab truck and did not take the driver’s money.”
- c. Regional Shai Officer South: The cases did not occur in the Negev, but during street patrol carried out by Hish [Haganah’s Field Corps] units. Somewhere around Beit Hanan, they took a handgun, and it is impossible to find out who has it. A similar case occurred during patrols in citrus orchards in Rehovot. It appears that they sold the weapon and kept the money. There were only two such cases.
- d. Givati was not aware of the cases.

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<sup>16</sup> Bir Asluj was a small Bedouin hamlet and a nearby British Police station, some 34 Kilometers from Be’er Sheba. The name Asluj probably refers here to Kibutz Revivim, established in the vicinity in 1943.

Conclusion:

Task Givati with making further inquiries into these cases and drawing conclusions.

12. a. "There have been cases of execution of Arabs by security cells. Recently, an Arab was executed near Rishon [LeTzion]" (David).
- b. Regional Shai Officer South: One case was on the Rishon – Moledet road, by the brigade. Second case – near Rishon by Hish men.
- c. The response of the Committee: "Transportation security units received an order that whenever there is an Arab attack on Hebrew transportation, they must attack Arab transportation. "We inform the Organization of every such case, including the killing near Rishon LeTzion (daily report of January 22).

Conclusion:

- Hillel must:
- a. Meticulously review the orders given regarding transportation.
  - b. Determine whether the aforesaid acts were in keeping with these orders.

13. a. "Several people from the Tel Aviv Hish unit that came to the Negev defected because of poor housing and living conditions" (David).
- b. Regional Shai Officer South: The unit concerned is the Hish unit from Tel Aviv that arrived in Nir Am.
- c. Givati: Highlights the lack of information and education – which are essential in conditions of mass conscription among uneducated segments of the population. (It is a whole affair of demanding salaries they allegedly deserved, protest strikes, etc.). The matter itself was handed over for battalion trial.

Conclusion:

Since the matter was forwarded for adjudication – the conclusion of the trial must be obtained from Givati.

14. a. "Complaints of robbery of Arab property on behalf of the Organization in fields, citrus orchards and warehouses have come from the vicinity of Petah Tikva. Nothing has been done to stop the thefts" (David).
- b. Meir (Regional Shai Officer Center): There are many incidents of theft of Arab property. Partnership between Organization members and non-members; between farmers and Seceders<sup>17</sup> – regarding packing materials, wrapping materials, pipes and machines. They sold a certain amount to Gad Machnes. He said he would pay after he got a note from a Haganah man. After he got such a note – he bought and paid.  
In terms of persons involved: Shabtai Sirotkin, who was involved in money forgery in Herzliya;

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<sup>17</sup> Referring to members of Etzel and Lehi



Banko; Yentel; Hateshuel (son of the Attorney Hateshuel). Said he was not guilty but fell under suspicion later as well. Sapir, who was asked to bring the matter to the municipal tribunal, has not yet contacted the District Commander and has not asked for his assistance. Tribunal not held as of yet.

- c. According to Shai reports on this affair, it emerges that a “financial” operation had been undertaken to benefit the area, with the knowledge of the area commander and his deputy, and there is reason to suspect that actions for private gain have also been carried out here.
- d. Gad Machnes: Did not go into details. Spoke about the importance of the custodianship of enemy property.

#### Conclusion:

Hillel must hold a trial and summon implicated Organization members only.

Comment: The Mayor of Petah Tikva should be officially asked by Hillel what measures he has taken in this matter and what came of the municipal trial against the accused.

