THE CONQUEST OF JAFFA

On Monday, April 25, 1948, during the week of Passover Festivities, an ETZEL force set out to conquer Jaffa, the largest Arab city in Palestine, population of about 80,000, and to remove the danger it represented to the city of Tel-Aviv and its residents. The objective of the operation was to eliminate the threat of Jaffa becoming a naval and land base for the Arab armies.

After three days of hard fighting, on April 28 the large Manshiya quarter was taken, with its mosque, Hassan Bek, which had cast a shadow of fear over Tel-Aviv. The other parts of the city held fast with the help of 4,500 British soldiers, but the ETZEL mortars, relentlessly bombarding the center of the town, caused the mass flight of the Arab population. The attack on Manshiya began before the drafting of the operative sections of the agreement with the Hagana, which had become effective on April 24, according to which the ETZEL would act in coordination and agreement with the Hagana high command. This was another reason, besides the British factor, that motivated ETZEL to have the agreement signed and to hand Manshiya over to the Hagana, which had commenced operation Hametz.
THE SPEECH BY THE ETZEL COMMANDER, MENAHEM BEGIN, JUST BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE LIBERATION OF JAFFA:

"We are going out to conquer Jaffa. This will be one of the most decisive battles in the war for Israel's independence. Know who is before you. Remember those you have left behind. You are up against a ruthless enemy who intends to wipe us out. Behind you are your parents, our brothers and our children. Smite the enemy! Aim well! Conserve ammunition. Show no mercy in battle, just as the enemy has no pity for our people. Be compassionate with women and children. Whenever someone lifts his hands in surrender, spare him. He is your prisoner, do not harm him. Gundar Gideon, who is experienced in battle, will lead you in the attack. Remember the Etzel standard! There is only one direction: Forward!"