- 15. a. “There was a case in which an Arab was interrogated by unauthorized persons in Nir Am, using cruel torture, and executed amid abuse” (David).
- b. Regional Shai Officer South: The Arab was found near Saad’s fence. The Shai man in the Negev (David Karon) was about to leave and handed him over to locals for interrogation. The Arab was suspect but acted proudly [sic]. During the interrogation, the Arab was tortured. A crowd formed, and there was wild laughter.
- c. The letter of the council dated February 2: “The Arab from Dura, near Hebron, said he was sent by Sa’id from Jaffa and said no more. It is true that during the interrogation, the Arab was tortured. I believe they acted correctly, because there was room to hope to extract information from him regarding his function. It is not a usual occurrence for an Arab to come from near Hebron up to Saad’s fence. I know that in many cases, Shai did the same during interrogations, and all the more so in the circumstances in the Negev. It is not true that he was killed amid abuse.
- c. [sic] Moshe (Nir Am): The Arab said he was on his way to Gaza and had lost his way. Before his departure, David Karon said he should be killed if he did not speak. People from Nir Am interrogated him. They tortured him. They hit his head against the wall. Moshe gave an order to inform him before executing the Arab. He did not receive such a notification before the execution. The Arab himself lay inside the pit. He was shot and covered.
- d. Karon (Nir Am): He was first interrogated in Sa’ad ([by] the Mukhtar), then he was brought to Nir Am. In Sa’ad, he was beaten, but generally speaking, he was still “okay.” Karon left and handed the matter over to Moshe Brechman. Karon said if the Arab did not talk, and if his condition after the interrogation was bad – he should be killed. The interrogation was handled by various, random people from Nir Am. The [REDACTED] of the community took an active part in the interrogation. There was severe torture (his penis was clasped with pliers). Karon spoke harshly to the people from Nir Am after the incident.

#### Conclusion:

Hillel must hold a trial and summon the persons responsible for this unauthorized, cruel interrogation.

## **Section B: Additional Facts**

- a.
  1. Theft in the home of the Deputy District Governor in Sarona.
  2. Removal of bananas by force and on behalf of the Haganah (Sholmo Kosayev, 24 Chelnov St.).
  3. Wounding of Arab man in Petah Tikva (Yehoshua Cohen, Sharon Café, Stampfer St.).
  4. Connections between commanders in the Organization and Irgun members (Shai materials) – Petah Tikva.
  5. Removal of motors and machine parts from the exhibition.
  6. Attempted robbery in Arab citrus orchard near Kefar Azar.
  7. Killing of Pole Krapovich Piotro from Petah Tikva.
  8. Seizure of Arab herd by Hish in Kefar Hess.
  9. Extortion in the name of the Haganah.
  10. Socony Vacuum carjacking.
  11. Robbery of military camp in Netanya prior to its transference to competent Jewish authority (written material from Shai).
  12. Private profit shopping for the Organization (details with Baruch).
  13. Expropriation of Arab goods in the port in warehouses. Arab property in general and friendly Arabs in particular (Gad Machnes reports of an Arab citrus orchard of this kind near Herzliya).
  14. Arbitrary confiscation of sheep and hay belonging to Arabs by people from Mishmar HaNegev (according to David Karon's account. Kibbutz conference discussed the case and condemned it).
  15. Vulgar conduct by Hish Brigade staff officers in Netanya (drunkenness and improper conduct in a public place, Pinati Café, February 10).
- b. I did not go into a detailed inquiry of matters brought to my attention in addition to the list attached to the letter of appointment. I thought it right to take note of them and bring them to the attention of the Head of the National Headquarters so that he demands: a. Further investigation inasmuch as these incidents have not been investigated to date; b. Prosecute the offenders. I did not note in this report the facts or problems I came across during my interrogations, which are important in and of themselves, but were not within the purview of my investigation: questions related to general practice, safety rules, the ethics around relationships between female and male members of the Organization, accusations against Haganah non-members, seceder groups and more.

## **Section C: General Questions**

1. a. How can the spread of unruly conduct be prevented? How can it be overcome?  
By increasing education and information activities in the Organization.  
By personal example from the commanders.

By instilling knowledge among commanders that maintaining the Organization's ethical-ideological level is one of the conditions for the success of our war and their success in their role.

By targeted educational activities among conscripts.

By providing for the sustenance of the conscripts and their families.

By educating on respect for human life.

By preserving the pioneering character of the Haganah.

An education and training center for the Haganah is required.

b. By clear and effective legal procedures.

2. What are the conditions for clear and effective legal procedures?

a. Giving and receiving exact information about the crime.

b. The ability to conduct a quick full rounded review of the complaint.

c. The availability of a contact that would address the complaint immediately and handle its prosecution if the need arises.

d. Proper trial proceedings.

As I have been informed by Comrade Yosef Yizraeli, a special committee of the National Headquarters is preparing a legal constitution, and I do not wish to encroach upon its purview. I do wish to note several issues I have encountered during my investigation: I received an important share of the information regarding internal unruly conduct from Shai personnel. However, a. They believe this area is unrelated to their function; b. The commanders do not look favorably on intervention by a "foreign power" in the lives of the units. I do, however, note that all Shai personnel I have met with are attentive to and concerned about the proper comradery level in the Organization. While some of the definitions and accusations presented by Shai personnel did appear to me to be exaggerated, the fact that they were brought up will be, and to a degree already has been, beneficial.

In legal proceedings, the investigation of facts is of crucial importance; such investigation requires more than just goodwill, but also a certain degree of expertise; there are "borderline" cases involving members of the Organization and people who are not members of the Organization;

a. For this reason, I tend to favor a mixed intelligence and investigation institution for the internal life of the Organization, made up of command members and Shai members. There is no need at this time for a separate, special mechanism in this field.

b. Given the facts surrounding unauthorized interrogations (particularly of Arabs), the top command must issue clear and strict orders to prevent any misunderstanding in this field.

The information arriving through different channels today (Shai, the command, individual complaints), is not directed to a single, clear organization route. Whether a person is or is not put on trial could be the result of chance. It is, therefore, essential to

c. Immediately create the position of Organization general prosecutor, who will be responsible for a. operating the investigation mechanism; b. bringing matters to trial.

d. A permanent Haganah legal organization that follows uniform rules is essential.

- e. It is essential to highlight, clearly and resolutely, that no death sentence can be delivered by way of administrative trial, without a competent decision from the Haganah tribunal.
- f. The principles of the legal constitution, and in particular, the issue of death sentences, must be brought for review by the security committee.
- g. The executive of the National Committee and the executive of the Jewish Agency must be called upon to institute regulations for public oversight of Arab property located within areas under Jewish rule.

### **Section D: Letter of Appointment and Work Program**

- a. As a member of the Security Committee, I was of the opinion that my appointment should be brought for the approval of the Security Committee. However, given the importance of the matter and a desire to avoid wasting time on procedural arguments, I have accepted the appointment of the Committee Chair without prior approval from the Committee.
- b. I have been presented with written material by Shai and via Nehemia from the command.
- c. I have interrogated the following comrades:
  - 1. Isser – Acting Head of Shai
  - 2. Yosef – Regional Shai Officer Tel Aviv
  - 3. Binyamin –Regional Shai Officer South
  - 4. Meir – Regional Shai Officer Center
  - 5. David – Shai Negev Representative
  - 6. James – Tel Aviv Commander
  - 7. Shimon – South Hish Brigade Commander
  - 8. Yigal – Brigade Commander
  - 9. Nahum – Negev Commander
  - 10. Moshe N. – Commander of Negev stationed brigade battalion
  - 11. Eliezer – Brigade treasurer
  - 12. Baruch – National Command member, treasurer
  - 13. Yosef Y. – National Command member, Chair of the National Command Legal Committee
  - 14. Gad M. – National Command (on the issue of Arab property).
  - 15. Michael – Negev Cluster Coordinator
- d. I note the efficient assistance provided to me during my investigation by Comrade Nehemia.
- e. I request to provide copies of the memo attached hereto for review and implementation to the Head of the National Command, the Chief of Staff, the Palmach Commander, the Head of Shai.
- f. Attached: A file containing all the documents I received during my investigation.

March 1, 1948.

[signed]

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Yaakov Riftin